



Planning Center of Expertise - Ecosystem Restoration



One of the USACE national planning centers of expertise focuses on the ecosystem restoration mission area. The National Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise (ECO-PCX) is based in the Mississippi Valley Division and leverages a virtual team staffed from across USACE to coordinate independent reviews and provide other services to civil works study teams.

As of March 2020, the center is managing review oversight of 19 active feasibility studies and 24 requests for planning model certifications or approvals. This includes work in all eight Major Subordinate Commands and in 32 of 38 Corps of Engineers Districts across the nation. In some cases these services are provided with the ECO-PCX as the lead responsible for managing reviews. In other cases the ECO-PCX is supporting another planning center that serves as the business line lead but needs support for an environmental or ecosystem aspect of a study review.

Engaging the ECO-PCX early offers teams the ability to access expert support in the critical initial scoping stages of a study and to maintain coordination throughout the planning process. Ideally the ECO-PCX should be consulted when a district begins to negotiate a feasibility study with a non-Federal sponsor. This helps frame the nature of an investigation and identify study support tools, planning models, best practices/lessons learned, and available technical expertise.

Technical experts from the ECO-PCX support teams in planning charrettes or other workshops that gather information and shape potential solutions to water resources problems. Interaction between the ECO-PCX and a study team carries-on throughout the study with the center’s critical involvement in developing a Review Plan, selecting and approving/certifying a planning model, performing various independent reviews, and participating in vertical team engagements at milestone meetings and other coordination events.

The Director and Operating Director are nested within the MVD Planning organization. The other team members reside at USACE Districts inside and outside of MVD. Our Account Managers are the primary contacts coordinating interactions between the ECO-PCX and districts. Two specialists on the team manage all activities related to Independent External Peer Review and the planning model reviews. In addition, the center maintains a large network of ad hoc supporting technical experts with a variety of skills often used in ecosystem restoration planning. The ECO-PCX virtual team is identified in the table below:

ECO-PCX Position	Name	Location
Director	Gary Young	MVD
Operating Director	Gregory Miller	MVD ¹
Account Manager – NAD	Chip Hall	Nashville District
Account Manager – SAD	Katie Opsahl	St. Paul District
Account Manager – LRD	Sierra Keenan	St. Paul District
Account Manager – MVD	Kat McCain	St. Louis District
Account Manager – SWD	Rachel Mesko	Rock Island District
Account Manager – NWD	Brad Foster	Jacksonville District
Account Manager – SPD	Mike Scuderi	Seattle District
Account Manager – POD	Valerie Ringold	Portland District
PCX IEPR Lead	Andy MacInnis	New Orleans District
Model Review Manager	Nate Richards	Rock Island District
Budget Analyst	Linda Weiman	Rock Island District

¹ The Operating Director is an MVD staff member that resides in New Orleans and teleworks when not traveling.