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PLANNING ahead

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“Make No Little Plans”

—Daniel Burnham, 1846-1912, architect & planner

I saw this quote on an information placard walking along Pennsylvania Avenue recently and it put me in mind of the work we Civil Works Planners do to develop solutions to our Nation’s most pressing engineering challenges. We are often working at scales involving billions of dollars in public funding. Even our smaller projects typically require millions for planning and design work, and tens or hundreds of millions for construction and future operations and maintenance. These are not little plans. Since arriving here at Headquarters in late February, I have had opportunities to sit with Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) James and LTG Semonite on a few occasions, and I assure you they are very interested in our work, especially as it plays out through the final steps of the decision-making process.

The Chief and Mr. James are concerned about our back-log of incomplete or unconstructed projects and adding more projects to that – especially those that will not compete favorably in the budget process. A modest return-on-investment

VIEW FROM THE TOP

MESSAGE FROM THE (ACTING) CHIEF OF PLANNING & POLICY, ERIC BUSH

project that does not receive federal funding frustrates and disappoints our non-federal partners, stakeholders, and the public who are depending on USACE to develop solutions to their very real water resources problems. This is why we are seeing shifts away from our traditional planning, authorization, and design and construction processes. The Chief talks about “revolutionizing” Civil Works because he knows we have to keep pace with expectations and demands in an ever-evolving, resources-constrained operating environment.

To enable that, we have to think differently. To our credit, the Planning Community is already doing that. There are many examples of innovative planning work going on throughout USACE. (This is one of the great, eye-opening benefits of working at Headquarters – I get reminded of this every day!) But we’ve got to stay on that trajectory. Things I think we can continue to improve are: (1) formulating high value-to-the-nation alternatives. Don’t let the process drive you to a tepid recommendation. Be bold! If this means scaling alternatives to produce outputs that will eventually demand funding because we can’t afford to NOT invest, that’s good! Put the pressure on the decision-makers and

the budget process instead of making it easy for them by presenting a modest recommendation; (2) evaluate other benefit streams, especially social and non-monetary outputs. Decision-makers constantly ask about these other effects and we too often truncate or rush this type of analysis without giving it the rigor it deserves; and (3) explore innovative funding opportunities – for the planning work and other phases, too. This can be a hard topic to brainstorm. But if we have the right people at the table, including our non-federal partners and stakeholders, and they understand project funding risks and consequences and are willing to consider increasing their equities, that may lead to overall funding solutions that IMPROVE prospects of federal funding.

What else? Our 2018 Supplemental studies (38!) are underway and the perception is this has been a great success so far. The feasibility cost share agreements were signed and Alternatives Milestones successfully achieved for most studies. But the hard parts (evaluation, comparison, selection, risk analysis, decision-making) are still ahead. I am asking everyone involved in these studies to stay laser-focused on timely, effective, and risk-informed delivery of interim work

products. We must fulfill our commitments to Congress, the Administration, our leadership, and the public who are depending on what we recommend to decrease the devastating impacts of inland and coastal flooding. I like to think of the Supplemental program as the Olympics. We will get a bronze medal for every study we finish on time recommending an economically-justified plan. But who wants to settle for bronze? We could earn a gold medal for every study we finish ahead of schedule recommending a project with a budget-competitive BCR that gets in queue for the reserve construction dollars.

Finally, I want to close by stating what should be obvious, and that is how talented, hard-working, and smart our Headquarters team is. As someone who has spent my entire career in a district or more recently at SAD, I didn’t always see or think that. But they (we) do a tremendous job covering down engagements with stakeholders, supporting the DCW/DCG/Chief, preparing and defending budget requests, and most importantly, resolving project issues and pushing actions forward for decisions. It is my great privilege to be part of the Headquarter Planning and Policy team.



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE HIGHLIGHT: NANCY BRIGHTON AND THE CULTURAL RESOURCES SUB-COP



ARCHEOLOGIST AND HEADQUARTERS DEPUTY FEDERAL PRESERVATION OFFICER NANCY BRIGHTON AT THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF UR OUTSIDE OF TALIL, IRAQ IN 2007. SOURCE: NANCY BRIGHTON, HEADQUARTERS

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Nancy Brighton is an archeologist who recently joined the Headquarters Planning and Policy Division as the new Deputy Federal Preservation Office and Cultural Resources sub-Community of Practice (CoP) lead. She recently spoke with the Planning Ahead team about her career path in Cultural Resources as well as her vision for the Cultural Resources sub-CoP in the coming months and years.

Hello! My name is Nancy Brighton and I am the new USACE Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, replacing Mr. Paul Rubenstein who retired in 2017. Up until taking my current position at Headquarters in December 2018, I spent my entire career (since March 1992) as an archaeologist for the New York District, working on projects in and around areas where I grew up in New Jersey and New York. In 2000, I took the position of supervisory archaeologist as Chief of the Watershed Section in the Environmental Analysis Branch, Planning

Division, in addition to serving as the District's Tribal Liaison. At the District I was fortunate to work on a variety of Planning studies – navigation, flood, and coastal storm risk management – as well as projects outside of Planning including in Regulatory, Interagency and International Services (IIES), and Military Programs.

I have also been fortunate to participate in some unusual Corps adventures: working as the Deputy Director for the Mass Graves Investigation Team when deployed in Iraq as part of the Regime Crimes

Liaison Office; completing the archives project in the shadow of the ziggurat at Ur in southern Iraq; deploying to Afghanistan as the cultural resources specialist on an Environmental Support team prior to the surge; coordinating the General Services Administration's re-interment of the men, women, and children of New York City's African Burial Ground; and relocating the National Museum of Health and Medicine's artifacts – and its ghosts.

Over the past three months, I have been getting to know



my Planning colleagues at USACE Headquarters, and of course finding my way around! I have been working closely with the Cultural Resources sub-CoP to develop a “to-do” list of items most critical and relevant to the Cultural Resources community, such as updating and maintaining the team membership roster; restarting Agency Technical Review (ATR) certification reviews; and hosting an annual workshop. I have also been working with the larger Planning Community to perfect the coordination of Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act compliance requirements with SMART Planning milestones and activities. Ultimately, my goal is to facilitate consistency across the Cultural Resources sub-CoP to ensure we are working with the same foundation, yet allowing for flexibility and creativity

within the Districts to support the Planning process.

Finally, I would also like to continue Paul’s efforts to highlight the knowledge, skills, and abilities of cultural resources specialists, and work to further enhance our value to the mission. Although we possess a specialized technical skill set, the education and experience of cultural resources specialists makes us invaluable in other, broader roles, including plan formulation, project management, and project development.

I look forward to working with you to tackle these goals, I request your input on adjusting them, and I seek your input on how to enhance both the Cultural Resources and larger Planning community, working together to accomplish the USACE mission.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: PLANNING AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following should be kept in mind when planners consider how and when to engage with cultural and tribal specialists, ensuring timely engagement and participation in important components of overall environmental compliance activities for feasibility studies:

1 Cultural resources compliance starts when the feasibility study begins, and study scoping should include discussion of these compliance activities.

2 Cultural resources team members must be part of the development of the alternatives and identification of the tentatively selected plan (TSP).

3 Alternative cost estimates for cultural resources mitigation must be included as project costs under Cost Account 18, Cultural Resources Preservation, and cost-shared in accordance with the one-percent rule (Section 7a of the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-291)).

For more information, visit the National Historic Preservation Act page on the Planning Community Toolbox.

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➤ 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.

Recent national policy changes and new guidance applicable to planning are available on the front page under Policy and Guidance Updates. New additions to the Toolbox include Director’s Policy Memorandum 2019-01 on Policy & Legal Compliance Review, new interim guidance on

streamlining independent external peer review, implementation guidance for Section 1001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 on vertical integration and acceleration of studies, EP 1105-2-57 Planning Stakeholder Engagement: Collaboration and Coordination (formerly Appendix B of the Planning Guidance Notebook), and more.

Interested in becoming an expert on a specific topic or getting trained up on the Planning Core

Curriculum? Space availability for upcoming courses is frequently posted on the Toolbox homepage under Notices, and information on other planning-related PROSPECT courses can be found in the Training section of the Toolbox.

The Toolbox also contains helpful resources for planners who are working through Emergency Supplemental and other new start studies. The Emergency Supplemental Single Phase Feasibility Study Resources and Single Phase Feasibility

Study Resources pages contain recently released guidance, useful factsheets, and other informative documents for PDTs. The Toolbox also contains information on numerous tools available to Planners, such as a list of certified models as well as national models in review.

Looking to spread your wings? Job openings across Planning are frequently posted on the Toolbox’s home page under Notices.

Visit the Toolbox online at www.corpsplanning.us.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:

SAN JUAN HARBOR NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENTS FEASIBILITY STUDY

The San Juan Harbor Navigation Improvements Study, initiated in September 2015 by the Jacksonville District, assessed possible navigation improvements to address shipping inefficiencies due to limited channel width and restrictions that don't allow two-way traffic. Specific measures were taken to keep the study on-time and within the set budget. At the beginning of the study, the team identified high risks associated with the schedule and budget. The team's cohesiveness and experience with prior deep-draft navigation improvements studies contributed a great deal to identifying these potential risks.

The team's Planner and Project Manager worked very closely on the development of the Project Management Plan (detailing the scope of the study) and the schedule (identifying the critical path network) at the onset of the study. The development of the Review Plan was a concerted team effort, including all disciplines, as well as coordination with the Deep Draft Navigation Center of Expertise (DDN-PCX). This resulted in identifying review

The Chief's Report for the San Juan Harbor Navigation Improvements Feasibility Study, Puerto Rico, was signed in August 2018 by General Todd T. Semonite in Jacksonville, FL, several weeks ahead of the study's 3-year SMART planning schedule and within the \$3 million federal limit. San Juan Harbor was the first 3x3x3 Navigation SMART Planning study to accomplish this task thanks to the efforts of its Jacksonville District-based project delivery team (PDT). PDT members Ashleigh Fountain, Brenda Calvente, Steve Conger, Paul DeMarco, Courtney Jackson, Milan Mora, and Bryan Merrill shared their insights on the study's success as well as best practices for other study teams to consider.

teams and timeframes up front to allow the team to meet, and in this case beat, the three-year targeted completion date of the feasibility study. The Chief's Report was signed over three weeks ahead of schedule on August 23, 2018.

The PDT conducted a unique economic analysis to capture power generation cost reduction benefits during plan formulation, reflecting the cost savings of converting from diesel to more efficient and less expensive Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in combination

with the construction of associated LNG holding and storage infrastructure. The team also conducted an economic analysis with no power generation cost reduction benefits to provide a range of potential outcomes, reflecting the risk and uncertainty of future utility conditions in Puerto Rico, especially considering the effects and aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The shift from diesel fuel to LNG demonstrated innovation by incorporating a new benefit category into the economic evaluation, which typically focuses

on transportation cost savings alone. This benefit stream reflects a National Economic Development (NED) benefit that captured cost savings to the Nation while simultaneously providing a fuel source that provides long term social and environmental benefits.

The PDT also took initiative to examine Other Social Effects (OSE) in the formulation, evaluation, and comparison of alternatives based on information in Mr. Dalton's June 21, 2017 memo, Advancing Project Delivery Efficiency and Effectiveness of USACE Civil Works. The PDT identified health benefits associated with power generation fuel utilization, and described how the navigation improvements at the harbor would be the conduit for those OSE benefits. A feasibility study has never proposed to use this type of analysis to assist in the identification and justification of a plan for implementation.

The PDT also utilized Regional Sediment Management (RSM) experts to assess beneficial uses of dredged material associated with channel deepening at the Harbor.



GENERAL TODD T. SEMONITE SIGNS THE SAN JUAN HARBOR NAVIGATION IMPROVEMENTS STUDY CHIEF'S REPORT IN JACKSONVILLE ON AUGUST 23, 2018. SOURCE: JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT

Former dredge holes used in the 1950s for development purposes had turned anoxic in an otherwise very healthy bay bottom surrounded by seagrass and invertebrates located in the Condado Lagoon, within the city of San Juan. The PDT, in coordination with RSM experts, assessed the feasibility of filling those former dredge holes with the material from the proposed harbor deepening as a dredged material management option, along with the feasibility of re-establishing seagrass habitat. The non-federal sponsor could not commit to the additional costs associated with the RSM opportunity in the feasibility stage. However, the decision to fully evaluate the RSM effort by the PDT allowed the proposal to be considered as “shovel ready” for the beneficial use of dredged materials pilot program established

by Section 1122 of WRDA 2016. In late December 2018,

the San Juan Harbor RSM project was selected as one of

ten pilot projects – out of 95 proposals received.

SAN JUAN HARBOR PDT BEST PRACTICES

- *Take the time up front to make connections and establish an effective rapport with stakeholders. Open lines of communication with the sponsor, U.S. Coast Guard, harbor pilots, and port operators proved incredibly beneficial; anyone from the team could reach out directly to get questions answered.*
- *Create quality graphics and meeting materials for repeated use, keeping in mind what you want for the final products. The PDT developed a very detailed map and graphics early on that were repeatedly utilized for meetings, and eventually for the report.*
- *It is critical for interested parties to hear the same information at the same time. The PDT held inclusive team meetings involving the ATR lead, the DDN-PCX, sponsor, and others. Timely follow-up with meeting notes helped attendees refer back to previous discussions and decisions.*

The team worked diligently throughout the study process to meet the schedule, including during and after Hurricane Maria, which hindered communication with the Territory. The PDT persisted, and at times, traveled to meet in-person in order to complete the required coordination. The described measures and approaches, among others, allowed the PDT to successfully meet the ambitious task of completing the San Juan Harbor study under the 3-year and \$3 million mark. The Preconstruction, Engineering and Design phase is expected to start in 2019, with an anticipated completion timeframe of two years. Construction of the project is anticipated to take 3 years to complete.





LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIRST ITERATION: USING THE CORE TEAM APPROACH

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Planning Ahead reached out to teams engaged in the early stages of feasibility studies to collect lessons learned regarding the “first iteration” scoping of a 3x3x3-compliant study from start-to-finish using only existing and available information, and only certain key members from the PDT to do so – referred to as the “core” or “focused” team. Don Kramer, Seattle District Planning Section Chief, provided his observations on the key lessons learned from the Tacoma Harbor Study PDT’s use of the first iteration approach, including successes and challenges, as well as how other teams can effectively use this concept for their own studies.

What are the key lessons learned from using the first iteration approach?

It is possible to complete a full iteration of the planning steps in a single meeting early in a study, using a core team’s subject matter knowledge and available information at the time. Going all the way through the planning steps very early raises questions to be answered during a study, such as what existing and future without project condition information should be gathered to support decision making, what potential new information needs to be collected, uncertainties and associated risks of moving forward with or without that information (both for the study and for implementation), and potential risk mitigation strategies.

Think carefully about which disciplines are on the “core team” – and ensure they are involved in the first iteration meeting. There’s a risk that the core team may not include someone who has a concern or constraint that affects the first iteration, which means communicating to the full PDT before the first iteration is critical to ensure all team members understand what will happen at the meeting and how the resulting information will be used going forward.

Holding a full PDT study kickoff meeting a week before the core team first iteration meeting is also helpful to introduce everyone and provide an initial high-level overview of the study process and steps, including

study-specific background, a summary of the Corps risk-informed planning process, a preview of the study milestones and timeline, and a general idea of deliverables and key decision points. In addition, it’s beneficial to hold a full PDT meeting after the first iteration to review the outcomes and their underlying logic and assumptions, make sure the full PDT is familiar with initial study scoping information, and identify input from PDT members not on the core team.

What went well during the first iteration and why?

- Completing a first iteration of the entire planning process with a core team before the charrette allowed a



- more open discussion. The core team was able to identify critical needs and uncertainties and communicate risks with the vertical team at the charrette from the start.
- Including our assigned Planning Mentor provided subject matter expertise, process feedback, and maintained focus on identifying risks and uncertainties.
- Although not required, including the MSC (District Support Team Planner) provided immediate feedback on planning steps and results and made communicating project status and hurdles much more efficient.
- Including our non-federal sponsor to provide an overview of the study area and other important details resulted in a very efficient use of the first iteration meeting and reduced some of the need to follow up with the sponsor.
- Getting through the full iteration early and identifying a list of questions to be answered, information to acquire, and initial thoughts on risks and uncertainties was important given the expected timeline to complete the Alternatives Milestone within 90 days.
- It was useful to look at the big picture study process all the way through to a potential TSP. It's easy for a full team to focus on one of the first few steps and fail to see an important task, risk, or uncertainty down the road that could have benefited from early consideration, planning, and communication.
- what level of detail is needed and what level of confidence is expected when providing technical information to support decision making at such an early stage.
- Provide first iteration participants worksheets to fill in as the team walks through each planning step to make it easier to document and track decisions and questions.
- Share a few good graphics of the existing study area to provide common reference points for the core team, especially during the measures and alternatives discussions of the first iteration.

What changes would you recommend?

- Have a training with the full PDT to specifically go through risk-informed planning and decision making and how it will be used for the study before the first iteration meeting. It can be difficult to determine

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON FIRST ITERATIONS: PAPILLION CREEK GENERAL REEVALUATION

Tiffany Vanosdall, Omaha District Senior Plan Formulator, shared lessons learned from the first iteration approach her PDT recently took for the Papillion Creek GRR.

The Papillion Creek Basin has been studied a number of times by both the Corps and the study's non-federal sponsor, the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District. The Corps has built a number of flood risk management projects over the years in the basin, as has the sponsor. The team assigned a few core members to conduct the first planning iteration including a Planner, Hydraulic Engineer, Hydrologist, and Economist. The team also included a Planning Mentor and MSC Planner to help work through policy and guidance issues.

All of the previous studies, models, and analyses were placed on a shared drive and each core team member was given a week to identify data gaps and uncertainties in the information.

The first iteration meeting was split into two separate half days. The first half day, each of the core team members reported out the information they had available and what they were comfortable and uncomfortable with. The team then discussed the risks of using this information and in what stage of the study

it would make sense to collect additional information. After working through discomfort related to accepting uncertainties associated with use of available information and limited collection of additional information, the core team members went back to their supervisors and discussed the decisions to get buy-in. The core team then met again several days later to complete the first planning iteration.

Splitting the meeting days helped the core team identify some of the major risks during the first planning iteration, which helped the core team stay focused and avoid chasing details that weren't needed to support decisions. The core team understood there would be opportunities to gather additional data in later phases of the study if needed. The team also used this information to develop a first draft of the Risk Register and Decision Management Plan.

The core team then scheduled a second iteration with the sponsor and the rest of the PDT, during which the core team presented the outcomes of the first iteration and gave the participants an opportunity to provide feedback and identify gaps. By doing this, other PDT resources that are often overlooked in the beginning, such as real estate and cultural resources, could inform ongoing discussions during the second iteration.





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 2019 FRONT COVER — CLIFF DWELLINGS IN SANTA CLARA CANYON, NEW MEXICO. SOURCE: MAJ. JASON MELCHIOR, ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT.

THE FORGING OF A PARTNERSHIP

Amanda Velasquez, Tribal Partnership Program Manager with the Albuquerque District, shared her insights on the recently completed Santa Clara Creek Canyon Watershed Management Plan (WMP) – the first in the Nation to be completed under the USACE Tribal Partnership Program authority.

The common phrase of “throw yourself into the fire” can be construed as having a negative connotation to some folks. In the case of Santa Clara Pueblo (Pueblo) and the USACE Albuquerque District Partnership, this phrase sheds a positive light on how the two parties forged a strong and mutually beneficial relationship during and after five federally declared National Disasters in the aftermath of two New Mexico wildfires.

The Cerro Grande (May 2000) and Las Conchas (June 2011) wildfires burned more than sixty percent of the Pueblo’s Forested Tribal Lands. Most notably, the Las Conchas fire burned approximately fifty percent of Santa Clara Creek Canyon watershed, which is located upstream of the Pueblo’s Village. The eminent danger after the Las Conchas wildfire was flash flooding, with soil that burned so hot

that it turned the ground into a hard surface and, with no vegetation, it was impossible for rain to be absorbed. A rain event that produced an inch of rain created a flash flood, starting at the headwaters of Santa Clara Creek. Boulders and large woody debris were carried downstream with such ferocity that anything in its pathway was wiped out or destroyed as it made its way towards the Pueblo and Santa Clara Creek’s confluence with the Rio Grande.

The magnitude and size of the Las Conchas burn scar has imperiled the Pueblo’s community and made their infrastructure susceptible to catastrophic flooding events until the watershed is stabilized. Stabilizing the watershed required several challenging actions: deploying emergency management measures to protect life and safety of the community; protecting infrastructure such as roads and bridges; protecting the water supply and quality; and protecting cultural and natural resources. Over time, these monumental challenges of building access roads, installing temporary structures to stabilize slopes, and building sediment retention structures together forged a strong and mutually respected partnership

between the Pueblo and District. Instead of two entities being encumbered by bureaucratic process, they had to jump into action and learn how to work together in an effective and efficient manner. During stressful times, the Pueblo and District were united, each bringing their unique skills to the table and working with a common purpose. It was through open communication, mutual trust, and respect that they were able to serve the community.

The landscape is an essential part of constructing social identity and the transmission and survival of historical and cultural knowledge and practice for the Pueblo. Santa Clara Creek Canyon, in particular, has provided cultural, recreational, hunting, and gather opportunities for millennia. The wildfire and post-fire flooding events have impacted Santa Clara Creek Canyon for generations to come. Accessing Santa Clara Creek Canyon and partaking in cultural practices that are tied to this watershed will be lost for those community members of the Pueblo born after 2011. It will take generations for the watershed and forested land to recover to pre-fire conditions.

In September 2018, the



PHOTO OF THE PRISTINE CONDITION OF SANTA CLARA CREEK CANYON WATERSHED PRIOR TO WILDFIRES AND FLOODING EVENTS. SOURCE: SANTA CLARA PUEBLO FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

Santa Clara Creek Canyon Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was the first in the Nation to be completed under the USACE Tribal Partnership Program authority (Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, as amended). The team made interagency collaboration a centerpiece of the effort by working closely with the Pueblo, other federal and state agencies, and non-governmental organizations in an interagency working group, while respecting the Pueblo's sovereignty and rights to confidentiality of their culturally sensitive information. In addition, the WMP complemented the Federal Emergency Management Recovery

Support Strategy Plan for the Pueblo; this allows Pueblo, federal, and state funding to be more effective (i.e., "more bang for the buck") and prevent overlapping efforts in the future. The regional process used by the team also established a breakthrough model for team work and collaboration between two USACE Districts and the South Pacific Division. The WMP is a strategic roadmap that will enable Pueblo decision makers to implement fire recovery, ecosystem restoration, and recreational and cultural access recommendations in partnership with other agencies for the benefit of future generations.

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

- **Understanding Cultural Identity:** Tribal members define themselves in relation to the landscape, an interface where the past gives meaning and context to the present. The burned and altered landscape is an existential threat to customs, beliefs, and practices paramount to the cultural identity and continuity of the people of Santa Clara Pueblo.
- **Building Trust between Partners:** Maintaining a clear and open line of communication is important to building trust. Despite challenges along the way, the partnership between USACE and the Santa Clara Pueblo has become a model of government-to-government cooperation and collaboration in the United States.
- **Timely Decision Making:** The Corps District, MSC, and Headquarters team worked cooperatively together with Tribal members to prioritize the delivery of a final Watershed Management Plan. The PDT developed the draft WMP, led a concurrent technical and policy review with MSC and HQ reviewers, and finalized the WMP within 5 months.



PCoP Q+A

My PDT just completed the Alternative Milestone Meeting (AMM) for a new study; what should we be aware of as we move toward the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) milestone?

PDTs around the country recently passed dozens of AMMs for Emergency Supplemental and other new start studies and are working toward their TSP milestones over the coming months. As PDTs narrow down their alternatives, all team members should take time to read and become familiar with the requirements for the TSP – and for all milestones – contained in Planning Bulletin 2018-01, Feasibility Study Milestones, which superseded Planning Bulletin 2017-01 of the same name as well as specific sections of ER 1105-2-100 (the Planning Guidance Notebook) that reference feasibility study milestones.

Planning Bulletin 2018-01 clarifies the decisions and procedures associated with feasibility study milestones – including for studies delegated to the MSCs – and was developed to assist teams in development of the feasibility study products and to define the processes to reach each of the decision milestones. Effective decision milestone meetings underscore vertical team engagement from the beginning of the study and enable PDTs to proceed with the assurance that key study decisions were made with vertical team engagement.

The following are highlights of the requirements contained in the bulletin that PDTs should be aware of:

- PDTs are responsible for accomplishing key feasibility study tasks before each milestone, which are detailed in Table 1 of the bulletin and include efforts such as updating the Project Management and Review Plans to show the team’s path to Report Transmittal.

- Important reminder: Table 1 of the bulletin is not all inclusive. For example, study teams must also consider natural and nature-based features alone and in combination with other nonstructural and structural measures, as appropriate, to meet study objectives for flood risk management, hurricane and storm damage reduction, and ecosystem restoration projects.

- There are numerous participants who are required to be invited to the milestone meetings; PDTs should be aware of these participants (or their designee) and ensure they understand their District’s and/or MSC’s protocol for sending meeting invitations. Schedules should not slip due to unavailability of participants, and it is up to participants – and decision makers – to designate a representative if they are unable to attend.
- To avoid any issues at the end of the study, PDTs should review and keep in mind the required contents of the Final Report submittal package from the beginning of the study process, drafting documents along the way when possible. The required items are detailed in Table 3 of the bulletin.

PDTs can find Planning Bulletin 2018-01 as well as other resources – including FAQs on Feasibility Study Milestones and Feasibility Study Documentation – on the Planning Community Toolbox.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS, ANXIETIES — IF YOUR QUESTION CAN HELP FELLOW PLANNERS, EMAIL US AT HQPLANNING@USACE.ARMY.MIL AND MAYBE YOU’LL SEE IT HERE.