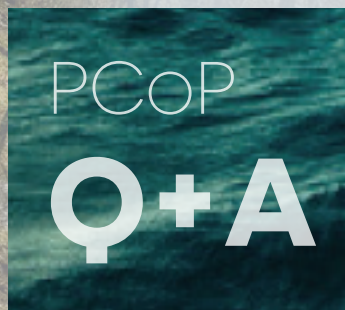
US Army Corps of Engineers ®

PLANNING ahead

Spring 2020 - Issue 01



Planning Ahead is a quarterly publication of the Army Corps of Engineers Planning Community of Practice. Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Army Corps of Engineers or the Department of Defense.

Previous issues of Planning Ahead can be found on the Planning Community Toolbox: www.corpsplanning.us.

SPRING 2020 FRONT COVER — MERAMEC RIVER, MISSOURI. SOURCE: AJAY SURESH, FLICKR.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF PLANNING & POLICY — STACEY E. BROWN

Recently, I was invited to sit down with Mr. Al Lee, the new Director of Civil Works and discuss my priorities for the Civil Works Planning program.

I was asked for my top five priorities this year and I described my top three priorities as:

1. **Completion of Chief's Reports;**
2. **Completion of Chief's Reports; and**
3. **Completion of Chief's Reports.**

Everything we do in Planning is important but at times we have to set realistic priorities. With Congress expecting to introduce a bill for a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) this calendar year, all eyes are on completing Chief's Reports for potential inclusion for construction authorization. The field is completing feasibility studies and we are executing Chief's Reports on an ambitious schedule. LTG Semonite has signed 18 Chief's Reports since WRDA 2018. We are expecting the Chief to sign 17 reports between now and the end of May and another 15 before the end of the calendar year. This is an astonishing level of activity for the Civil Works Planning program and I congratulate all of you for keeping your efforts focused on execution.

After completing Chief's Reports, my next priority is ensuring close coordination between Planning, Project Management, and study sponsors so that project schedules are accurate and up-to-date in P2 and feasibility report packages are complete and high quality when submitted to Headquarters. Accurate reporting in P2 ensures a common understanding of study commitments and is essential for aligning resources for a feasibility report's final technical and policy reviews and required certifications.

I am working with the Division and Headquarters staff to improve the process for delivering Chief's Reports. We can best support field execution by preparing for and translating final feasibility report packages into Chief's Reports in a timely manner. When study schedules slip – or get contracted – it challenges us at all levels of the agency to deliver the highest quality documents and recommendations that are required of us.

My other priority this year is to establish the processes and checks required to ensure delegated actions and decisions are being implemented consistently with policy and leadership intent. This applies to delegations from the Assistant Secretary of the Army to Headquarters, as well as delegations from Headquarters to Divisions and possibly Districts.

Across Civil Works, there have been many decisions and actions delegated in recent years, but with little rigor in monitoring. In addition to confirming that delegations are working as intended, opportunities exist to improve how we share best practices and to bring the full power of our collective creativity to problem solving. To be successful, we need to identify what's working and where there are challenges to overcome together.

PCoP NEWS FLASHES

PLANNING COMMUNITY NEWS

2020 Work Plan, 2019 Emergency Supplemental Investigations List Released

The FY20 Work Plan, which explains how USACE will spend its 2020 congressional appropriations, was published on 13 February. In addition, the studies to be accomplished with 2019 emergency supplemental funding have been identified in two states (North Carolina and Florida) and three territories (American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam). The 2019 disaster relief bill (PL 116-20) includes $35M for Investigations, and is in addition to regular appropriations. For more information on these activities, visit the USACE Civil Works budget and performance website: www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Budget.

Class of 2021 Planning Associates

The new Planning Associates class members kicked off their program with two weeks in the DC region in December. The Planning community's continued support of the program is greatly appreciated. Congratulations to the members of the class of 2021: Justin Brewer (NWO), Tom Herbert (LRN), Erin Maloney (LRC), Jessie Mizic (NWS), Jennifer Shunfenthal (NAO), Steve Stalikas (LRB), and Corrie Stetzel (SPK).

2019 Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) Risk Management Graduates

Congratulations to Mr. Drew Minert (NWK), Mr. Richard Oskey (NWO), Ms. Sarah Mattingly (LRL), Mr. Eric Singley (LRH), Ms. Jessie Mizic (NWS), and Mr. Norm Lewis (SWF) for joining a growing cadre of 29 other planners who have completed the Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) Risk Management Master's Certificate Program. Since 2015, five cohorts have completed the program, and a sixth cohort is well underway. Be sure to watch for the next offering of this in-depth training on risk management that begins in August 2020.

Planning Workforce Development Guide

The Planning Workforce Development Committee, the central body guiding the training and development of PCoP members, is creating a workforce development guide! This guide will be a living document to provide planners with recommendations for technical, leadership, and on-the-job training based on where they are in their careers. The purpose of this guide is to empower planners to make informed career decisions as they look to develop and advance within the PCoP. The main body of the document is now available on the Planning Community Toolbox with appendices to be released over the course of the year.

2019 PCoP Workshop

Thanks to all whose active participation, willingness to ask tough questions, and enthusiasm in sharing your experiences and perspectives helped make the 2019 PCoP Workshop a success. For those who couldn't attend, PCoP webinars will be held on certain topics presented at the workshop over the course of this FY. Session materials and links to videos of recorded sessions have been posted to the 2019 PCoP workshop SharePoint site.

> Planning Community Webinars

The Planning Community of Practice (PCoP) webinar series offers planners and their colleagues an opportunity to share information and learn more about trending topics in Civil Works planning and water resources development policy, guidance, processes, and tools.

The series provides an opportunity to discuss important and timely topics for the field, with recent presentation topics including: Economic Guidance Memorandum 19-06: "Ability to Pay" for Tribal Partners; applied learning environments; incorporating life safety into FRM planning studies; the deep draft navigation business line; the FY21 FPMS interagency nonstructural call for proposals; ecological model development within the planning phase; cost engineering in planning studies; and the Planner Database.

Webinars are held every other Thursday from 2-3 pm eastern. Presentations and the question and answer sessions from each webinar are archived on the Planning Community Toolbox, and recent webinars are always on the front page of the toolbox: www.corpsplanning.us.

If there is a webinar topic you believe the PCoP would benefit from, please email your ideas to hqplanning@usace.army.mil.

FIND MORE WEBINARS AT:

http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/resources.cfm?Id=0&Option=Planning%20Webinars

ST. LOUIS RIVERFRONT–MERAMEC RIVER TEAM SHARES LESSONS LEARNED

THE ST. LOUIS RIVERFRONT: SOURCE: USACE ST. LOUIS DISTRICT

Completed in just over four years, the St. Louis Riverfront – Meramec River Basin feasibility study provides a constructive case study on coordination with other federal agencies. The November 2019 St. Louis Riverfront – Meramec River Basin Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study Chief's Report recommends a plan to improve habitat in the Meramec Basin, with the goal of assisting the long-term survival of several threatened and endangered freshwater mussel species.

The team worked extensively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on restoration alternatives for habitat of threatened and endangered mussel species. Interagency coordination took precedence because, concurrent to the St. Louis District's feasibility study, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) was conducting a remedial investigation in the same area under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as "Superfund," to determine the nature and extent of heavy metals contamination due to historic mining practices in the area.

Monique Savage, St. Louis District Plan Formulation Section Chief, as well as other members of the Meramec River Basin project delivery team (PDT), recently spoke with Planning Ahead and shared several best practices as well as ideas for coordination and process improvement opportunities for other PDTs to consider as they advance their own studies.

ENGAGE EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Interagency coordination and partnership was essential to this feasibility study. The PDT held weekly calls with state and federal agency experts from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR), USFWS, and USEPA to ensure a holistic and collaborative study process. USFWS and MoDNR were also engaged in the review process, but often took longer than expected, or submitted multiple rounds of comments, making it difficult to finalize the report. The PDT kept lines of communication open – and plans to better establish expectations and adjust the master schedule accordingly in future projects, for example by using concurrent reviews to help soften the impact to the project schedule. The PDT also obtained a 3x3x3 waiver from the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to extend the overall project time to approximately four

years to allow for additional engagement with the project partners.

USEPA data was an important addition to the USACE Hydrologic Engineering Center's (HEC) River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) sediment data/analysis to inform the existing, future without project (FWOP), and future with project conditions.

Non-federal partners supported the study, as well. The study team engaged The Nature Conservancy to elicit unique subject matter expertise on appropriate natural and nature-based features for bank stabilization. Local soil and water conservation districts provided the link to facilitate communication with landowners in the study area.

TAPPING INTERNAL EXPERTISE

The PDT was able to engage expertise in multiple areas of USACE, reaching across organizational and geographic boundaries.

The USACE Committee on Channel Stabilization, which provides consulting and other services in the field of alluvial channel hydraulics and channel stabilization, contributed subject matter expertise that ensured proper characterization of the stream bank instability problems and potential solutions within the Meramec River Basin, leading to a recommendation to request further U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) support.

The ERDC Water Operations Technical Support (WOTS) program was able to provide targeted funding for assistance from a subject matter expert in geomorphology. The PDT's work with the geomorphologist led to the recommendation of an innovative passive bed load sediment collector measure, which the PDT had not previously considered.

In addition, the Meramec River Basin PDT pooled its resources with two other projects in need of ecosystem restoration models and arranged a combined model workshop in the St. Louis area facilitated by the Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise.

STUDY RISK MANAGEMENT

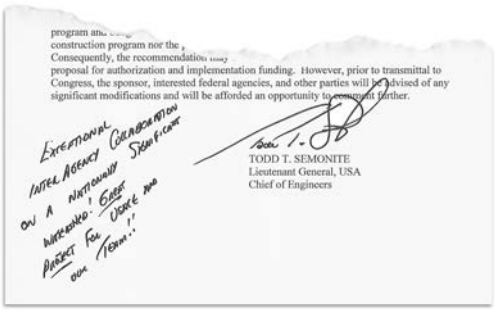
Throughout the course of the study, the PDT accounted for and managed known issues, and included additional time in its schedule to adapt to issues that were unknown at the beginning of the study. When the unexpected occurred, the district was able to adapt.

New and updated guidance over the course of the study, as well as review member changes, could result in unscheduled revisions to the report and schedule slips. While it is impossible to eliminate all impacts to the schedule, the PDT reduced them significantly by reading existing guidance, attending PCoP webinars, reading Headquarters Planning and Policy Division "Hot Topics" newsletters, communicating with multiple USACE Planning Centers of Expertise, and via robust vertical team engagement.

During the alternative evaluation and tentatively selected plan (TSP) selection meeting, a formula error was found in a spreadsheet, delaying TSP selection. The PDT recognized the error and responded by ensuring a "red dot review" is completed on products prior to alternative evaluation (per EC 1165-2-217, Review Policy for Civil Works) for this and other projects.

The timing and outcome of USEPA's ongoing CERCLA remedial investigation contributed significant uncertainty to the

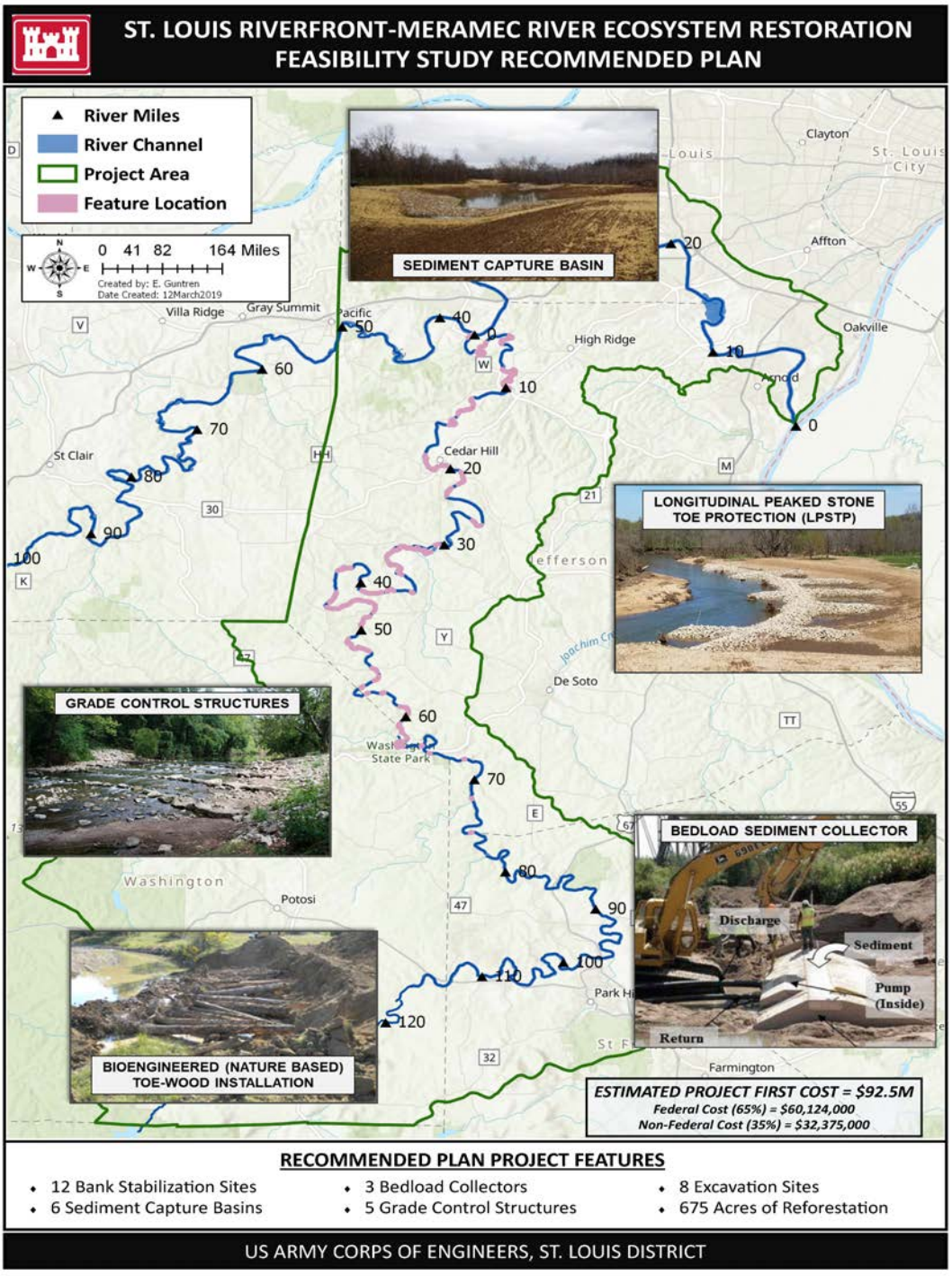
"EXCEPTIONAL INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION"



construction program nor the
Consequently, the recommendation
proposal for authorization and implementation funding. However, prior to transmittal to Congress, the sponsor, interested federal agencies, and other parties will be advised of any significant modifications and will be afforded an opportunity to comment further.

TODD T. SEMONITE
Lieutenant General, USA
Chief of Engineers

THE ST. LOUIS RIVERFRONT – MERAMEC RIVER BASIN ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY CHIEF'S REPORT WAS SIGNED BY LIEUTENANT GENERAL TODD T. SEMONITE ON 1 NOVEMBER 2019.



feasibility study schedule, impacting plan selection and sequencing of the PDT's decisions. Initially, it was assumed that USEPA would finish its Record of Decision (ROD) prior to the TSP milestone so the PDT would be able to design the project around up-to-date heavy metals (lead) contamination levels, part of their hazardous, toxic, and radioactive waste (HTRW) investigations. However, when it became apparent that USEPA was not going to finish its investigation prior to the TSP milestone, the PDT used previous USEPA sampling and RODs around the study area showing clean-up levels for lead between 400 ppm and 1,200 ppm (parts per million) to make a risk-informed decision to assume USEPA will set a remedial action of 1,200 ppm for lead for this area too. This decision did not prematurely constrain the study and allowed a wide array of USACE alternatives to be evaluated. In addition, the anticipated low-to-high lead levels were assessed using the Institute for Water Resources (IWR) Planning Suite tool to show that while there is an overall decrease in cost effectiveness for all alternatives on the Big River at 400 ppm, a change in lead concentrations does not affect whether a plan is cost effective, and would not change which plan was recommended.

The St. Louis District PDT hopes that the lessons it learned and best practices it employed while engaging in this study will help other teams around the country as they begin the study process, or as they consider making changes to ensure their studies cross the finish line. This study could not have been completed without robust partnerships, engaging expertise in multiple areas of USACE, vertical teaming, reaching across organizational and geographic boundaries, and adaptively managing to known and unknown schedule and budget challenges to make decisions and take actions that led to the signing of the Chief's Report late last year.

PLANNER PERSPECTIVE:

ENTERPRISE LEADERSHIP DELIVERING PLANNING EXCELLENCE RESULTS

BROOKE KAYAKING IN THE SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN RIVER DELTA. SOURCE: BROOKE SCHLENKER, SPK

Brooke Schlenker, Sacramento District, is a recipient of the USACE Planning Excellence Award. This award provides an honorary recognition to an outstanding USACE District employee in a professional planning position, and is designed to recognize an individual's contributions to advancing the state of the art in the practice of civil works water resources planning. Brooke is recognized in the "enterprise" category for FY18 based on her innovation and leadership on two recent studies, which helped USACE deliver sustainable water resource solutions and services in highly sensitive California landscapes; and which, when constructed, will help restore degraded ecosystems and support species recovery. Brooke's collaborative and creative approaches break through organizational barriers to achieve consensus and results. Her extensive achievements are a testament to her sustained drive for excellence.

As a Senior Water Resources Planner for the Sacramento District with experience in flood risk management, ecosystem restoration, deep draft navigation, dam safety, and multi-objective studies, Brooke exemplifies the qualities a USACE planner needs to successfully advance water resources planning for USACE and its non-federal partners. In her roles as senior lead planner, mentor, and district quality control reviewer, Brooke is considered a problem-solver and innovator, as well as an outstanding collaborator by her peers and supervisors.

As lead planner, Brooke recently led the California Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Islands and Levees Feasibility Study Project Delivery Team (PDT) through completion of a signed Chief's Report, with the recommendation for an ecosystem restoration project of historic ecological importance. The delta is an estuary of national significance and is the hub of the water system behind the world's fifth largest economy, home to endangered and threatened species, and includes communities housing approximately 500,000 people. The delta has been extensively studied by federal, state, and local agencies for decades, but very little restoration has been accomplished. This ecosystem restoration project provides an opportunity to restore an area using beneficial reuse of sediment from annual maintenance dredging of the nearby Stockton deep

water ship channel when restoration would otherwise have been cost prohibitive. This is the first feasibility study to establish federal interest in an ecosystem restoration project in the delta, paving the way for a future feasibility study to assess broader efforts within this critical landscape.

BROOKE DISCUSSING POTENTIAL MULTI-PURPOSE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT/AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION MEASURES IN THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA DELTA WITH USACE CIVIL ENGINEER, LARRY NEMETZ. SOURCE: BROOKE SCHLENKER, SPK

In collaboration with other USACE districts, Brooke identified synergy between USACE's ecosystem restoration and navigation missions and authorities, and persevered to achieve a policy-compliant and agency-supported recommendation. Using her strong collaboration skills, Brooke overcame several obstacles to identify a strategy that allows the landowners in the study area, the State of California, and USACE to reach alignment on land use issues on the recommended plan.

Given the technical and political complexity of the study, Brooke worked closely with the SPD Regional Integration Team planner, Charles Wilson, for the duration of the study, providing additional information to ensure a successful Senior Leaders Briefing, Chief's briefing, and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) briefing. Informal coordination with the vertical team through phone calls, emails, and in-progress reviews (IPRs) was critical to effective vertical team integration, allowing the full team to reach consensus on unique study challenges prior to formal milestone meetings.

Brooke will continue to serve as the subject matter expert on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and will continue to be engaged as the study moves through ASA(CW) review, Office of Management and Budget review, and into the pre-construction engineering and design (PED) phase.

In another display of exemplary leadership, Brooke developed an innovative solution for the Yuba River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study when the PDT was struggling to identify a method to compare diverse ecosystem restoration measures. After considering various potential approaches, Brooke proposed using a budgetary tool outlined in an expired USACE program development engineering circular (Engineer Circular 11-2-206) because the categories of measures discussed in the EC were the same as those considered for the study: aquatic habitat improvement, dam removal, and fish passage improvement. Even though the method was intended for budget and workplan development, it provided the PDT with an unbiased and logical approach to converting riparian habitat restoration areas and stream connectivity factors into a single metric for evaluation, or in other words provided the PDT with a way to compare "apples and oranges."

In addition, Brooke proposed using risk and uncertainty rankings that allowed the PDT to further screen measures, an approach which moved the PDT forward after several less productive prior screening iterations. Regularly coordinating with the vertical team, including the Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise, allowed for the success of this unique screening method. IPRs were utilized to first, clearly define and describe the unique study challenges and potential consequences and second, describe the proposed solution. The vertical team then worked together to determine the necessary approvals required to move the study forward incorporating the proposed approach.

Finally, in addition to her technical expertise in plan formulation, Brooke is an exceptional mentor to junior planning staff. She works closely with new staff members assigned to her PDT to ensure they are receiving the best on-the-job training possible. She is adept at explaining technical details as well as providing a big picture perspective so that junior planners understand how their work contributes to USACE's mission at the local, regional, and national levels.

Please join Planning Ahead in congratulating Brooke on her FY 2018 Planning Excellence Award!

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

THE USACE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

Through the Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) program, USACE can work in partnership with local interests, state agencies, and other federal agencies to guide development of the floodplains of the rivers of the United States, inform people who live and work in floodplains about existing flood hazards, and describe actions they can consider to reduce property damage and prevent the loss of life caused by flooding. In this article, Lisa Bourget of the Institute for Water Resources discusses various opportunities for USACE to collaborate specifically on interagency nonstructural efforts under the auspices of FPMS. In addition, FPMS interagency nonstructural effort collaboration experiences and lessons-learned from two districts are highlighted.

Sometimes we can accomplish more together than separately is a key premise behind the nonstructural interagency efforts within the USACE FPMS program. The FPMS program makes funds available to USACE staff for work it conducts in collaboration with other flood risk management (FRM) partners, with each partner bringing its own particular expertise and authorities to the effort – stretching both available resources and the sphere of possible solutions.

Since FY2016, a portion of the FPMS budget has been annually apportioned to interagency nonstructural efforts. Nonstructural FPMS solutions seek to reduce human exposure or vulnerability to a flood hazard (reduce consequences) without altering the nature or extent of the hazard. In order for a nonstructural effort to be considered interagency, USACE must work collaboratively with at least two additional governmental partners including tribal, federal, state, regional, or local governments, where each partner makes a substantive contribution to carrying out the effort, often via work-in-kind. Other partners are also encouraged to participate in these efforts, including non-governmental partners, universities, businesses, task forces, and others that can help advance solutions to FRM challenges.

Nonstructural interagency FPMS efforts were initially tested with 18 pilots in FY2011 and FY2012 that built on previous coordination successes of state-led Silver Jackets teams.

Silver Jackets teams are an established forum for interagency coordination, which makes them common submitters of FPMS proposals – but submission via a Silver Jackets team is not required.

Formal cost-sharing agreements are not required for FPMS interagency nonstructural efforts. However, on average, each FPMS dollar invested by USACE in interagency nonstructural collaborative efforts leverages another dollar in partner contributions. FPMS effort outcomes are documented on a FRM continuum that progresses from "raising awareness" to "prompting action" to "reduces/manages flood risk." Ancillary outcomes that achieve non-monetary social benefits or improve environmental function are also documented.

The nature and type of FPMS interagency nonstructural efforts varies, with more than 325 efforts initiated since FY2016 – but all must follow FPMS program guidance in seeking nonstructural

The annual call for FPMS interagency nonstructural proposals is issued by the Headquarters Planning and Policy Division in the late fall each year, with a long open submission period so that projects can be coordinated among interagency partners before requests for funding are made in early spring for consideration in the next fiscal year's budget.

solutions with interagency partners. Example FPMS interagency nonstructural efforts include performing nonstructural assessments, technical and planning assistance associated with sea-level change, developing flash flood warning system plans, supporting development of flood plain management plans for a tribal entity, undertaking post-wildfire flood risk assessments, developing flood inundation maps, and supporting public outreach and risk communication efforts.

The example projects that follow provide a brief overview of two FPMS interagency nonstructural efforts: a nonstructural flood risk management analysis for Minnie Creek in New Jersey; and development and subsequent use of an Emergency Action Plan Guidebook in Minnesota. Although the possibilities for interagency coordination on nonstructural activities are wide-ranging, these successful case studies may help other USACE teams consider potential collaboration opportunities.

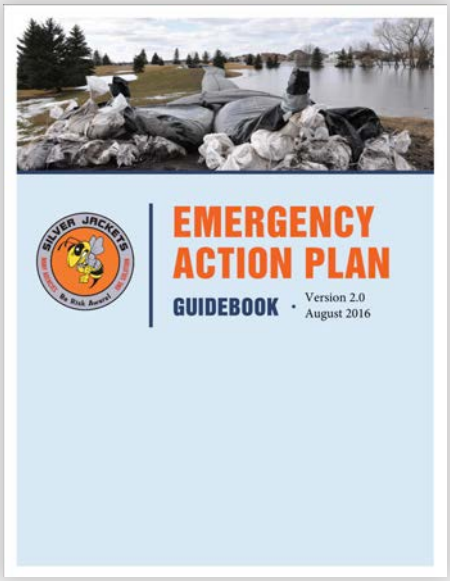
ASSESSING A COASTAL NEIGHBORHOOD AT RISK: NONSTRUCTURAL FRM ANALYSIS

Erik Majusiak, NAP

Minnie Creek is a tidally influenced channel subject to frequent flooding located inside the suburban landscape of the coastal city of Margate, New Jersey. After assessing structural FRM measures, the Philadelphia District partnered with FEMA, the State of New Jersey, and Atlantic County to develop an FPMS interagency proposal. The selected FY2018 proposal included interagency nonstructural FRM assessments performed virtually using several readily available data sources, as well as relying on USACE team member technical expertise and field experience in the assessment area. Data sources included LIDAR for ground elevation, the FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) for FRM water surface elevations, and Atlantic County tax parcel data for initial structure information to assess 73 structures in the study area adjacent to Minnie Creek.

The nonstructural analysis showed that 38 of the structures would benefit from being elevated to the local regulatory flood elevation. The team also found that if National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) sea level change predictions were included, four additional homes in the study area would be recommended for elevation.

Although the final documentation of this FPMS project included information on opportunities for grants through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and state programs such as the New Jersey Green and Blue Acres Programs, next steps for implementation of nonstructural FRM measures will be determined by the City of Margate. The city is also adopting other nonstructural measures such as higher regulatory standards for elevation requirements, as well as publication of a flood information brochure to help educate its residents with information on how to apply for local government grants for elevation costs.



DEVELOPING SCALABLE TOOLS WITH PARTNERS: EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN GUIDEBOOK

Terry R. Zien, MVP

The interagency Minnesota Silver Jackets team completed its first FPMS interagency project in 2014 – flood inundation mapping for the Mississippi River along six miles of downtown St. Paul. At the project conclusion, the city of St. Paul then asked USACE for guidance in updating its emergency action response, evacuation, and zoning plans. The city wanted a guidance document to provide the framework and context for thorough coverage of these topics. It soon became clear that there were examples of flood response content available online, but no comprehensive guide on how to develop the content. This led to development and implementation of an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) guidebook by the Minnesota Silver Jackets team, designed to be used by municipal and tribal staff FPMS technical experts.

The initial version of the EAP guidebook was ready in 2015 after thorough vetting by USACE, FEMA, and state and local partners. Since then, the St. Paul District has leveraged FPMS and partner funding to conduct 27 emergency action planning workshops for communities – usually municipalities, tribes, county governments, and state partner agencies – to help them understand and implement the EAP guidebook. The desired outcomes of the workshops are for participants to document institutional knowledge, define personnel roles and critical tasks, and develop processes for planning and response that may not exist, or are nearly impossible to implement, once a flood event begins.

The St. Paul District has documented several lessons learned that should be considered by other districts hoping to hold similar emergency planning workshops with state and local partners:

1 Remember that the local officials very likely have other jobs outside of their civic duties. Do not schedule the workshop event during planting or harvest times, hunting seasons, fishing openers, county fairs, etc.

2 Ensure the county/tribal emergency manager is involved, starting in the planning stages. They are pivotal in establishing and maintaining effective communication between the municipalities and tribes and the state government. In addition, they are trained professionals in emergency management and have the networking connections to critical people required for a successful plan.

3 Follow-up by USACE with the plan owners post-workshop is critical interagency collaboration, ensuring plan development is progressing and allowing for opportunities to offer advice and to review draft products, as appropriate.

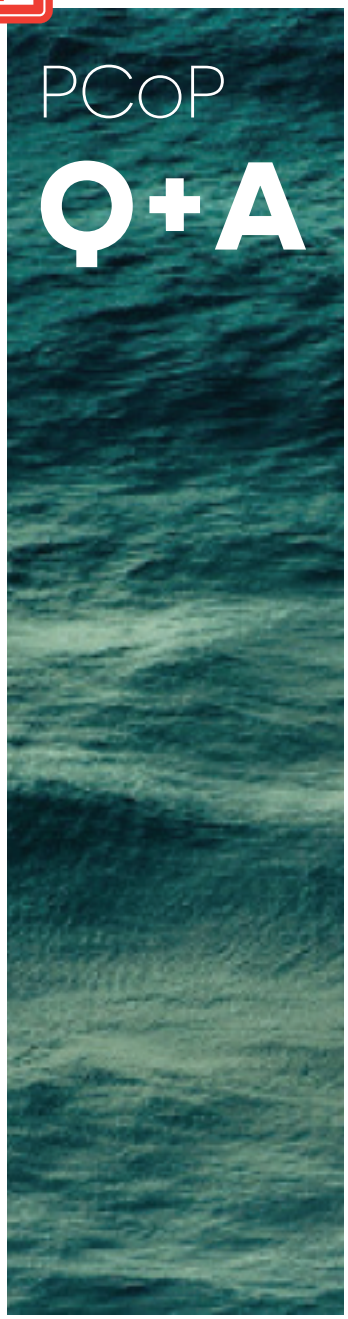
4 The best information is usually what the community already knows.

5 During emergency events, the local person who "thinks" they are in charge may not be the best choice. Communities should therefore have this potentially delicate discussion and make a selection outside of emergency situations.

6 Look for opportunities to combine the workshop with a table-top exercise.

7 The local relationships you develop may become the go-to people for your part of an emergency response involving the district – do not underestimate them.

Most communities want to take care of themselves as much as possible. Developing a flood EAP promotes self-reliance, shared responsibility, resilience, and reduced risk. Elements of the plan can easily apply to other emergencies, and the workshops can be an enhancement to existing plans. The current updated edition of the EAP guidebook can be found on the St. Paul District homepage: www.mvp.usace.army.mil



My region is slated to start multiple feasibility studies this year. Are there tips to help districts and divisions address localized surges in workload without an increase in resources?

With regions preparing to take on surges of feasibility work as a result of the FY2019 Emergency Supplemental, on top of FY2018 Emergency Supplemental studies and regular new starts, districts are eager for strategies to set PDTs up for success. The following suggestions may help MSCs and districts as they plan for increased workloads:

- Work with district and MSC leadership to outline the specific resources intended to be used to execute the study workload across the MSC and develop a resourcing or "acquisition plan" to meet those needs. This plan should detail how resources – the do-ers and the reviewers – will be assigned and leveraged to complete all studies on time and within budget (i.e., how experienced staff with sufficient capability will be "spread out" across the portfolio).
- Include other functional areas such as engineering, counsel, and real estate in your resourcing plan. Coordinate closely from the beginning to ensure the necessary technical resources are available and will be committed to PDTs and completing the studies on time and within budget.
- Consider "brokering" studies to other MSCs and districts, or to another district within the same MSC, to leverage expertise and capacity across the enterprise. Successful brokering agreements should detail expectations for all involved, roles and responsibilities of the "home" and "brokered" MSC, and any internal requirements specific to either MSC.
- Establish a communication strategy early on for informing the vertical team, milestone decision makers, and other interests of study progress. This strategy should include preferred frequency and method of communication (e.g., weekly or monthly e-mails, calls, or in-person meetings). This strategy will allow the lead planner, lead project manager, and other PDT members, as needed, to request assistance and discuss current issues. In addition, vertical teams should schedule IPRs as needed between milestone meetings.
- Clarify a decision-making strategy at the district level for critical interim study decisions and procedures for communicating those decisions to the vertical team. For example, hold kick-off meetings for each individual study team, attended by MSC-level staff, to establish the study scope and establish district/MSC alignment from the start.

These tips and best practices apply to any district or MSC with beginning multiple studies simultaneously, not just those receiving FY2019 Emergency Supplemental funds.

Many thanks to Eric Bush (SAD Planning and Policy Chief), Hank Gruber (NAD Deputy Planning and Policy Chief), and Sue Hughes (SWD Planning and Policy Chief) for their insightful contributions to this Q&A!

What's New on the Planning Community Toolbox

The Planning Community Toolbox is the "go to" website for current planning policy and guidance, and links to the tools that can support planners and planning decision making.

Looking for a recent – or old – Chief's Report? The toolbox houses signed Chief's Reports for water resources projects going back to 1970 and is sortable by district, state, year, and title. Be sure to visit the new Director's Reports page while you're there – and send us your signed reports to help us complete the collection. You can find these resources under the "Planner's Library" tab on the Planning Community Toolbox. Helpful shortcuts are on the left side of the page.

Recent national policy changes and new guidance applicable to planning are always available on the front page under policy and guidance updates. New additions to the toolbox include completion and termination guidance for USACE studies, Economic Guidance Memorandums 19-04, 19-06, and 20-01 on sponsor ability to pay, tribal ability to pay, and federal interest rates for USACE projects in FY20, respectively; Engineer Regulation 1105-2-101: Risk Assessment for Flood Risk Management Studies; Engineering and Construction Bulletins 2019-8, 2019-11, 2019-13, and 2019-15 on managed overtopping of levee systems, transition guidance for levee system evaluations for the National Flood Insurance Program, methods for storage/yield analysis, and interim approaches for risk-informed designs for dam and levee projects, respectively; the ASA guidance memorandum on partnering with non-federal interests; five USACE National Nonstructural Committee best practice guides (2020-1, 2020-2, 2020-03, 2020-04, and 2020-05); and more.

Interested in taking a deep dive on a specific planning topic? The training tab contains links to the Planning CoP webinar series – and other CoPs' webinars, information on the Planning Core Curriculum courses and other PROSPECT courses, the Planning Associates program, and more.

Visit the toolbox online at www.corpsplanning.us.