



US Army Corps
of Engineers ®

PLANNING ahead

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AS A REMOTE COMMUNITY WITH A SIGNIFICANT DEPENDENCE UPON SUBSISTENCE HUNTING AND GATHERING FOR FOOD, THE COMMUNITY IS VERY SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGES IN ANIMAL MIGRATION PATTERNS AND SHIFTS IN CLIMATE. BEING AN ALASKAN NATIVE TRIBE ALLOWS THE COMMUNITY TO HUNT SEALS,



WALRUS AND OTHER MARINE MAMMALS. AS THE CLIMATE HAS CHANGED, SO HAVE THE PATTERNS OF ANIMAL BEHAVIOR, LEADING TO FEWER SUBSISTENCE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AND A GREATER TIME REQUIREMENT TO ACCOMPLISH THE SUBSISTENCE HUNT.

LITTLE DIOMEDE

Feasibility Study Recommends First “Remote and Subsistence Harbor” Authorization

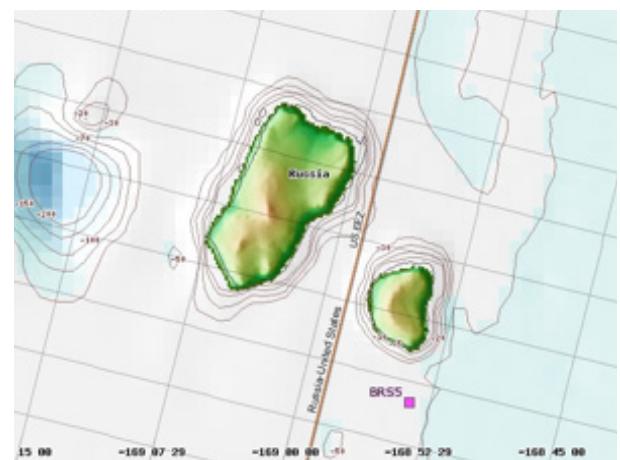


The Alaska District, in partnership with the Native Village of Diomede and a nonprofit tribal consortium, Kawerak Inc., has completed the first study that recommends a project under the authority of Section 2006 of WRDA 2007, Remote and Subsistence Harbors.

Section 2006 allows recommendations of projects “without the need to demonstrate the project is justified solely by national economic development benefits” provided the community meets certain provisions. These include being at least 70 miles from the nearest surface accessible port, having over 80 percent of the goods imported into the community be consumed within that community, and a threat to the long-term viability of the community if the project was not constructed.

The community of Little Diomede, formally known as Inalik, is a traditional Eskimo village located on the western shore of Little Diomede

(locally known as Igналук) Island, Alaska. Little Diomede is an extremely remote community of 115 people who rely almost entirely upon a subsistence way of life; the small island and its companion island, Big Diomede, lie at the center of the Bering Strait, which separates the Bering Sea from the Chukchi Sea and Russia from the United States.



LITTLE AND BIG DIOMEDE ISLANDS ARE IN GREEN .



As a remote community with a significant dependence upon subsistence hunting and gathering for food, the community is very susceptible to changes in animal migration patterns and shifts in climate. Being an Alaskan Native tribe allows the community to hunt seals, walrus and other marine mammals. As the climate has changed, so have the patterns of animal behavior, leading to fewer subsistence opportunities available and a greater time requirement to accomplish the subsistence hunt. The community has a limited ability to launch and retrieve vessels for these hunts due to the severe weather and wave conditions of the Bering Strait. A means by which to provide the community better and more reliable



access to their subsistence resources was needed.

The Alaska District assessed a series of alternatives that were eventually narrowed down to a set of options that would provide safe launch and retrieval of vessels while minimizing the footprint. As with many of the projects in remote Alaska, the extreme cost of construction became an overriding factor in the analysis. The options' costs ranged from about \$25 to \$30 million dollars. The principal National Economic Development (NED) benefit for these alternatives was the improved subsistence harvest. Although improved subsistence was extremely important, the NED benefits were

only enough to provide a benefit-cost ratio of 0.2.

The unique nature of Section 2006 allowed the Alaska District to recommend the project for authorization despite having a benefit cost ratio less than one. Section 2006 allows for other means of justification of a project beside NED, specifically the use of the Other Social Effects (OSE) category. Implementation guidance for Section 2006 instructs OSE be analyzed using the Cost Effectiveness/Incremental Cost Analysis (CE/ICA) tool. Identifying the significant resource is at the core of the analysis; in the case of Little Diomede, that significant resource was the number of "Subsistence Vessel Days."

Subsistence Vessel Days are the number of days a boat can safely launch multiplied by the number of boats available for subsistence activities – in this case, hunting and fishing. Subsistence Vessel Days are justified as OSE for this study because subsistence gathering on Little Diomede is a generations old practice that defines a culture and lifestyle through hunting, preserving resources, and ways of preparing food.

The team shared some tips they applied to successfully demonstrate benefits under the OSE account.

» Focus on resource significance – including institutional significance, cultural significance, and scarcity – and how it ties to regional significance.

» Apply science to support the analysis of OSE benefits. For this study, the team used leading experts on subsistence and research

LITTLE DIOMEDE IS AN EXTREMELY REMOTE COMMUNITY OF 115 PEOPLE WHO RELY ALMOST ENTIRELY UPON A SUBSISTENCE WAY OF LIFE; THE SMALL ISLAND AND ITS COMPANION ISLAND, BIG DIOMEDE, LIE AT THE CENTER OF THE BERING STRAIT

to describe why subsistence is such an important activity and why it is important to build a more reliable access for vessel launch and retrieval to this community.

» Share findings with the Planning Community of Practice and Small Boat Harbor PCX to bounce ideas around and see if any major issues have been missed prior to sending up to the vertical team for review.

The Little Diomede study has successfully completed



the CWRB in May 2014 and is undergoing final review in preparation for a Chief of Engineers report.



Feature News Items

WRRDA PASSED

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR PLANNING?

President Obama signed the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014 into law on June

projects (and modifications). In 2014, WRRDA picked up an extra "R" in its title for Reform. True to its title, this WRRDA is heavy on Civil

engagement in studies and projects.

So, what's next? The first step will be that HQ will develop

implementation guidance for each of the provisions of WRRDA 2014 which ultimately require the approval of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works). WRRDA is strictly authorizing legislation – it does not include funding. Funding via the annual appropriations process is a prerequisite for implementing

been approved, the PCoP will provide updated guidance and information related to planning via Planning Bulletins, webinars, fact sheets, Frequently Asked Questions, and more. Some changes from WRRDA 2014 will also impact future revisions of Engineer Regulations, Engineer Circulars, and other officially published guidance.

How can you find out more?

» The PCoP discussed key provisions affecting Planning on the August 7 Planning Community Webinar (if you missed it, find the slide deck and Questions and Answers on the Planning Community Toolbox).

» Jen Greer and Jan Rasgus, both from HQ, offered their perspectives on a recent "Communicators Webinar" – the recording is available on the PAO's "Communications Toolbox" SharePoint site.

» The Conference Report, Enrolled bill (final version before it is published as a Public Law), and more are available on the Planning Community Toolbox.



WRRDA Authorizes 34 Projects For Construction

Congratulations to the District Planning Teams that saw projects authorized for construction in WRRDA 2014. The 34 authorized projects recommended in Chief's Reports include projects for navigation, flood risk management, hurricane storm damage reduction, and ecosystem restoration.

These projects will provide value to the nation in developing and maintaining the nation's waterways and harbors, reducing damage from storm and flooding events, and restoring the environment.

10, 2014. This law has been closely watched inside and outside the agency – in no small part because the last time a Water Resources Development Act was passed was in 2007.

WRDA is the primary legislation by which Congress authorizes Corps studies and

Works reform in addition to the authorizations it includes. Reform elements include many of the approaches the Corps has already developed through the implementation of Planning Modernization and SMART Planning over the last three years and by providing new opportunities for nonfederal sponsor

many of WRRDA 2014's provisions, including the new studies and projects that have been authorized, and implementing some of the policy reforms.

Once Implementation Guidance for sections most relevant to the Planning Community of Practice has



SMART: SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, RISK-INFORMED, TIMELY

> Many of the Planning Modernization efforts spearheaded by the Planning Community of Practice since 2011 have been reflected in the WRRDA. Title I, "Program Reforms and Streamlining" reinforces the process and accountability improvements made by the Corps under the "SMART Planning" approach to feasibility studies and the discipline of completing studies under the 3x3x3 rule (3 years, \$3 million, 3 levels of the vertical team engaged).

Section 1001, Vertical Integration and Acceleration of Studies, is a case in point. This section requires feasibility studies to be completed within 3 years and \$3 million federal investment, with

district, division and headquarters concurrently conducting their reviews (3 levels of vertical engagement).

This is not a one-size-fits-all approach, however. The 3x3x3 rule put into place by Major General Walsh has an exemption process for studies whose project type, size, cost and/or complexity make the risk of complying with the limits of 3x3 unacceptable. Similarly, the WRRDA provisions on 3x3 also have Exception and Extension criteria for studies that cannot meet 3x3x3.

As HQUSACE develops implementation guidance for WRRDA, the PCOP will build on the processes and accountability already in place, creating a stronger Planning Program that delivers timely, cost-effective and high quality water resources investment recommendations.

PLANNING CENTERS OF EXPERTISE:

Insights on Change from the Flood Risk Management PCX

I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better – Georg C. Lichtenberg

Change can be empowering, threatening, exhilarating, and challenging -- sometimes all at once. There is no question the Corps is undergoing significant changes through Planning Modernization to better deliver water resource projects for the Nation. Districts are on the front lines of this change, but they are not alone.

The Flood Risk Management Planning Center of Expertise (FRM-PCX), based in the South Pacific Division in San Francisco, is ready to assist Districts to meet the challenges they face in tackling tough flood risk management problems and navigating the changes of Planning Modernization.

Who is the FRM-PCX? Well, in a sense we all are. The FRM-PCX is a virtual center led by the South Pacific Division in partnership with the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, Mississippi Valley Division, Northwestern Division, Institute of Water Resources, Hydrologic Engineering Center, Engineer Research and Development Center, and the National Nonstructural Flood Proofing Committee. The FRM-PCX seeks flood risk management expertise wherever it resides, both across the Corps and outside of the

Corps, to provide services such as policy advice, technical support, training, and independent peer review.

With respect to Planning Modernization, the FRM-PCX supported the establishment and execution of the Sutter Basin, CA (Sacramento District) and Jordan Creek, MO (Little Rock District) pilot studies, two of five pilot studies that pioneered SMART planning principles. Currently, the FRM-PCX, in coordination with the Coastal Storm Risk Management PCX, is leading a collaborative effort to apply SMART Planning principles on new start reconnaissance flood and coastal storm risk management studies. The PCXs are supporting the Divisions and Districts executing the new start studies by identifying subject matter experts as needed to provide advice on technical and policy issues; SMART Planning principles, procedures and tools; and SMART Planning milestone requirements. The PCXs are also facilitating compilation and sharing of lessons learned. These new start studies present a tremendous opportunity to successfully apply SMART Planning from the beginning and share lessons learned for the future.

Eric Thaut serves as the Deputy Director of the FRM-PCX and manages the day-to-day operation of the center. Prior to becoming

Deputy Director in 2008, he worked as a planner on flood risk management, ecosystem restoration, coastal storm risk management, and deep draft navigation projects in the Sacramento and San Francisco Districts. Miki Fujitsubo, who recently joined the FRM-PCX full-time, serves as a National Technical Specialist for the center. Miki previously worked for the Sacramento District as a Plan Formulation Regional Technical Specialist. If you have questions about FRM planning, or application of SMART Planning principles, Eric and Miki can provide assistance or get you in touch with someone who can.

To learn more about the FRM-PCX, visit the FRM-PCX SharePoint site: <https://cops.usace.army.mil/sites/PLAN/pcx/FRMPCX>



Hails & Farewells

Congratulations to Harry E. Kitch, P.E., who retired after 43 years of service with the Corps, most recently as the Deputy Chief of Planning and Policy in the Directorate of Civil Works, Headquarters, where he was responsible for overseeing the Planning Community of Practice and the Office of Water Project Review and Policy Development. Harry started his career with the Corps in 1971 in the Baltimore District as a hydraulic engineer. Since he moved to Headquarters, he has led a variety of assignments managing water resources planning programs at the national level. Prior to his last assignment, Harry served as the Deputy for the Planning Community of Practice where he had responsibility for developing the Corps planning processes and guidance as well as the training and development programs for the Corps planning function. He also served as the Business Line Manager for the Corps Flood



Risk Management program and was instrumental in conceiving and establishing the Silver Jackets program of cooperative, interagency emergency planning and response teams. Harry's intelligent, curious and

You have been quoted as saying, "All human activity comes with tradeoffs, and we must make them explicit for decision making when considering human development near floodplains and coasts." Can you explain

HARRY'S PERSPECTIVE, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE CORPS IS BEING PRESERVED AS PART OF THE PCOP'S ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FULL DOCUMENTARY AND VIDEO INTERVIEW.

receptive nature has been integral to the success of many projects. He has also served as a mentor for countless planners across the years and throughout the Corps.

some of the tradeoffs that we, as Corps Planners, must make?

The important thing is that we acknowledge that there are tradeoffs, and that we

make them explicit to the public. We are faced now with an infrastructure that has been in place for a long time, so we are trading off the current costs (of rehabilitation, reconstruction, or even decommissioning) against future benefits. Several generations ago, we invested heavily in the country's water resources infrastructure, and we have been reaping those benefits. Today, as a society, we don't seem as willing to do that. To me that is the fundamental tradeoff. The other basic question is "should we do it at all?" Saying "no" is very difficult both personally and as an agency, but we never seem to be



willing to say, "Maybe this is not worth doing as a Federal agency."

How do you feel about the evolution of water resources management and public perceptions?

Well, change is a normal course of life and of the world; look at impacts associated with Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, the Flood of 1993, and the 1988 Drought. Us, our children and our children's children, are going to have to live with that changing environment. In addition, public priorities have changed a great deal. I started in the Corps right after the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) passed and while we all had some notion of what the environment was, we had never been required to consider it as explicitly as NEPA called for. Today, it is a fact of life. Since the 1970s, there have been many new laws that reflect the public's perceptions and priorities for the environment. It's not that we were deliberately out to destroy the environment or that we didn't think about the environment as a profession before the laws, but it was not a public priority. Now we must be much more explicit and transparent.

Congratulations to Clark Frentzen on his retirement after 38 years of service with the Corps. He joined the Corps in 1975 as an engineer in the Los Angeles District intern program. Two years later he took a position with the Sacramento District. Clark moved into Military Programs for the European Division for three years before going back to Sacramento District. In 1987 Clark moved to the South Pacific Division where he most recently served as the SPD Chief of Planning and Policy.

Beyond normal duties, Clark routinely provided executive level guidance to

individuals and teams, from in-progress reviews to one-on-one counseling. He was personally involved in providing leadership at all levels of the regional Planning organization, whether meeting with HQUSACE and other Federal agencies, State and local government leaders, non-Federal sponsors; all the way down to engaging in counseling and mentoring sessions with employees.

Clark's passion for teaching is reflected in his dedication to building the Planning Core Curriculum. His PCC Plan Formulation training course, first



developed in 2002, was adopted by the Corps as the standard for training planners across the nation.

Clark sat down with us to share some of his knowledge and experience with the Corps.

How has Planning in the Corps changed from when you first started your career?

Planning (in the Corps) hasn't changed at all since I started my career. It sounds

crazy, but we still use the same scientific process to get to the finish line. What has changed is the big "P" part of Planning; the political side of Planning has changed.

What educational/life experiences best prepared you for a career in Planning?

The thing that prepared me best was growing up on a farm where being self-sufficient and problem solving was a daily activity. It was a mindset that helped me to problem solve in all aspects of life.

What are your thoughts on the future of Planning?

Planning is always going to have a full plate. We have an overwhelming number of water resource related issues that need to be addressed. More importantly, we need to address the aging infrastructure. Planning needs to be involved in the decisions on how to address those problems. No shortage of fun for planners!

What advice would you give a new planner?

Take full advantage of all the experienced planners, technical experts and pick their brains. Seventy percent of your knowledge will come from others. Secondly, take as many of the Planning Core Curriculum course as possible in your first few years. The biggest problem for planners is "not knowing what you don't know." Lastly, I encourage every planner to do a temporary assignment or detail at a different District, Division office, or Headquarters with the goal of seeing a different perspective of the agency. Travel around, young planners!

**PCoP Note**

Completion of the 905(b) analysis is the initial step in scoping the feasibility study. The tips offered by Rachel are important stepping stones to preparation of that scope of work. This is the time to ensure that the vertical team is on the same page with the Project Delivery Team (PDT) and the sponsor. Toward that end, the Planning Communities of Practice are facilitating “sync meetings” with each reconnaissance study PDT to initiate this vertical dialogue. The sync meetings will continue through the recon phase and offer an opportunity to identify and resolve scoping questions and concerns with vertical team participants.

Planning charettes are another means to bring the vertical team, PDT, and sponsor together to reach alignment on the feasibility scope of



work. The key assumptions documented in the 905(b) analysis, and the identified gaps, should be used as the basis for development of the initial study risk register. Before stepping back out of the weeds, PDTs should make note of how the feasibility study analyses will (or could) iron out the details and then develop risk register entries for the most critical study elements. In this manner, the risk register is an important tool in the development of the feasibility PMP and to support the vertical dialogue about the scope of work and required budget.

STARTING NEW: TIPS FOR NEW START STUDIES



Port of Seattle image by Don Wilson

This year the Corps has initiated nine new reconnaissance studies, the first reconnaissance studies since FY2010. The PCoP has challenged and empowered the new start study teams, setting high expectations for these studies as they join the Corps' active planning portfolio of risk-informed, SMART Planning studies.

We sat down with Rachel Mesko, lead planner on the Seattle Harbor reconnaissance study, Seattle District, to learn a little more about their progress on one of nine new reconnaissance studies.

Rachel Mesko is a graduate of the 2013 Planning Associates Program and the lead planner on the Seattle Harbor Navigation Improvement Project, a new start reconnaissance study evaluating potential deepening of the Port of Seattle's East and West Waterways. With the reconnaissance analysis well underway and 905(b) report drafted, Rachel is sharing her experiences on the study and tips for teams to consider when working on new start studies.

Because we haven't had new reconnaissance

studies for nearly four years, even the most experienced PDT members may need a little “recon refresher.” Discussions about appropriate levels of detail, risk-informed decision-making, and reasonable assumptions are all needed early in the study. A few key tips for successful reconnaissance studies are outlined below.

» Get on the same page early Although a few of our team members have been working with the Port of Seattle for years, most were new to the project, its sponsor, and needs of the study. We met with the Port for an initial kickoff meeting, getting everyone in the same room to discuss the study face-to-face. Building relationships early has been key in developing a strong rapport with our sponsor and ensures the PDT is functioning as a team early in the process. Additionally, these early conversations have helped confirm basic study assumptions with the team about project footprint, existing conditions, and key problems.

» Document and verify assumptions (twice) with the right players Guidance tells us that reconnaissance is all about qualitative



descriptions and analyses. Because we stay away from complex quantitative analyses, teams need to make assumptions using best professional judgment and available data. The Project Delivery Team worked with the Port of Seattle, Northwestern Division, and the Deep Draft Planning Center of Expertise to make a number of assumptions for this reconnaissance study and documented those assumptions and why certain decisions were made. This also helps confirm that teams are consistently applying various assumptions in their discipline-specific analyses.

» Get into the weeds, but don't stay there

The Seattle Harbor project is inherently complex with numerous moving pieces. While it is important for the Project Delivery Team to dive into the weeds for certain parts of our analysis, it is equally vital to step back out and remember the bigger picture: this is a mostly qualitative reconnaissance analysis, with many of the finer details still to be ironed out in feasibility. It's okay if we don't have all the answers now.

Currently, the 905(b) report is complete and undergoing District Quality Control (DQC)

review. The 905(b) report has identified a positive federal interest and recommends moving forward as a feasibility study.

SHARE examples of Planning Modernization activities that are working well within your organization. What is not working well and how would you propose to improve that process or practice?

Send emails to us at hqplanning@usace.army.mil.

THE FUTURE OF PLANNING:

Planning Modernization

The Corps' Planning Modernization initiative is reinvigorating Planning.

Planning Modernization activities began in 2011 with a re-envisioned decision-focused, risk-informed feasibility study process piloted by five ongoing studies. These pilots laid the groundwork for the new SMART Planning feasibility process and demonstrated that a more comprehensive Planning Modernization approach – more than just changing processes – is required to deliver a risk-informed planning program that produces timely, cost effective and high quality water resources investment recommendations. Improving our processes and practices must work concurrently with developing and managing a balanced planning portfolio and understanding and improving regional organizational workforce capability.



Working with districts, Divisions and HQ, the Corps is delivering an improved planning program by:

» Program: Managing a portfolio of projects, focusing available funding on the most credible and viable projects for Congressional authorization and ensuring consideration of study objectives throughout the lifecycle of Corps projects. More than characterizing the portfolio, the Corps must deliver on its commitments, completing studies and making recommendations – positive or negative – for federal investment in water resources projects.

» Projects: Delivering timely and high quality products within established policy and statutes, meeting our duty to the Nation by providing solutions to the Nation's most pressing water resources problems.

» Process: Transforming Planning processes by bringing increased efficiency and efficacy to the processes the Corps uses to make decisions and produce planning decision documents.

» People: Investing in our People by improving planner knowledge and experience through training and other opportunities and creating a sustainable national and regional planning operation and organization.

A robust and efficient Planning Program is an essential component of the Civil Works Program. Since its founding, the Corps of Engineers has responded to the water resources challenges of the Nation. The Planning Modernization initiative strengthens the Planning program's response to the internal and external challenges of planning water resources development projects in the 21st century.

Updates on key Planning Modernization activities will be highlighted in future issues of Planning Ahead.



AS PART OF THE PLANNING ASSOCIATES PROGRAM, EACH PA IS TASKED TO WRITE A SHORT ESSAY ON HOW THEY WILL APPLY THE LESSONS THEY LEARNED EACH SESSION TO THEIR WORK AT THE DISTRICT. PLANNING ASSOCIATE ANGIE DUNN WRITES ABOUT HOW SHE WILL APPLY WHAT SHE IS LEARNING IN THE PA PROGRAM TO HER WORK IN THE JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT.

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PA PERSPECTIVES:

Importance of Telling the Flood Risk Management Story



One recurring theme in the Planning Associates Program thus far, is telling a better story in our reports. This is especially important in Flood Risk Management (FRM) studies since a proposed solution reduces the economic and life safety risks associated with flooding, but does not prevent flooding from occurring. Using a floodplain wisely includes looking for natural solutions, such as restoring a wider, natural floodplain to attenuate flows, as well as placing a restriction on development within or adjacent to a floodplain – options that may not have been seriously considered in the past.

In order to fulfill our duty to the nation with respect to FRM studies, the Corps must analyze all aspects of risks associated with a FRM project, communicating both the

transferred risk and residual risk with respect to proposed projects. In order for the Corps to effectively communicate risk to our stakeholders, we must be able to communicate risk within our organization.





This risk includes those hazards which exist in the current condition within the project area, as well as risks that could occur with each alternative. By clearly defining these risks, it is possible to effectively tell the story in the feasibility report and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for the benefit of interested stakeholders and decision-makers.



In addition, as part of the study team, the non-federal sponsor will be aware of these risks as they work to develop an effective and useful Floodplain Management Plan for the project area (a requirement from WRDA '96). The Floodplain Management Plan is designed to reduce the impacts of future flood events in the project area. It would be efficient for the non-federal sponsor to develop this plan in coordination with the Corps' feasibility process and in conjunction with the Corps' compliance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, directing Federal

agencies to consider "wise use of the floodplain."

As an agency, we must work together to share our successes and learn from our failures or inefficiencies. Though the National Economic Development (NED) plan is required to be identified in FRM studies, Project Delivery Teams need to improve their understanding of risks and communicate future uncertainties associated with structural FRM measures to better analyze alternatives and screen measures. Truly understanding the lifecycle of a Flood Risk Management project will aid future FRM studies in telling the whole story to our stakeholders.



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.



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The Flood Risk Management PCX provides additional insights on changes within Planning. See story on page 5.



Upcoming 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.

Webinars are scheduled for the first and third Thursday of each month from 2-3 pm Eastern. Webinars are archived on the [Planning Community Toolbox](#).

Webinar topics and dates will be posted on the

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



PCoP Q+A

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What is the Division's (MSC's) review role under SMART Planning? Is there a specific role during the concurrent review of the draft report?

The MSC role in SMART Planning is one of frequent interaction with District Project Delivery Teams (PDTs) to better effect vertical alignment. This occurs through involvement in (and sometimes leading) charettes, In-Progress Reviews, Issue Resolution Conferences, and pre-milestone meetings. While the MSC is not the decision making body at such vertical team meetings, the MSC strives to prepare PDTs for successful resolution of issues and successful milestone meeting outcomes. The MSC endorses all district planning products as to completeness, identification of potential policy issues, and verification of DQC prior to submittal to HQ (RIT) for upcoming milestones, and transmits compliance memos confirming status of vertical alignment after milestone meetings.

Quality Assurance is the oversight of the District's Quality Control (QC) process. QA is not technical review, which is a function fulfilled – it is a function fulfilled by District Quality Control, Agency Technical Review and Independent External Peer

Review. The MSC's QA assures that the District's QC plan is appropriate and being implemented. The goal of the QA process is to assure that Districts are able to plan, design, and deliver quality products on schedule and within budget.

Consistent with ER 1105-2-100, the MSC does not conduct substantive policy compliance review of documents submitted for HQUSACE policy review unless there is a need to address unusual and significant QA/QC issues. However, because the final report is endorsed to HQUSACE under the Division Commander's signature, the MSC does have a QC role to play for the final report.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNs, ANXIETIES — IF YOUR QUESTION CAN HELP FELLOW PLANNERS, SUBMIT IT ONLINE AND MAYBE YOU'LL SEE IT HERE.

What's New on the Planning Community Toolbox

> Several Policy and Guidance updates have recently been posted to the Planning Community Toolbox:

- The Water Resources Reform & Development Act of 2014 – stay tuned for Implementation Guidance.

- Planning Bulletin (PB) 2014-02, SMART Planning in the Reconnaissance Phase, outlines the SMART approach to reconnaissance studies and includes an outline of a typical Reconnaissance

Report. Note: While the Water Resources Reform and Development Act eliminated the separate Reconnaissance Phase, all Reconnaissance Studies underway should be completed following this guidance.

- Engineering & Construction Bulletin (ECB) 2014-10 provides guidance for climate change adaptation engineering inputs for Civil Works studies, designs, and projects.

- Engineering Regulation (ER) 1110-2-1156, Safety of Dams, covers the policies and procedures for the Corps' Dam Safety Program.

In addition, we have shared recent examples of Risk Registers for the various business lines and a Decision Management Plan (DMP) template. You can also find Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) milestone and Agency Decision Milestone (ADM)

so that District, Division, and HQ have a common set of expectations allowing for these important decision meetings to operate smoothly and effectively. SOPs for the Civil Works Review Board (CWRB) will be coming soon.

Visit the Toolbox online at www.corpsplanning.us

If you have questions or suggestions for the Toolbox, please email us at hqplanning@usace.army.mil