



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

PLANNINGahead

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PLANNER'S DATABASE: A TOOL FOR ALL PLANNERS

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.

PLANNING AHEAD



Did you know that you can use the Planning Community of Practice's Planner Database to access information about planners' knowledge, skills and abilities throughout our community of practice? The online tool, developed by the Institute for Water Resources, can also be used to find other planners that can assist in fulfilling various needs in support of planning studies, projects and programs.

The Planner Database has four portals for the cultural resources, economic, environmental, and plan formulation sub-communities of practice. Searches and reports can be conducted within or across those portals to show graphical and tabular reports on resources, expertise, training and other information, with options

for national and regional searches. Whether you are interested in personal growth and career advancement, or are able to assist other planners at this point in your career, the Planner Database is the principal location for information management. If you are a less-experienced planner interested in seeking opportunities for new experiences, training and development, adding your profile to the database can assist you in creating a career roadmap based on your knowledge, skills and abilities. For more experienced planners, the database offers an opportunity for you to give back to the Planning Community of Practice and share your knowledge with others.

It is also important to keep your information up to date on the Planning Database. Study managers and ATR leads are using the information added to the database to identify team members with required skillsets that can participate as a virtual team member and provide general support to study or project problem-solving.

The Planner Database is located at: <http://sme.planusace.us/>. A brief instructional video on how to create or update a Planner Database profile can be found under the "Help" tab at the bottom of the database home page. For any other questions on the Planner Database, contact your division sub-community of practice lead, or send an email to: planningonline@usace.army.mil.



Feature News Items

PCoP NEWS FLASHES

PLANNING COMMUNITY NEWS

Recently Signed Chief's Reports

Congratulations to the Princeville North Carolina Flood Risk Management Study and Upper Turkey Creek Basin Flood Risk Management Study, teams and their non-federal sponsors who have recently had Chief's Reports completed and signed. The efforts of study teams across the nation to complete ongoing studies has not gone unnoticed: the jump in the number of signed Chief's Reports since 2012 has been noted by the Chief and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Ms. Darcy, at several recent Water Resources

Development Act (WRDA) and appropriations hearings on the Hill.

New Guidance Impacting Planners

Guidance impacting planners can come from many angles, not only the "1165" series of Engineer Regulations and Circulars and Planning Bulletins, but also the annual budget and program development Engineer Circulars, the 1110 series of ERs and ECs, Engineering & Construction Bulletins, WR(R)DA Implementation Guidance, command memos, and more. Recently published guidance of possible interest and use include: PB 2016-02/ECB

2016-9: Civil Works Review; ER 1165-2-208: In-Kind Contributions (WRRDA 2014 Implementation Guidance for Section 1018); and ER 1165-2-209: Studies of Water Resources Development Projects by Non-Federal Interests (WRRDA 2014 Implementation Guidance for Section 1014(a).

Supporting a Sustainable Planning Portfolio

In addition to the 10 new start feasibility studies, the FY16 Work Plan funded an additional 18 new efforts in Investigations: three new General Reevaluation Reports (GRRs); five new disposition studies; two new

studies recommended in the North Atlantic Coastal Comprehensive Study; three resumed or reclassified studies, and five studies moving into Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED).

PCoP Hot Topics

Can't wait for the next edition of Planning Ahead? Get the scoop on People, Process, Projects, and Program key initiatives and information from Headquarters in the new monthly Hot Topics. Find the latest in your email inbox or on the Planning and Policy SharePoint.

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.

Recent topics include: an overview of the Corps' Infrastructure Strategy and opportunities for alternative financing approaches, Conservation Planning to Recover Federally Listed Species, and a District's Perspectives on recent Civil Works Review Boards.

Webinars are held the first and third Thursday of each month from 2-3 pm

Eastern. Presentations and the Question and Answer sessions from each webinar are archived on the **Planning Community Toolbox**.

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

FIND MORE WEBINARS AT: <http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/resources>





PLANNING FOR DAM SAFETY

*Importance of Planners
Involvement in Dam Safety
Modification Studies*

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Everything we do as planners in the Corps focuses on identifying solutions to difficult problems that impact economic, environmental, social and public safety issues for our great nation. Dams impact the gauntlet of almost every Corps Civil Works mission: FRM; Hydropower; Environmental; Navigation; Recreation; and Water Supply.

The Dam Safety Program focuses on delivering benefits in a manner consistent with the known risks, including the challenge of addressing impacts that are potentially catastrophic combined with the urgency of addressing what is paramount: life safety.

Early on, we asked ourselves: Do we need planners involved on studies approved through the engineering chain

with technical solutions informed by meeting tolerable risk guidelines? The answer is simple: **Planners bring a unique, comprehensive and unifying perspective to dam safety study teams and provide decision makers the knowledge and tools with which to make sound decisions.**

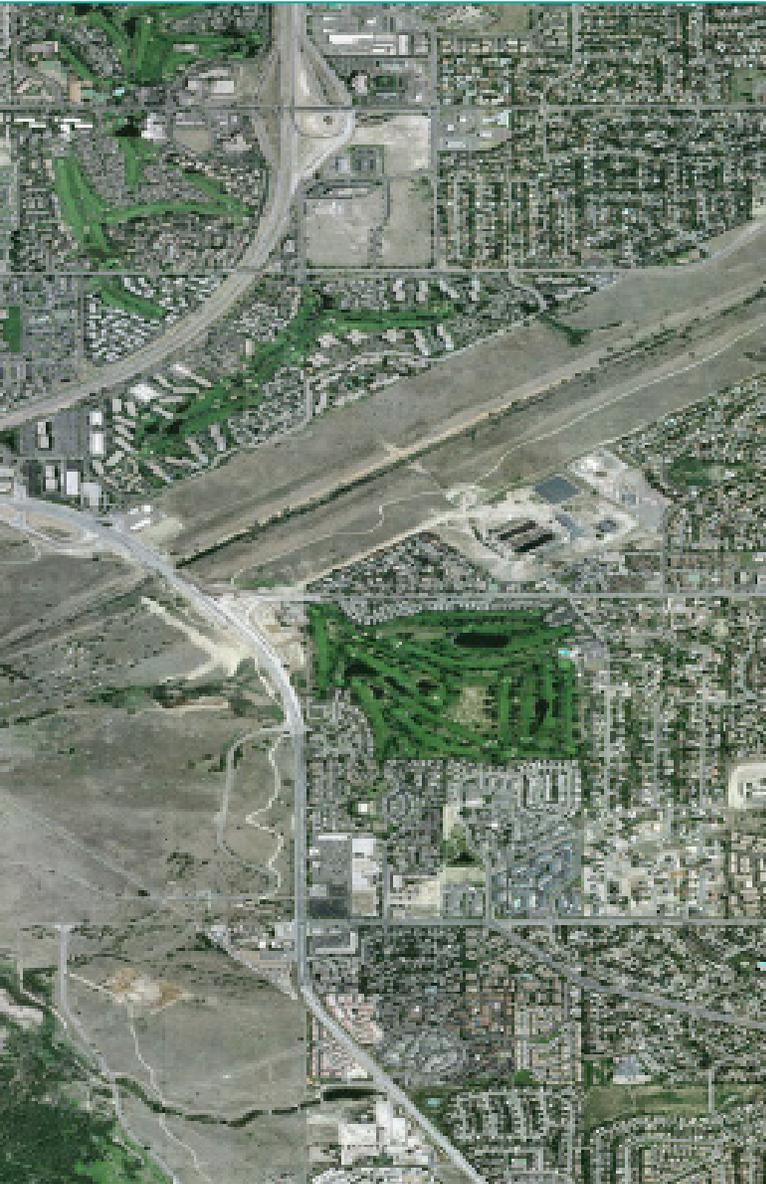
Planner's perspectives are **unique** in the sense that teams may otherwise be solely focused on technical

design features, while planners are responsible for ensuring study teams capture the full breadth of the problems and range of opportunities.

Comprehensive in that all significant criteria from costs to consequences throughout the full planning horizon are included in the formulation, evaluation and comparison of alternatives.

Unifying by gathering all technical aspects of the study and parlaying the information in a succinct manner to the public, stakeholders and vertical team.

Every dam safety modification study team is led by an experienced planner in partnership with the engineering technical lead. Planners on a Dam Safety Modification Study (DSMS) lead technical teams through the



THE DAM SAFETY TEAM: KEVIN WITTMANN, MARCI JACKSON AND JAY AYA-AY FROM LEFT TO RIGHT.

development of a Dam Safety Modification Report (DSMR). The DSMR is the approval document outlining the planning process and recommended plan. Key tenets of SMART planning are adopted with a strong emphasis on expediency, and early and seamless vertical engagement, but there are several characteristics unlike a traditional feasibility study. The recommended plan for a DSMS is approved through

the Dam Senior Oversight Group (DSOG) and includes senior leaders from business lines spanning from planning through engineering.

Typically, dam safety studies do not require a Civil Works Review Board or additional congressional approvals for studies because the infrastructure is already in place and the recommended plan is within the original authorization. Even

without those hurdles, dam safety modification studies include the distinctive challenges of identifying authority, sponsors and cost sharing responsibilities for projects that may have been built decades ago; and balancing an open and transparent risk communication strategy while still maintaining national security interest.

During the DSMS, the team will be supported by the Dam Safety Modification Mandatory Center of Expertise (DSMMCX) in the Huntington District. The DSMMCX has several planning and policy advisors with experiences ranging from plan formulation, environmental analysis, economics and engineering. The advisors serve as a member of the vertical team while also ensuring they are closely integrated within

the PDT to assist teams with properly scoping DSMS, advise teams on planning/policy matters, identify issues and assist HQ ensure studies meet the intent of guidance in Safety of Dams – Policy and Procedures (ER 1110-2-1156), the Planning Guidance Notebook (ER 1105-1-200) and the Principles and Guidelines. The DSMMCX is led by Mr. Jay Aya-ay and includes full time employees Ms. Marci Jackson and Mr. Kevin Wittmann. Mr. Lance Awsumb splits his time between the DSMMCX planning section and the Inland Navigation Planning Center for Expertise.

Planners interested in finding out more about the activities of the DSMMCX or applying their skills to a dam safety modification study should contact Jay (Jonathan) Aya-Ay.





Diving Into Risk Management

Early in 2015, the Planning, Engineering & Construction Safety Programs, and Operations Asset Management Program Communities of Practice (CoPs) contacted Dr. Charlie Yoe from the Notre Dame of Maryland University (NDMU) about interest in a pilot program to advance the knowledge and understanding of risk management. The result was participation by 24 Corps students in an online graduate Risk Management Program offered by NDMU for working professionals in fields that involve risk-informed decisions. The program includes courses for risk management, risk assessment, uncertainty, quantitative risk management, risk communication, and ethics and risk governance. Students completed the program on their own time.

I found out about this opportunity through an email from Sue Hughes. It was an appealing opportunity – the Corps would pay for the tuition, and “all we had to do” was complete the coursework outside of work hours. I had been looking for an opportunity to expand

out of my traditional environmental boundaries (and my comfort zone) – and I thought that perhaps this was the perfect chance – I would learn something new, expand my network of Corps colleagues, and gain a new knowledge base that would benefit both myself and my agency. I applied and was thrilled to be selected.

Little did I realize the magnitude of the commitment! From the very beginning, I (along with the rest of the class, I am fairly confident) struggled to keep up with the expectations of Dr. Yoe and the curriculum. We had weekly readings, quizzes, forum postings,

and assignments. Sometimes the assignments were individual and sometimes they were group assignments. So.... I’m all about teamwork. But teamwork on a weekly basis – with people that I don’t even know – on a topic that I don’t understand – and outside of working hours.... this was quite the paradigm shift on life for a while. But, I am proud to say that the vast majority of the class quickly adjusted and took on the challenge – some with gusto, and others with a begrudging acceptance and understanding that this would be worth the effort.

All of the courses were very hard, but I have

to give a special shout-out to “quantitative risk management.” August of 2015 may have been the most difficult academic month of my life. We were expected to build an Excel-based quantitative risk model that actually solved a real-world risk problem! When I first heard this, I thought “Does Dr. Yoe realize that he is teaching biologists?” I am not an Engineer, so this was not only out of my comfort zone, it was out of my comfort galaxy. But we all rose to the task, and I think we are better for it.

So here is what I learned in my 12 months of risk management training:





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Susan Conner, Chief of Planning and Policy Branch, Water Resources Division, Norfolk District, shares her experience with the risk management course led by Dr. Charles Yoe.



RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM GRADUATES, WITH PROGRAM DIRECTOR, DR. CHARLES YOE, AND DIRECTOR OF CIVIL WORKS, MR. STEVE STOCKTON. THE AUTHOR, SUSAN CONNER, IS FOURTH FROM THE RIGHT.

■ **There is no such thing as “THE NUMBER.”** No matter who tells you to give them a number, don’t do it! We hardly ever actually know the number. Use a range. Qualify it with an uncertainty. Discuss the reasons that we don’t know the number. But don’t give a number when we don’t really know a number.

■ **At the Corps, we would all benefit from a common language of risk.** For example, how do you define risk? Uncertainty? Probability? Likelihood?

I bet that you define it differently than the person in the cube next to you does.

■ **We should also ask ourselves: Who owns the risk for the Corps?** Who manages the risk for the Corps? Is it the Chief? Or the District Commander? Or the ASA? When you figure that out, you let me know.

■ **We need an Enterprise Risk Management Model.** As part of Civil Works Transformation, we are asked to embrace “risk-informed decision

making.” But how do we do that without some guidelines to lead the way?

■ **Finally, change happens from the bottom-up.** So we need to test these principles, charge forward using these concepts, and let the fun begin!

I am in touch with a few of my classmates, but after a year of multiple weekly postings and group assignments, I do miss them. I admittedly enjoy having a life again, but I miss the camaraderie of the group. I am positive

that our newly certified risk managers are out in the Corps, amongst you all every day, carrying the good word. Thanks to Dr. Charlie Yoe for creating an awesome program that addresses an issue that is imperative in keeping our agency relevant. I am honored to have had the opportunity to make this journey and would encourage anyone else, if offered the chance, to truly consider this program. It will change the way you think in every meeting, and will provide you with the tools needed to change the way we, as Corps Planners, do business.





PLANNER SPOTLIGHT

WENDY GENDRON, ATR CERTIFIED REVIEWER



Wendy Gendron is a biologist from New England District. Wendy shares her experience of being an ATR certified reviewer.

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I started with the New England District in 2009 after many years in private consulting. My primary reason for joining the Corps was the ability to see a project through the entire process: defining a problem, developing solutions, implementation, and monitoring after construction to assess efficacy. I enjoy working with diverse teams and non-Federal sponsors throughout the process and find my consulting background provides a unique perspective.

As a Biologist, my experience and interest is primarily Ecosystem Restoration. Being a Certified ATR reviewer expands my exposure to unique solutions employed by other Districts. I am able to share this

knowledge within my District which increases our ability to identify restoration measures and alternatives and adds to our formulation tool box. Reviewing and discussing engineering details during the design phase is useful for determining “what works” in different situations across the country. And as ATR is a two-way street, it allows me to share my District’s knowledge and processes with others in the Corps. Reviewing work products for other project business lines like flood and coastal storm

risk management, navigation, and dam safety modification studies exposes me to policy and solutions for other mission areas and allows me to offer opportunities to include natural features to create integrated solutions to water resources problems. Being an ATR reviewer also helps to build and maintain a network of professional colleagues with which to share experiences and provide professional and career advice.

I have gathered a few “ATR lessons learned” as an ATR reviewer.

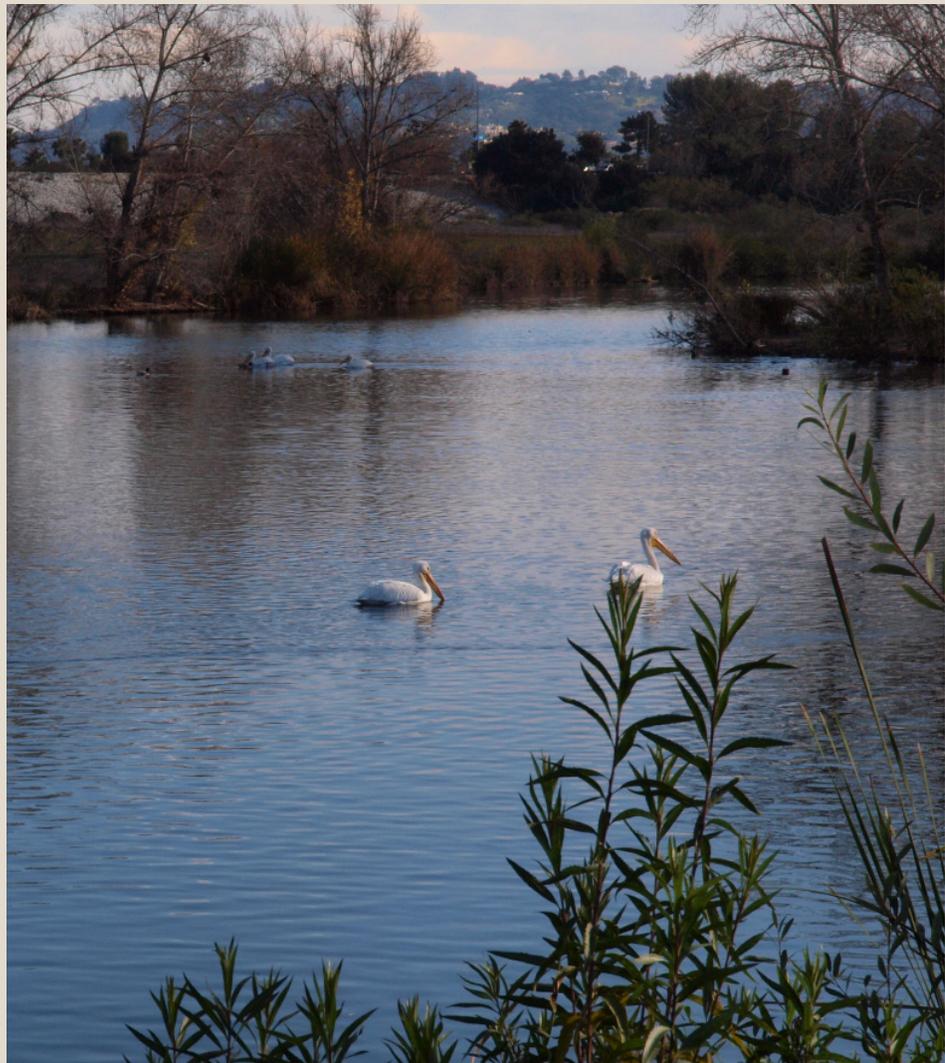
- I suggest that all planners and districts keep a running archive of the reports, designs and reviews that were very well done and build a library of resources for future use.
- Also, set up regular communication with your fellow planners to share your experiences even if



it is just an informal lunch gathering.

- And lastly, don't be afraid of conducting interim reviews on large projects such as Dam Safety Modification Studies and General Investigations. This ensures there are no surprises that result in rework of alternatives when you thought you were approaching the finish line!

Best of luck to all in the Planning community.



IN 2015 we launched the ATR Certification process for the Planning Environmental Sub-CoP. The 2016 window for seeking certification is now open! All environmental specialists interested in ATR certification for either environmental compliance or ecosystem restoration should complete a statement of qualification and supervisor validation form and submit this package to their MSC Environmental Lead and copy furnish Jodi Creswell (Acting HQ Planning Environmental Sub-CoP Lead). The qualifications statement template and validation form are available on the Environmental sub-CoP SharePoint site in the folder ATR Certification.



HAILS & FAREWELLS

WE BID FAREWELL TO LEE WARE AFTER 41 YEARS

In January, members of the planning community and Corps expressed their gratitude to Mr. Charles (Lee) Ware, celebrating a well-deserved retirement from the Corps after 41 years of exceptional selfless service to the nation. Lee began his career in 1974 with the Philadelphia District, obtained a master's degree in civil engineering from Drexel University in 1985, became the Chief of Basin Planning in 1997, started work with Corps Headquarters in 2002 in what eventually became the Office of Water Project Review, and served as Environmental and Formulation Team Leads in subsequent years. Without fault, Lee would always take time to provide constructive feedback, offer advice, and be a much needed voice of reason in times of chaos.

Here are some "Thanks for..." thoughts that display the respect and appreciation for Lee, shared by members of the planning community.



Thanks, Lee, for...

"Taking the time to provide guidance and insight"

"All your support and can-do attitude over the years"

"Your great demeanor and thoughtful comments"

"Always being fair and very helpful in finding ways to get things done"

"Always being a pleasure to work with and be around, and a huge asset for those of us looking for help and mentorship"

"Being a mentor and a wealth of knowledge to so many of us planners"

"Mentoring and sharing - my policy hero!"

"Taking the time to mentor me early in my career and as a Planning Associate. You challenged me to become a better planner and economist."

"Being a trusted advisor and mentor for more than a decade. Your patience, wisdom, and wit are unmatched! Our organization has lost a great one."

"The warmth, enthusiasm and optimism you bring to all you encounter"

"The opportunity to learn so much from you about Corps planning"

"Being the friendly voice on the other end of the phone for so many years"

"Sharing all your knowledge and making sure I got the most out of my details in HQ"

"No matter how many actions you were handling, always making me feel mine were top priority"

"All the level headed guidance you provided while you worked here at Philly District, as well as the help you offered to us from afar"

"Being such a voice of reason and knowledge over the years"

"Being such an exceptional person to work with"



If you didn't get the chance to include your own well-wishes before Lee's retirement, please add your thoughts to his guestbook at: <https://leewareguestbook.wordpress.com/>.



FACES OF HEADQUARTERS: RIT ENDOWED CHAIR



Planning Ahead recently caught up with Diane Perkins to discuss her experience in her detail at HQUSACE as a RIT Endowed Chair for LRD.

How did you find out about the endowed chair opportunity?

The Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD) provides opportunities to act as the Regional Integration Team (RIT) endowed chair on a rotational basis with each district taking a turn. Within the Louisville District, it's a competitive application process where we prepare statements of interest as potential candidates for review and selection by upper management.

What steps did you take to prepare yourself for the acting RIT endowed chair? Any advice for others?

Talking to prior endowed chairs within my region helped me understand what responsibilities I would have, confirmed my interest in applying, and allowed

me to prepare a strong application to compete for the opportunity. Shortly after selection, the acting endowed chair at that time was extremely helpful by proactively reaching out to me with a list of items that needed to be done before arrival, helping with logistics, and taking time to answer other questions.

What were your roles at the RIT? What provided the greatest challenge? What was rewarding about it?

Roles and responsibilities vary by time of year and current events, and the endowed chair has some flexibility to make the most of the position according to their particular strengths and capabilities. Ms. Prettyman, the Deputy Chief for the LRD RIT, was a fantastic role model and mentor. I provided a variety of support to Ms. Prettyman, as well as the LRD RIT planner, the LRD RIT programmer, and occasionally others as well. This includes activities such as processing congressional taskers and preparing and participating in meetings with senior leadership,

such as the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. My biggest challenge was getting a handle on the broad array of activities happening across LRD, which was absolutely critical to being able to serve in the LRD RIT. What I found most rewarding was the opportunity to meet and work with many of the wonderful people at headquarters (HQ).

How did your perspectives and understanding change about the roles of the RIT in planning and other efforts, from before-to-after your detail? What are lessons-learned that you will bring back to your job?

After the detail, I better understand the sheer volume of work that HQ staff face, and how absolutely critical the RITs are to ensuring that things keep moving and that the necessary parties are involved all along the process. The RITs are essential to helping people sing to the same sheet of music, and are uniquely positioned to provide mentorship not only to division and district staff, but

also some ground-truthing to HQ staff regarding the challenges and realities of work at the district level. Additionally, as RIT planners and programmers talk amongst each other, it allows for a natural diffusion of best practices throughout the organization, both horizontally and vertically. RIT staff can serve as the transmitters of information directly, as well as help people connect to each other for exchange of experiences and ideas.

What, if anything, would you change about the endowed chair program and why?

I wouldn't change a thing about the program aside from increasing the opportunities for more short-term assignments at HQ for district and division staff. Equally important is for HQ staff to rotate through districts at the hands-on work level. The more we talk with each other, and share recent experience in each other's shoes, the better we will function as an organization.



PCoP Q+A

Dear PCoP – There is so much going on, it’s hard to keep track. At the same time, I feel like there are probably important announcements that I’m missing. How can I stay in the know?

We are all working to ensure the right information gets into the right hands, at the right time. The challenge is that there is a lot of information and a lot of hands! We would recommend you start with the tried-and-true approach of talking with your neighbor, your section chief, or someone who has recently gone through some training.

Are you feeling a little introverted? The Planning Community Toolbox, www.corplanning.us, has information on almost every aspect of the Planner’s job – and has a search function that will Google within the Toolbox to track down guidance, webinars, and links to useful information related to your question.

Are you getting conflicting answers to your question? Bring it up a level. Can’t find an answer at all – ask the PCoP. If you email us at hqplanning@usace.army.mil, we’ll do our best to track down an answer (and make that answer more broadly available if it’s something that belongs on the Planning Community Toolbox or SharePoint site).

To keep track of new guidance coming from HQ, we push it out in a few ways. We’ll post it to the front page of the Toolbox in the Policy

and Guidance Updates feed. We will include it in the monthly Planning Hot Topics newsletter that goes out at the end of the month via email (and is cross-posted on the Planning Community SharePoint site). And, we will often send it out directly via email to the appropriate PCoP distribution lists via Outlook.

Are You on the Right PCoP Distribution Lists?

The PCoP Distribution Lists are used to disseminate a variety of information to our community. Each organization has distribution lists by sub-CoP: cultural, environmental, plan formulation, and economics. PCoP members should make sure they are on the appropriate sub-CoP distribution lists at the lowest level – for most of us, this is your district sub-CoP DLL. The DLLs roll up – from District to MSC to Corps-wide. The parent combined distribution list, CDL-P-PCOP-All, goes out to the entire Planning Community of Practice and includes over 1,000 recipients.

To check what lists you are on, go to your contact info in Outlook Global Address List, “Member Of” tab. If you are not on the right list, your Planning Chief may be able to add you or you can submit a request to be added by submitting an ACE-IT Remedy Ticket. Note: In addition to the sub-CoP lists, each organization has a “genplng” list for individuals who don’t fit in one of the sub-CoPs, including administrative staff, project managers or engineers that are interested in planning news.

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> What’s New on the Planning Community Toolbox

Policy and Guidance updates come in many flavors: find the latest on the Toolbox homepage, including links to the latest WRRDA 2014 Implementation Guidance, a joint OMB/CEQ/OSTP memo on Incorporating Ecosystem Services into Federal Decision

Making, and an Engineering and Construction Bulletin on using Non-NOAA Tide Gauge Records for Computing Relative Sea Level Change.

Learn from the Community – the latest Planning Community Webinar

presentations with a summary of the Question and Answer sessions from each webinar are on the toolbox – follow the link from the front page or on the Training tab.

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