

PLANNINGahead

Fall 2024 - Issue 03

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

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



VIEW FROM THE TOP

MESSAGE FROM SUSAN WERNING, PCoP DEPUTY

PICTURED ABOVE: SUSAN WITH JEFF LIN (CENTER, OFFICE OF WATER PROJECT REVIEW) AND BRYAN TAYLOR (RIGHT, MVD REGIONAL INTEGRATION TEAM) BEFORE RUNNING PCoP STRONG AT THE ARMY TEN-MILER RACE IN ARLINGTON, VA.

Greetings!

I hope that everyone is enjoying some cooler weather and harvest festivals! I am certainly enjoying the change of season here in the Mid-Atlantic, and plan to soak it in before the cold temps set in!

In this edition's "View from the Top," I want to focus on the identified priorities of our new Chief of Engineers, LTG Graham, and how the Planning Community and the work you do fits into those priorities. The priorities are Focus on People Always, Deliver Today, Innovate for Tomorrow. Each of these are both embraced by and reflected within our Planning Community.

I want to start with "Focus on People", as this is so important to me personally. It has always been my passion to support our planners, and when we do this correctly, we are truly "focusing on people." From our "Planning Cares" webinar in May and new monthly Hot Topics tips to our acknowledgements in newsletters and annual awards, we know that YOU are the ones doing the heavy

lifting and we continue to seek better ways to support our Planning Community. I would ask each of you to do whatever you can to support your people – whether you are a supervisor or a recent hire, there are always ways that you can lift up those around you in both personal and professional ways.

The next goal is "Deliver Today," and this is the foundation of many of our daily activities and tasks. In the Districts, you participate on project delivery teams to formulate, evaluate, and recommend projects. At the HQUSACE and MSCs we write policy, review study documents, and engage as members of the vertical team. As a learning organization we are always striving to improve, and have been working on a Planning MAP (Modernize, Adapt, Partner) initiative for much of this year. We look forward to rolling out the recommendations from this effort over the coming months with a goal of having the most efficient and effective study process that we can, resulting

in high quality projects. I know that our planners are working hard nationwide to deliver the program – thanks for all you do!

Looking forward, the final goal is to "Innovate." There are so many opportunities for us to continue to innovate within our Planning Community. Planners are using innovative methods to collect data, justify projects using multiple benefit streams, and ultimately protect and improve communities. The opportunities available using Artificial Intelligence greatly expand what might be in the realm of possible for future planning studies. Do you have an innovative idea that you have incorporated in a study, or that you would like to share with others? Send those to me directly so that we can share and leverage those ideas!

As always, I am so grateful to work within such an incredible community of practice. Please take a moment today to thank a fellow planner for what they do – and pat yourself on the back as well.

Essays! – Susan



FALL 2024 FRONT COVER — AERIAL VIEW OF THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY SYSTEM. THE PORTLAND DISTRICT'S WILLAMETTE VALLEY SYSTEM DISPOSITION STUDY TEAM WAS RECENTLY RECOGNIZED WITH THE FY23 OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT (ENTERPRISE) AWARD. SOURCE: USACE PORTLAND DISTRICT



PCoP NEWS FLASHES

PLANNING COMMUNITY UPDATES

Water Resources Certified Planner Requirements for Feasibility Studies

To improve the quality and consistency of plan formulation conducted for USACE studies, [a new memorandum has been released](#) requiring the use of Water Resources Certified Planners (WRCPs) as either Planning Technical Leads or as an assigned Planning Mentor to the Planning Technical Lead. This requirement does not apply to Continuing Authority Program or Planning Assistance to States studies. Due to the anticipated increased demand for WRCPs due to this new requirement, another WRCP application opportunity is now open through 1 November. For more information on the WRCP application process,

visit the [WRCP Civil Works Planning and Policy Division page](#) and the [Planning Community Toolbox WRCP page](#).

New Interim Guidance on Nonstructural Project Planning and Implementation

New nonstructural guidance from MG Graham contains relevant nonstructural planning and implementation information for flood risk management and coastal storm risk management projects. This memo also contains nine enclosures that provide supplemental guidance, containing further information on real estate, nonstructural elevations, and more. A future Engineer Regulation will be issued that will include detailed guidance for floodproofing, relocations, and acquisitions. For more

information, guidance, and resources on nonstructural flood risk management, visit the new Nonstructural collection on the Planning Community Toolbox and refer to the 2 May 2024 PCoP webinar on the new guidance

Guidance for Incorporating Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Analysis in NEPA Reviews

Engineering and Construction Bulletin 2024-9: Guidance for Incorporating Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis in National Environmental Policy Act Reviews provides guidance for incorporating greenhouse gas emissions analysis for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This updated bulletin aims to enhance USACE analysis of GHG emissions for planned, new, and existing USACE

projects to consider how GHG emissions impact climate change and vice versa.

Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) Section 165(a) Pilot Program Projects Announced

With nearly 200 submitted project proposals for the CAP Section 165(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 pilot program, 12 projects were selected, with water resources issues addressed ranging from environmental restoration to flood damage protection. The pilot program is designed to make federal investments in small or economically disadvantaged communities and projects will be 100% federally funded. For more information about the program and to view the selected projects, view the U.S. Army's announcement article.

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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 additions of interest include:

- Two Delegations of Authority for the Continuing Authorities Program have been issued. The two memos, [Delegation of Authority - Continuing Authorities Program \(CAP\) Approval Level for Locally Preferred Plans and Delegation of Authority](#)

- [Continuing Authorities Program \(CAP\) Approval Level for Section 14, Section 103, Section 107, Section 204, Section 205, Section 206, Section 208, and Section 1135 Decision Documents](#), provide instruction on the authorizing authorities for different sections of CAP. For more information, watch the [PCoP Webinar on recent CAP updates](#).

- A new [Planning Charette Handbook](#) has been released, which focuses on how teams

can facilitate a collaborative session to gain vertical and horizontal participation and alignment. A complimentary webinar, which goes over best practices and recommendations from the handbook, was recorded and posted to the [Planning Community Toolbox](#).

- A new white paper, titled [Incorporating Sea Level Change in Civil Works Programs](#), was published this July. It provides best practices

for teams working to incorporate sea level change in feasibility studies based on [Engineer Regulation 1100-2-8.162, Incorporating Sea Level Change in Civil Works Programs](#).

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 <http://www.corpsplanning.us/>





TELLING YOUR STORY

120 DAYS AS ACTING SENIOR TRIBAL LIAISON

Curtis Sedlacek recently spoke with Planning Ahead about his time as acting Senior Tribal Liaison. He shared lessons learned during his 120-day detail and his gratitude for the efforts of Tribal Liaisons and Tribal Nations.

During my 120 days as acting Senior Tribal Liaison, I had the opportunity to work with Tribal Liaisons and Tribal Nations across the enterprise. Two key things I wanted to highlight from my time in the role are the **recertification of the Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise (TNTCX)** and the **Tribal Engagement Tool**.



CURTIS VISITING THE SOO LOCKS PROJECT IN SAULT STE MARIE, MI.

With the recertification of the TNTCX, it stands ready to provide support to Districts and MSCs across the enterprise with a wide skill set related to tribal consultation. I would encourage all Tribal Liaisons to reach out to the TNTCX, even if you have before, to get an understanding of the full breadth of their capabilities and what they may be able to assist you with. The TNTCX can be a force multiplier for a District when it comes to tribal consultation in a variety of ways.

The Tribal Engagement Tool was rolled out enterprise-

wide in the Spring of 2024. With the new FY about to start, I encourage all districts to consider how they can best utilize the tool and ensure their interactions with Tribes are being recorded. Utilizing the Tool will not only simplify reporting, but will also make visible the currently “invisible” work that goes into tribal consultation. Often consultation/coordination with Tribal Nations is summarized neatly in a few paragraphs in a combined feasibility report, which may not fully capture the breadth of the consultation/



coordination that occurred. By making these interactions “visible,” leadership can make more informed decisions when it comes to capacity building in the Tribal Program.

Finally, I want to recognize the passion of our Tribal Liaisons and the members of the Tribal Nations Community of Practice in their work with Tribal Nations. They are

trailblazers when it comes to finding ways around barriers, both internal and external, to ensure we can deliver on our mission, and they have taught me more than I can ever hope to fit into just a few paragraphs. Thank you all for your support during my detail, and I hope to bring the knowledge I’ve gained back to my home district.



GETTING TO KNOW HQ

PCoP WELCOMES NEW USACE LEADERS

PCoP Welcomes New Chief of Engineers & Deputy Commanding General for Civil Works & Emergency Operations

LTG William H. "Butch" Graham, Jr. is USACE's newest Chief of Engineers and commanding general of the Corps of Engineers. LTG Graham succeeded LTG Scott A. Spellmon whose four-year term as Chief of Engineers ended on 13 September.

LTG Graham is entering the position with three main priorities:

- **Deliver Today:** Every member of the USACE community is critically involved in the delivery of critical and lifesaving work, and the nation depends on USACE to deliver these studies and projects.

- **Innovate for Tomorrow:** Consistent innovation is needed to keep pace with the challenges and disasters USACE helps mitigate.

- **Focus on People Always:** Encourage USACE members to treat each other with kindness, respect, and dignity, and ensure that all members have the training and mentorship needed to thrive.

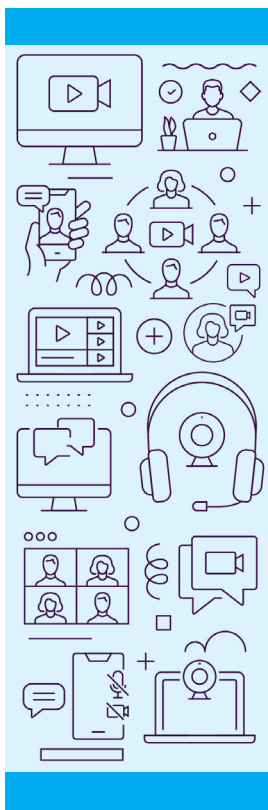
HQUSACE has also welcomed **Maj. Gen Jason E. Kelly** as the new Deputy Commanding General for Civil Works and Emergency Operations (DCG-CEO), succeeding LTG Graham. MG Kelly was most recently the Commanding General of the United States Army Training Center and Fort Jackson in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The HQUSACE Planning & Policy Division looks forward to working closely with both LTG Graham and MG Kelly, and thanks Lt. Gen. Spellmon for his many years of dedicated service.



Lt. General William H. "Butch" Graham, Jr.



Major General Jason E. Kelly



> Planning Community Webinars

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

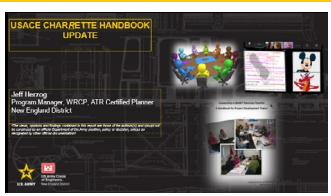
The series provides an opportunity to discuss important and timely topics for the field. Several recent webinar topics are highlighted below.

Webinars are held every other Thursday from 2-3 pm eastern. Presentations and the question and answer sessions from each

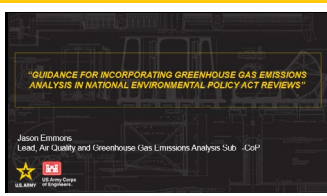
webinar are archived on the Planning Community Toolbox. Recent webinars are always on the front page: www.corpsplanning.us.

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

USACE CHARRETTE HANDBOOK UPDATE (25 JULY)



GUIDANCE FOR INCORPORATING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ANALYSIS IN NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT REVIEWS (22 AUGUST)



CURRENT EVENTS IN THE CONTINUING AUTHORITIES PROGRAM (CAP) (11 JULY)



FIND MORE WEBINARS AT:

<https://planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox/resources.cfm?id=0&Option=Planning%20Webinars>





CELEBRATING OUR FY2024 CHIEF'S REPORTS

As we kick off a new fiscal year, please join us in congratulating the USACE-wide teams who worked tirelessly to complete Chief's Reports in FY2024 for inclusion in the anticipated Water Resources Development Act of 2024 - which together represent a value of over \$40 billion to the nation, creating nearly 170,000 jobs with a total project first cost of approximately \$13.9 billion. Read on for highlights of each of the 18 studies reaching the Chief's Report milestone in FY2024.

Harbor was last deepened between 1975 to 1985 to the current project depth of 43 feet; the recommended plan will deepen Tampa Harbor to 47 feet. The port contributes over \$17 billion in economic impact supporting more than 85,000 jobs. This project will provide approximately \$39 million in average annual net benefits and provide between 65 to 80 percent of dredged material for beneficial use.

a strategy for hazardous, toxic, and radioactive waste (HTRW) contamination within the area. Continuous communication helped the study overcome these issues to generate a strong report explaining and validating project changes.

along 5.1 miles of shoreline. This plan reduces economic damages from erosion, wave attacks, flooding, and future sea level rise while maintaining opportunities for recreation and environmental resources for threatened and endangered shorebirds and sea turtles. This project will also extend the length of existing Federal shoreline.

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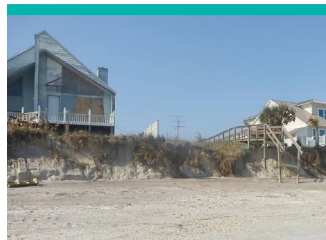
TAMPA HARBOR, FL

Port Tampa Bay is Florida's largest port in cargo tonnage and land area. It serves as a major cruise port and services a diverse mix of bulk, break-bulk, container commodities, and energy products that serve central Florida. Tampa



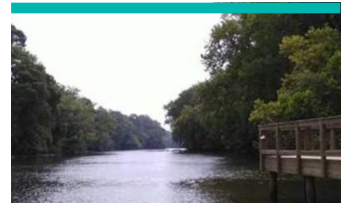
SOUTH SHORE STATEN ISLAND, NY

The South Shore Staten Island Chief's Report represented a two and a half-year coordinated effort by the vertical team and project delivery team. Hot topics that occurred included how to develop a complex physical model; how to analyze potential betterments within a changed design; and how to map out



ST. JOHNS COUNTY COASTAL STORM RISK MANAGEMENT (PONTE VEDRA BEACH), FL

Ponte Vedra Beach is the northernmost unincorporated seaside community in St. Johns County that includes residential structures, critically eroded beaches, and a National Scenic and Historic Byway that also serves as the area's major hurricane evacuation route. The recommended plan includes periodic beach and dune nourishment, a natural and nature-based feature,



TAR PAMLICO, NC

The Tar Pamlico study was brokered by SAD to LRD and was effectively executed in partnership between SAD, LRD, SAW, and LRP (the executing district). The recommended plan includes nonstructural measures at 155 structures and will reduce the risk of damages from inland flooding to residential and commercial structures. SAD Commander BG Hibner stated this was the "gold standard" for brokering,

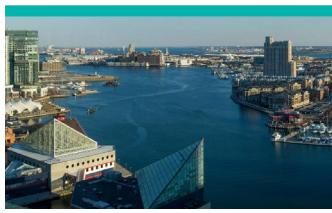


referring to how effectively technical resources, managers, and leaders at LRD, LRP, SAD, and SAW interacted throughout the study. The district’s seamless coordination resulted in a flood risk reduction plan ready for Congress to authorize.



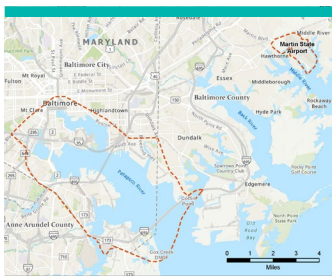
PUERTO RICO COASTAL

This study is the second successful coastal storm risk management project recommended for authorization in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Coastal Study is unique in that measures recommended in one of the two coastal areas addressed are entirely nonstructural and require mandatory acquisition and removal of structures. The study required extensive public engagement in English and Spanish. The recommended project was justified based on comprehensive benefits, and received two policy waivers from the ASA(CW). While local officials, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the broader community strongly support the recommended plan, mixed reviews were received from those within the acquisition footprint. Jacksonville District completed this study, but the new Caribbean District will implement the project.



BALTIMORE METRO COASTAL STORM

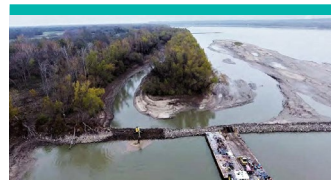
The Baltimore Metropolitan Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study’s Chief’s Report recommended a structural floodwall project to enhance the coastal storm resilience of the I-95 and I-895 tunnels and their associated ventilation buildings. The project has a strong benefit-to-cost ratio due to the economic benefits of managing risk for such a major transportation network. The Fort McHenry Tunnel (I-895) and the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel (I-95) are used by approximately 72 million vehicles annually. These routes are critical to maintaining access to jobs, commercial transportation, and emergency services.



BALTIMORE HARBOR ANCHORAGES & CHANNELS, SEA GIRT LOOP, MD

The Port of Baltimore is the most inland east coast port and a critical inland transportation hub. While

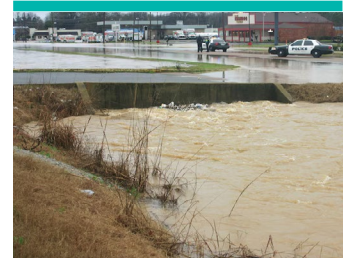
the Port can accommodate container ships that draft up to 47.5-feet at its Seagirt Marine Terminal, serious transportation inefficiencies and safety concerns with 1,300-foot long and 175-foot-wide vessels exist. The NAB team completed the study under budget and three months ahead of schedule by (1) implementing an efficient communication strategy between the multi-agency team, (2) leveraging sponsor resources through in-kind contributions, and (3) confronting study issues with Port partners. The team also addressed critical sources of uncertainty in the feasibility study up front, including completing bathymetric surveys in coordination with ongoing NAB operations works and a full ship simulation.



MISSISSIPPI RIVER HATCHIE/LOOSAHATCHIE, MS RIVER MI 775-736, TN & AR

The Hatchie-Loosahatchie Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration feasibility study effort, the first of eight priority ecosystem restoration reaches located in the Lower Mississippi River, was completed in under three years and under three million dollars. This project will be the first large-scale aquatic ecosystem restoration effort in the lower Mississippi River.

The team collaborated with multiple Districts within and outside MVD, the Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise, the Regional Integration Team, Headquarters, and the non-federal sponsors.



NORTH DESOTO CO., MS

The North Desoto County Feasibility Study is a dual-purpose Flood Risk Management and Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration solution in the fastest-growing county in Mississippi. A combination of structural and nonstructural components will reduce flood risks to the public and commercial, residential, and critical infrastructure in an economically disadvantaged community. In addition, the project will replace and improve in-stream habitat along with reforestation to restore habitat structure and function by arresting the uncontrolled degradation and erosion of streams throughout the county. The completion of this study exemplifies the partnership between MVM, Desoto County, Mississippi, and the many municipalities that will benefit from project execution.

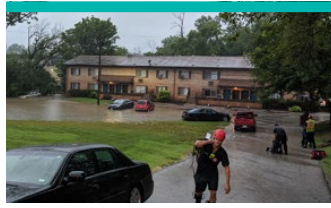




NORTHERN VIRGINIA COASTAL STORM RISK MANAGEMENT FEASIBILITY STUDY

WASHINGTON D.C. COASTAL

The ASA(CW) recognized the need to address coastal storm risks of vulnerable critical infrastructure in his approval of the National Economic Development policy exception for the Metropolitan Washington District of Columbia Coastal Storm Risk Management Study. A structural floodwall for the Arlington County, Virginia, Water Pollution Control Plant was recommended based on other social effects and environmental quality benefits. ASA(CW) Connor noted: "Failure to include this component in the recommended plan would result in unacceptable risk to the environment and dependent communities." Minimizing disruption of the facility's wastewater treatment operations and minimizing the risk of wastewater release into the Potomac River and surrounding residential community will benefit the community's coastal storm resilience.



RIVER DES PERES, MO

Overcoming past obstacles related to downstream impacts and funding constraints that kept the University City Branch, River Des Peres project at a standstill since 1990, the study restarted in 2020 using \$650,000 of non-federal funding. The PDT worked closely with the project sponsor, the City of University City, and the Commission on Storm Water Issues (who advised the City Council), carefully considering how to satisfy the engineering requirements and the social/political goals of the sponsor and other regional partners. After several in-progress reviews and pre-briefs with the vertical team, the Chief of Engineers signed the Report in February of 2024 without a formal Chiefs Briefing, which acted as a testament to the quality of the work performed by MVS and the team.



OAKLAND HARBOR TURNING BASIN, CA

The Oakland Harbor Turning Basin study started contemporaneously

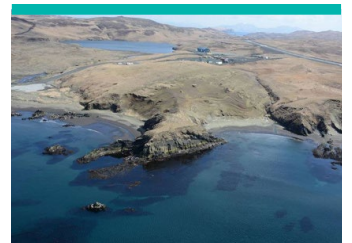
with the January 2021 comprehensive benefits memo from the ASA(CW). As such, the team prioritized finding ways to provide benefits to the surrounding disadvantaged and underserved communities beyond National Economic Development benefits. The recommended plan will improve transportation efficiency for the largest vessels that call on the port. Both inner and outer turning basins will be increased in diameter to a depth of -50 MLLW. All suitable dredged material will be beneficially reused.



ST. TAMMANY PARISH STUDY, LA

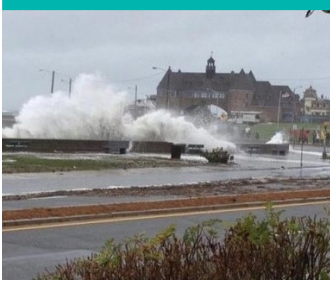
The 4.5-year St. Tammany Parish study was conducted by MVN and designated as a mega-study. This multipurpose FRM/CSRM study recommended 18.5 miles of levee and floodwall, as well as a nonstructural component with around 6,000 structures. With an expedited schedule, the team effectively dealt with issues and refinements regarding design maturity, real estate, risk assessment, and climate change through close coordination with HQUSACE Engineering and Construction, Real Estate,

and all members of the policy and legal compliance review team. This close coordination allowed the study to meet the expedited schedule, resolve multiple issues, and facilitate flood risk reduction to approximately 26,000 structures and 70,000 residents.



AKUTAN HARBOR NAVIGATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS, AK

The Akutan Harbor Navigational Improvements project is vital to the continued existence and viability of the Native Village of Akutan, located within the Aleutian Island chain. This harbor is a remote and subsistence harbor, and the recommended plan is justified using other social effects, as allowed under the remote and subsistence harbor program. This project completes a port system between the existing airport and the village, which is currently only connected by an inefficient and expensive helicopter. This project will establish a safe harbor and establish safer and more reliable transportation to and from the airport. This project is critically important for the continued viability of the community.



RHODE ISLAND COASTAL

The Rhode Island Coastline Coastal Storm Risk Management project encompasses the shoreline and coastal tributaries of northeastern Rhode Island, with more than 650,000 people residing in the 19 towns included in the study area. Structures in the area consist of single-family homes, apartment buildings, and commercial buildings. Many of these buildings have basements and are over 50 years old. The recommended plan goes beyond the National Economic Development Plan by including socially vulnerable areas, limiting risk to historic resources, and incorporating protection to critical infrastructure for which determination of public benefits would be beyond the capability of USACE tools. The plan is entirely nonstructural and is comprised of the protection of 461 individual structures and reducing flood damage to 36 elements of critical infrastructure.



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BACK BAY COASTAL STORM RISK MANAGEMENT, FL

This project was an Administration priority and was completed on an accelerated schedule of approximately one year. The recommended plan will provide coastal storm damage reduction benefits to approximately 2,500 residential and commercial buildings and up to 27 critical infrastructure facilities within historically underserved neighborhoods in Miami-Dade County. The recommended plan will reduce coastal storm damages and improve human health, safety, and community resilience. The study recommends authorization for the evaluation and construction of nature-based solutions pilot projects and for programmatic comprehensive urban nonstructural studies to innovate, formulate, and assess nonstructural measures for complex critical infrastructure facilities with which USACE currently has limited experience crafting solutions.



CENTRAL & SOUTHERN FL: COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN – WESTERN EVERGLADES RESTORATION PROJECT (WERP)

The WERP Chief’s Report was the culmination of an eight-year study that was “suspended” twice while working through issues concerning implementability and law, policy, and litigation. The team properly elevated the issues to headquarters and the Office of the ASA(CW), and effectively communicated and coordinated with the sponsor, agencies, and tribes. Direct interaction with leaders ensured appropriate contents were included in the Chief’s Report, and the Report was signed on schedule for inclusion in WRDA24. During the Chief’s briefing with LTG Spellmon, tribal representatives expressed gratitude for the completion of the study and Chief’s Report with statements about how the project will sustain their homelands and address past wrongs.



GULF INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY (GIWW), BRAZORIA & MATAGORDA COUNTIES, TX

The GIWW, Coastal Resiliency study is unique in that it provides comprehensive benefits for resiliency, environmental sustainability, and economic efficiency on one of the nation’s busiest inland waterways. This fully federally funded study addresses navigation and coastal storm impacts on the GIWW, while taking advantage of ongoing operation and maintenance of the federal navigation channel. The GIWW includes a barrier island system constructed in the 1940s that, over time, has nearly disappeared due to coastal storms and natural erosion. The project is designed to restore a resilient barrier island system that can withstand disruptive events, where projected sea level changes exacerbate the erosion concerns and threaten the reliability of the waterway. The project also supplies future disposal sites for maintenance material and secondary benefits of marsh creations for additional resilience.





RECOGNIZING OUR FY2023 NATIONAL PLANNING AWARD WINNERS



OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL EDITIONS OF PLANNING AHEAD WE WILL BE CELEBRATING THE INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM RECIPIENTS OF THE FY2023 NATIONAL PLANNING AWARDS, WHO ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN CIVIL WORKS PLANNING ACROSS THE NATION.



10

The Planning Excellence award is designed to recognize an individual's contributions to advancing the state of the art of the practice of Civil Works Planning, and the **Outstanding Planning Achievement award** recognizes a Civil Works planning project delivery team for the accomplishment of an outstanding planning activity. **The Noel Clay Planning Champion award** recognizes individuals who have been instrumental to Civil Works Planning success by providing leadership, encouragement, and support to project delivery teams, and the **Lifetime Achievement awards** go to those who have distinguished themselves by making significant and lasting contributions to the USACE Planning Community during their career.

PLANNING EXCELLENCE (ENTERPRISE) AWARD

Lance Awsumb
Planning Center of Expertise for Inland Navigation, PCXIN)

LANCE AWSUMB is recognized with the FY23 Planning Excellence Award (Enterprise) for his exceptional contributions to Civil Works Planning as a National Technical Specialist for the PCXIN. Through projects that span across the U.S. and beyond, Lance's expertise and innovative approaches to Navigation projects have significantly advanced the USACE planning process.

As Senior Project Manager for the Paraguay River Navigation

Master Plan, in FY2023 Lance showcased his ability to navigate complex challenges and highlight USACE capabilities when working with foreign partners. He effectively led an initiative to deliver a tailored proposal to the Government of Paraguay to improve navigation on the Paraguay River, building a diverse USACE team and collaborating closely with the national government of Paraguay and its stakeholders. His efforts culminated in a successful agreement between Paraguay's Minister of Foreign Affairs and the U.S. Ambassador to Paraguay, demonstrating his

exceptional leadership skills and ability to foster a collaborative and efficient planning environment.

Continuing to demonstrate his technical competence as well as his skillset as an exceptional facilitator, Lance's recent work includes leading scoping discussions for high-profile navigation projects such as the New Soo Locks Supplemental Economic Update, the Inner





Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) Lock Replacement, and the Lower Missouri River Basin Feasibility Study. In addition, during his tenure at the Northwestern Division Headquarters, he led economic studies for the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty and led flood risk analysis work across the Columbia River System.

Lance's commitment to advancing and understanding applicable technologies is equally impressive. By establishing a new partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Missouri's Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, he facilitated a knowledge transfer program that enhanced the scoping of the Upper Mississippi River Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program. His work led to refined traffic forecast models for grain movements, improving efficiency, accuracy, and overall project success. Additionally, his technical skills were crucial in addressing unique modeling challenges for the IHNC. By collaborating with experts from the Engineer Research and Development Center and Tug Pilots, Lance applied valuable insights from ShipSim modeling to further refine the IHNC project scope.

Other notable accomplishments of Lance's in FY2023 include guiding multiple teams through feasibility studies, managing economic and planning activities within the USACE

Dam Safety Program, and contributing as an instructor to the Planning Associates Program Inland Navigation course.

Lance's technical abilities, creativity, and unwavering commitment to quality have made a significant impact on the planning process and on enterprise advancement within the Navigation mission area. His work has set new standards within the field and contributed to the overall success of the USACE mission, leaving an enduring legacy of excellence in Civil Works Planning.

NOEL CLAY PLANNING CHAMPION AWARD

Tim Fleeger
Northwestern Division

TIM FLEEGER of the Northwestern Division is recognized as one of the recipients of the Noel Clay Planning Champion Award for 2023 for his leadership and efforts to the USACE planning and Environmental Communities of Practice over his 20-plus-year career.

In his role as the Columbia River Basin Policy and Environmental Coordinator, Tim has worked on two of the most challenging efforts within USACE, enabling planning project delivery teams to overcome obstacles and accomplish goals by



facilitating group collaboration and decision-making. He has served as the lead USACE planning and environmental policy coordinator for ongoing negotiations with the government of Canada to renew the Columbia River Treaty, providing leadership to an interdisciplinary team from Northwestern Division and its Districts to identify strategies for ensuring timely environmental compliance complicated by intergovernmental negotiations. Tim has been integral to an interagency team comprised of USACE, Bureau of Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Council on Environmental Quality in reaching a successful stay of the decades-long litigation on the operations of the Columbia River System. Tim's extensive knowledge of USACE authorities, funding mechanisms, and policy was key for the United States government, sovereigns, and litigants to reach this

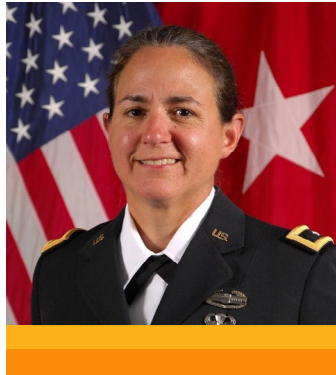
significant agreement. As a Policy Reviewer, Tim also continues to support numerous Planning and Environmental Studies within NWD, including Columbia River Turning Basins, Snake River Maintenance and Emergency Dredging, and John Day Fish Hatchery Mitigation. Tim serves as an outstanding mentor to planners and teams as he led Policy Reviews to successful Chief's and Director's Reports for seven projects.

Tim's leadership, encouragement, and support have been critical to the Planning Community of Practice, especially his contribution to the training and development of planners. He has taught or helped update content for all three of the Planning Core Curriculum (PCC) Courses. He helped refresh the online PCC Civil Works Project Development Process Course, served on the development team, and was a lead instructor for the PCC Planning Essentials Course. Tim has been an instructor for the PCC Capstone Course for the past five years. In these roles, he has trained hundreds of USACE's current and future planners. In addition, he also developed and serves as the owner and lead instructor for a Planning Associates course. Tim is actively serving on the Planning Workforce Development committee where he has supported and led numerous PCoP initiatives. He has also supported four PDTs as a Planning Mentor for Risk Informed Planning,



including the Grand River Basin Ecosystem Restoration Study, the Rio Grande de Manati Flood Risk Management Study, the Savannah River Below Augusta Ecosystem Restoration Study, and the Suisun Slough Disposition Study.

Tim's leadership and support of teams and initiatives while demonstrating personal courage, empathy, and respect for others exemplify why he has been chosen for the Noel Clay Planning Champion Award.



which began at the Little Rock District and culminated as the Deputy Director of Programs Division at Southwestern Division before her retirement, Trish faithfully and unfailingly demonstrated dedication to improving communities and the lives of their citizens through the implementation of the USACE Civil Works mission.



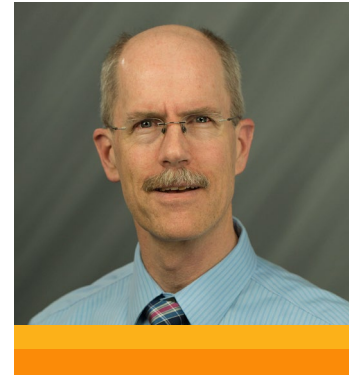
Tim Axtman
New Orleans District

TIM AXTMAN, Chief of the Plan Formulation Branch for the Regional Planning and Environment Division South (RPEDS), began his career with USACE in 1982 in the New Orleans District's Engineering Division. There, he was involved with

hydrologic, hydraulic, and sediment modeling, as well as managing the sediment analysis and monitoring program for the Lower Mississippi River. Since 1992, Tim has completed 35 feasibility studies and numerous Continuing Authorities Program study reports, culminating in over \$35 billion in authorizations for flood risk management, navigation infrastructure, and ecosystem restoration projects. During that time, he has developed an expertise in planning policy and procedures, and has gone on to mentor dozens of plan formulators and others in proper procedure and process.

Brad Foster
Jacksonville District

Brad Foster, currently the Senior Planning Technical Lead for Ecosystem Restoration in the Jacksonville District, is recognized for his 35 years of contributions to the successes of the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration (AER) Program. His contributions to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program and Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise have enabled the authorization of many multidisciplinary and multiagency AER projects such as bridging the Tamiami Trail, the Picayune Strand Restoration Project in 2007,



and the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project in 2020. Throughout Dr. Foster's illustrious career, he has amplified the highest standards of excellence in every endeavor, and is a testament of resilience, passion, and unwavering commitment to the Planning community.

OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT (ENTERPRISE)

Portland District Willamette Valley System

THE PORTLAND DISTRICT'S WILLAMETTE VALLEY SYSTEM TEAM recently spoke with Planning Ahead about best practices they implemented and lessons they learned throughout the study process.

Embracing Lessons from the Willamette Valley System Disposition Study: A Planner's Guide to Making It Work

Ladies and gents of the planning world, grab your



Trish Anslow
Southwestern Division

TRISH ANSLOW is recognized for distinguishing herself as a national leader within the Planning Community of Practice, working diligently within USACE for 29 years, and with numerous partners, agencies, and stakeholders to solve challenging national problems. Trish's commitment to continuous improvement resulted in significant actions that have helped modernize and keep relevant the Planning program. Throughout her career,



One of the highlights of our planning adventure was the vertical and horizontal alignment, which sounds like a fancy yoga pose but is actually the key to preventing your project from spiraling into chaos. We managed a 90-person hybrid charrette that brought together every level of the Corps and BPA. It was like organizing a flash mob but with more PowerPoint presentations and fewer dance moves.



highlighters and Gantt charts. The Portland District's Outstanding Planning Achievement (Enterprise) Award for the Willamette Valley System Disposition Study and Report to Congress is like our version of winning the "Best Director" award at the planning Oscars. Yes, we know it's not actually a trophy we can put on the mantel, but it's still a big deal!

Facing Challenges with a Smile (and a Calendar)

We faced more challenges than a "Choose Your Own Adventure" book where every choice leads to a new headache. With differing opinions from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), a budget tighter than a pair of skinny jeans, and an 18-month schedule that made us question whether we'd mastered time management or just time travel. But by proactively escalating

issues, seeking guidance, and even securing additional funding, we showed that we weren't just resilient—we were practically superhero-level problem solvers.

Vertical & Horizontal Alignment: Not Just for Tightrope Walkers

One of the highlights of our planning adventure was the vertical and horizontal alignment, which sounds like a fancy yoga pose but is actually the key to preventing your project from spiraling into chaos. We managed a 90-person hybrid charrette that brought together every level of the Corps and BPA. It was like organizing a flash mob but with more PowerPoint presentations and fewer dance moves. An initial vertical team meeting—where we assembled experts from district, division, and HQ leadership—set clear sideboards for project scope and analysis, making sure that no one accidentally tried to reroute the project to a different galaxy.

The Tier I meeting model was our secret weapon. This setup was so structured that even the most organized among us felt the need to double-check our calendars. But it worked! This meticulous approach helped

us bring the vertical team along throughout the process, dodge scope creep, and manage conflicts with BPA.

The Core Team: aka Dream Team

Our core team—which included the Project Manager, Planner, Team Lead, and Economic Subject Matter Expert—was like a Swiss Army knife for project management. They shared responsibilities across product development, meeting facilitation, and leadership briefings with the kind of flexibility that would put a contortionist to shame. This teamwork ensured that everything remained coherent, even when the project felt like it was spinning out of control. A true strength of this team was their ability to lay out the schedule with interim milestones so that the larger team, including BPA, had a clear roadmap and due dates. As a testament, every single product's due date was met on time and within budget.

Harnessing Expertise: The Superpower of Engineers

The project's success was largely due to the team's expertise, including members from operations who aptly knew the facilities being studied. They approached

the complex process with the confidence of someone who's just figured out the perfect Excel formula. They kept the scope streamlined and adapted faster than you can say "scope creep," making sure every update was seamlessly incorporated.

Frequent communication through bi-weekly meetings and targeted workshops fostered a collaborative environment where every team member felt valued and informed. The use of framework documents, prepped like blueprints before a big build, ensured we didn't end up with a parking garage that was accidentally designed as a skyscraper.

The Takeaway: Planning Success with a Side of Humor

This recognition proves that when you mix clear alignment, experienced teamwork, and a solid planning process, you can turn complex challenges into successes. So, here's to all the planners out there—may your schedules be always on point, your meetings be always productive, and your coffee always strong.



SPREADING THEIR WINGS

PLANNING ASSOCIATES OF 2024 GRADUATE

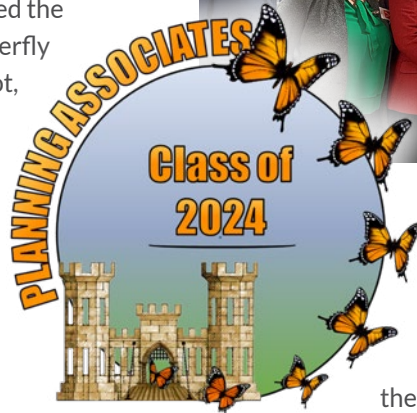
With the recent graduation of the Planning Associates cohort of 2024, Marc Glowczewski explains the rigor of the Planning Associates program along with the accomplishments and ideals of this year's seven graduates.

Well folks, another Planning Associates (PA) cohort has completed the rigorous two-year process of classes, coursework, and critical thinking. On August 29th, PA Class of 2024, a.k.a. The Monarchs, graduated at the Institute of Water Resources in Alexandria, Virginia. The seven newly minted Planning Associates are **Cynthia Fowler** of South Pacific Division, **Marc Glowczewski** of Pittsburgh District, **Kathryn Herzog** of Walla Walla District, **Jared Lopes** of Savannah District, **Ricky Oskey** of Sacramento District, **Luis Santiago** of Baltimore District, and **Michael Simmons** of Jacksonville District.

Headquarters sees the PA Program as a way to develop and sustain a national network of agile and informed planning leaders who are capable of solving the nation's most complex water resource issues. This is a lofty ideal for prospective students to consider as they

embark on a journey to transform themselves from learners to practitioners. This transformation was on the Class of 2024's minds as they selected the Monarch butterfly as their mascot, incorporated the Corps castle with open doors and windows and seven butterflies into the class logo, and created their class vision statement, "Emerging into adaptive, inclusive, and informed leaders to collectively evolve the Enterprise." This vision statement came about because the PA24 cohort wanted to set a goal for themselves to grow into being what the enterprise needs.

The PA Program is considered by many to be the preeminent training for planners. It lives up to its reputation as a demanding but rewarding course. The classes are comprised of 15 weeks of training, both in-person and virtual, over the course of 21 months. The Monarchs traveled across the nation, meeting with the Planning Centers of Expertise to learn more about the enterprise



business lines and the people behind them.

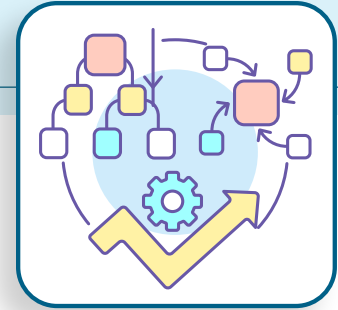
Additionally, each member of the cohort participated in a 9-month critical thinking assignment that was a deep dive into a topic that the Planning community wrestles with, designed to follow the process of a planning study. Lastly, to acknowledge the wealth of information and depth of time invested, each member also completed an applied learning project on a topic that was important to them and provided an opportunity to give back to the Planning community. As a result of this challenging developmental program, the Monarchs are closer to fulfilling their vision of becoming the adaptive, inclusive, and informed planners that the enterprise needs.

Starting a journey without a full understanding of the intensity and commitment needed to complete it can be daunting. Facing the difficulties that inevitably come up during that journey takes courage. We've learned that every journey starts with a single step, and every transformation begins with a desire to grow. The Planning Associates of 2024 mustered the courage and put in the hard work, sacrifice, time, and effort to complete their journey and are now spreading their wings, ready to help the enterprise help the nation.

The PA24 cohort would like to thank all the course owners, instructors, presenters, and special guests who made the experience worthwhile. A special thanks goes out to Lisa Rabbe, Judy McCrea, and Monique Savage for helping to guide our cohort and providing leadership and direction with grace and composure.



TRADEOFFS ANALYSIS IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF USACE PLANNING



Under current and future USACE planning guidance, tradeoff analysis is required to fully evaluate, compare, and recommend an alternative. Michelle Hilleary (IWR) offers a high-level explanation and guide for teams to accomplish this analysis.

A tradeoff is any situation when making one choice means losing something else. Making tradeoffs decisions is something we do every day. In the world of USACE Civil Works Planning, multi-objective tradeoffs analysis has been something we did when there was reason to consider plans other than the National Economic Development Plan. However, our approach to planning adjusts and evolves to meet

the changing requirements of our guidance. Under the current Comprehensive Documentation of Benefits Memo requirements, as well as the proposed Agency Specific Procedures, USACE planning studies are required to evaluate and directly compare economic, environmental, and social benefits and impacts. Comparing monetary values alongside other quantitative and qualitative values is extremely challenging, even for experienced planners and economists. Fortunately, there is a way forward through tradeoffs analysis!

TRADEOFFS ANALYSIS – WHERE TO BEGIN

Tradeoffs analysis is much

more than placing a bunch of numbers and/or words in a table and then attempting to make a decision. Tradeoffs analysis is a systematic and scientific approach to compare various types of criteria and metrics. When applied in an organized manner, tradeoffs analysis can provide the standard approach to plan evaluation and plan recommendation required for our planning studies. It can help clarify what the ‘value tradeoffs’ are that are required as part of the decision-making and plan selection process.

TRADEOFF TECHNIQUES

The goal of the tradeoffs process is to develop a shared understanding and to identify alternatives that best achieve the desired combinations of benefits. One way to do this is through qualitative analysis to uncover unavoidable tradeoffs and highlight these for our decision-makers. It’s important to set the stage through the previous steps of the planning process, and consider that the necessary time, resources, and skills are available for this step, within the context of each study.

USACE RESOURCES

In September, two ‘Tradeoff Approaches’ PCoP webinars highlighted key tradeoff concepts. The first training session covered Qualitative Tradeoff Approaches, establishing key concepts that are helpful for all planning studies. The second training covered Quantitative Tradeoff Approaches. Combined, these provide an overview of the recent IWR publication: Analysis of Tradeoffs Approaches Applicable to USACE Civil Works Planning.

Planned future tradeoffs webinars include how to design a collaborative tradeoffs engagement, how to deal with uncertainties, and how to get to a decision. Additionally, a collaborative tradeoffs guide, case study application, and other collaborative tradeoffs tools are planned for future development. Teams seeking to use tradeoff analysis should coordinate with the Vertical Team for policy compliant application.

A QUICK SUMMARY OF THE AGENCY SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

- The Agency Specific Procedures (ASPs) will guide USACE’s implementation of the Principles, Requirements and Guidelines for water resources investments.
- The Corps is proposing this rule in response to Section 110 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020, with the rule providing a framework to govern how the Corps would evaluate certain proposed water resource investments.
- The ASPs lay out decision-making framework that reflects national priorities, encourage economic development, and protect the environment by seeking to maximize sustainable economic development, avoid the unwise use of floodplains, and protect and restore natural ecosystems.





PCoP
Q+A

What should I know about Water Resources Certified Planner (WRCP) certification qualifications and the requirement for WRCPs on feasibility studies?

Due to the new **requirement** to have Water Resources Certified Planners assigned to all feasibility studies initiated during or after FY23, the PCoP is encouraging all qualified planners to apply for certification, and offered an additional opportunity for planners to apply for WRCP certification this fall. A new application round will take place in 2025, but planners can submit an application through the **Planner Database** at any time throughout the year.

The WRCP program sets a standard of excellence and provides internal recognition for USACE water resources planners, requiring a high level of training, experience, knowledge, and leadership for certification. Currently, more than 100 WRCPs bring their expertise to every corner of the Corps, representing all levels of the organization.

The PCoP frequently receives questions about certification requirements, so let's take a moment to address some WRCP "myths":

Do I have to complete the Planning Associates (PA) Program to qualify for WRCP certification?

NO. While PA Program courses may be used to demonstrate an applicant's education and training qualifications, WRCPs are not required to have completed the PA Program to be certified.

Are WRCPs required to be Agency Technical Review (ATR) certified?

NO. WRCP and ATR certification are different processes, and neither certification is required to obtain the other. However, ATR certification is demonstrative of planning expertise and is one indicator that you may qualify for WRCP certification.

Can only plan formulators become WRCPs?

NO. WRCP certification is open to all four Planning Sub-CoPs. WRCP certification is for any planner who serves as an integrator, knitting together technical information from an interdisciplinary team to formulate, compare and evaluate alternative plans. While plan formulators are most likely to have experience in planning integration, planners from the Environmental, Cultural, and Economics Sub-CoPs can certainly serve that role as well. We have WRCPs from all four sub-CoPs.

Is certification only for project delivery team (PDT)-level planners?

NO. We have WRCPs at the District, MSC, and Headquarters level. Many are still Lead Planners on PDTs, but many others have moved into more senior positions by the time they apply for certification. The application in the Planner Database accounts for an individual's study experience as well as review experience, and it credits planners who serve on study teams directly as well as in advisory capacities.

I heard recertification is required every so often. Does that involve reapplying in the Planner Database each time?

NO. Recertification is required every 5 years, but it is a simplified process done outside of the Planner Database. Each Spring, in conjunction with the call for new applicants, the WRCP Program Manager will reach out to all those due for recertification to provide instructions on how to document their continued education, experience, and leadership in the PCoP.

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.