

PLANNING AHEAD

Notes for the Planning and Policy
Community



US Army Corps
of Engineers

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Meet the **New Leader of the Planning Community of Practice!**

I sat down with Tom Waters, new leader of the Planning Community of Practices (and dually assigned as the Chief, Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) Regional Integration Team Directorate of Civil Works), to discuss his thoughts, ideas, and plans as he takes leadership of the Planning CoP. He discussed his assessment of current issues surrounding the CoP and his goals to address them, how those ideas fit into the big picture of the Corps' missions, and how these ideas will play out among those working to implement them.

An engineer by training, Mr. Waters has developed an appreciation for the importance of Planning to the Corps throughout the many phases of his career. He has served in Districts in the capacities of Design and Engineering Chief, but also wore dual hats as Planning Chief. He was also the Director of Programs in North Atlantic Division, where he says planning and policy challenges were encountered every day. He most recently completed 7 months of service in Iraq and was able to witness the tremendous work being done, but he recognized that skilled planning was one of their country's greatest needs in terms of effective infrastructure development. As for the future of the Corps, Mr. Waters feels that the Planning CoP is the most important entity in implementing the Strategic Plan, emphasizing comprehensive approaches to water resource management.

He feels Planning is well positioned for this challenge, and largely credits this to the insights and initiatives of the former Planning CoP leaders Bill Dawson and Jim Johnson, the Planning Advisory Board, and others who have been executing the Planning Excellence Program. He is also enthusiastic about the value of the new guidance recently published* (the 5 new Engineering Circulars). Mr. Waters states that EC 1105-2-409, *Planning in a Collaborative Environment* (31 May 2005), "is the most significant to the Planning CoP because it shows that we are recognizing the Corps has the ability to be more inclusive and/or flexible, as well as innovative in our planning approach." He also thinks the ECs are important to the development of the Planning CoP. Although the CoP may not be thought of as totally functional at this time, the new ECs and other Planning Excellence Program initiatives indicate that we are moving in the right direction towards building the Planning CoP. Mr. Waters and the Director of Civil Works, MG Riley, will discuss the new EC's with his MSC commanders and planning CoP leaders in the field in a VTC on August 1, 2005, as part of the rollout plan of the new ECs.

When asked to describe some areas to focus on as the new Planning CoP leader, he identifies three. One of his top priorities is ensuring maturation of the Planning CoP. He believes the district planners should have some sense of belonging to the CoP and that the CoP is "nurturing" the skills of planners partly for clarity in what members of the CoP should be doing and to help ensure employees' personal and professional development. Process improvement is another area Mr. Waters deems very important because processes should embrace USACE 2012 concepts being implemented, such as the team approach. Finally, Mr. Waters wants Planners to lead the way in the Corps' strategic direction to use a more holistic, collaborative approach in analyzing and solving water resource challenges.

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Mr. Waters' views on how planners fit into the organization are clear in his praise to the Planning Excellence Program. I asked him what he thought needs to be done to ensure the cohesiveness between the planning communities among all districts and he feels virtual communication using cutting-edge technology is essential. Another opportunity that exists for face-to-face interaction is the biennial Planner's Conference (most recently known as the Economics and Environment Conference). The next Planning CoP conference is scheduled for May 9 to 11, 2006 in San Francisco (see separate announcement in this issue).

To all planners reading this issue, Mr. Waters would like to extend his sincere appreciation for all that you do. He is convinced that planning is among the most challenging, but most important work that the Corps does. Hats off to Corps planners!

**A brief description of these new ECs can be found in Bill Dawson's note in the May issue of Planning Ahead: <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/plannersweb/pdf/v8i5.pdf> or to access the actual documents visit: <http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/usace-docs/new-pubs/newec's.htm>*

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FEATURED ARTICLES

Announcing Planning's E & E (& E) Conference for 2006

Bruce Carlson, Headquarters

Mark your calendars: The next Corps Economics and Environment (E & E) Conference will be held at the Westin St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco May 9 through 11, 2006. But the conference will no longer be formally known as the "E & E" conference, since it is being expanded to incorporate Engineering (Plan Formulation) into the mix and therefore fully represent the Planning Community of Practice. Therefore, please plan to attend the Corps' Planning Community of Practice Conference for 2006.

Like its successful predecessors in New Orleans (2002) and Baltimore (2004), the 2006 Planning CoP Conference will provide a forum to discuss planning issues and innovations related to the Corps' mission areas, with special emphasis on how the Planning CoP supports key business lines. Over three days, the conference will address a wide variety of topics related to plan formulation, environmental evaluation and economic analysis presented in a mix of joint and concurrent sessions. The conference will emphasize interactions among economists, environmental scientists and engineers. The format will allow for discussions of new policy and guidance, lessons learned, case studies, and current and potential future issues facing the Corps. Meetings of the economics, environmental, and plan formulation Sub-CoPs will also be held in support of their efforts to improve the state of professional practices in their respective areas.

Watch future issues of Planning Ahead for announcement of the conference theme, calls for papers, registration information, etc.

In the meantime, recall that documentation of the Baltimore and New Orleans conferences is still online for your reference:

Baltimore 2004: http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/E_E_conference/Title%20Frameset.htm

New Orleans 2002: <http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwp/eande2002/>

Good News About "Old" Planners

Dennis Wagner, Northwestern Division

On June 27, 2005 Tom Davis, former Planning and Policy Chief for NWD, was inducted into the Northwestern Division Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees in recognition of his 42 years of valued service to the Corps.

Mr. Davis began his employment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District in February 1959. By 1967, he was managing large studies to support water resource development in the LA District. From 1974 through mid-1982, he broadened his experience base and influence over the Corps' Civil Works Program while working at the HQUSACE. During this period, he spent a year working on the staff of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environmental and Public Works. He was one of the principles who facilitated the development of the Water Resource Development Act of 1976. This was a major piece of legislation that has had very positive and beneficial effects in meeting the Nation's water resource needs.

In 1982, he became Chief, Plan Formulation Division, of the former North Pacific Division, and in 1995 he was selected to the Chief of Planning and Policy position for NWD. During his tenure as the Division's Planning Chief, he virtually revolutionized the planning program by establishing robust planning organizations in each District that included plan formulation, economics, and environmental functions, with an interdisciplinary Chief that reported to the Deputy for Project Management. He achieved outstanding results in improving the morale and performance of the entire Division's planning organization. Product quality increased, significant improvements in resource sharing and utilization was achieved, and the Division was placed in a better position to collectively address the water resource needs of the northwestern region.

Tom is a graduate from the Planning Associates Program. He retired in January 2001.

Corps Fish Study Nets Useful Data **JoAnne Castagna, Ed.D., New York District**

In a New York City conference room with large windows overlooking the Port of New York and New Jersey, Dr. Mary Fabrizio, Chief of the Behavioral Ecology Branch of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, recently presented to scientists the results of an extensive fish tagging study she performed for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

As the study's principal investigator, Fabrizio told the scientists, "The findings will be used to update the Environmental Protection Agency's criteria that determine what dredged material from the port is environmentally safe to place in the Historic Area Remediation Site."

After undergoing a series of biological and chemical analyses, dredged sediment from the channels within the Port of New York and New Jersey is placed in the Atlantic Ocean at the HARS if found acceptable as remediation material.



HARS Study Site.

of Engineers, New York District.

"One of the parameters that goes into creating this risk-based criteria is the residency time of fish in the HARS because it is assumed that the more time the fish spend at the HARS, the more organisms they will eat that have been impacted by dredged material placed there."

"The New York District felt that the EPA's information on residency time was incomplete and needed to be improved, so we initiated and funded a fish tag study to better answer the question of how much time the fish actually spent within the HARS boundary," said Greges. "The results from this study will be provided to the EPA for use in their development of this risk-based criteria for dredged material proposed for HARS placement."

The Corps' U.S. Engineer Research and Development Center, Waterways Experimental Station in Vicksburg, Miss. managed the study and contracted the NEFSC to perform it.

The study was from June 2003 to June 2004 and included 145 healthy adult fish captured at the HARS. The species captured included 122 black sea bass (*Centropristis striata*) and 23 summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) or "fluke," both important recreational and commercial fishing. The two species studied were active at the HARS from May to December. During the winter these species move to deeper offshore waters.

To monitor activity, fish were tagged with ultrasonic transmitters that were surgically implanted in their abdominal cavities. The transmitters are 30 mm long and 9 mm in diameter and were programmed to send 68KHz signals, or pings, once every 3 to 5 minutes for about an entire year.

The HARS is an approximately 15.7 square nautical mile area - 3.5 nautical miles east of Highlands, New Jersey and 7.7 nautical miles south of Rockaway, New York.

Remediation material is used to cover or "cap" the dredged sediment that was placed there previously which does not meet EPA's current placement standards. This cap remediates the site and improves the habitat conditions for aquatic life in the HARS.

"After consultation with the Corps' New York District, the U.S. EPA Region 2 sets the final criteria for what is suitable for placement in the HARS. Several years ago the EPA indicated they wanted to update this criteria by using a risk-based approach," said Monte Greges, Chief of Dredged Material Management Section, U.S. Army Corps



Inserting a transmitter into a black sea bass.



Scientists disassembling an array that holds the receiver in order to retrieve the data.

Preliminary Results

- Habitat usage: The ocean floor of the HARS is composed of varying levels of dredged sediment. During the summer, both fish species spent most of their time in the shallow areas of the placed sediment.
- Seasonal activity: Black sea bass exhibited greater activity in the HARS during the summer than during the fall. Summer flounder activity patterns were more complex.
- Dispersal: All of the fish were captured and released within the HARS boundaries, but each species moved or "dispersed" out of the HARS at different times and rates. A handful returned to the HARS one year later.



Retrieving an array that holds the receiver. The array is also composed of mooring and a pop-up buoy.

To pick up the signals, 72 receivers were strategically moored throughout the HARS, 800 meters apart. Every signal detected by a receiver was decoded electronically and the receiver recorded the identification number of the transmitter, the date, and the time of the day the signal was detected.

These records were accumulated in the memory of the receiver. The receivers were retrieved in Summer 2003 and Summer 2004. When the receiver was retrieved, scientists downloaded the data to a computer. Scientists had collected 1.4 million records.

Recently, preliminary results revealed information on the fishes' use of the HARS habitat, seasonal activity and dispersal out of the HARS.

Fabrizio said the study was extremely interesting and she learned the importance of using appropriate equipment, selecting sufficient staff to conduct the work at sea, and coordinating the logistics required for a large field study.

"Deploying and retrieving sensitive acoustic equipment at sea for long periods of time is difficult," said Fabrizio. "Each time we attempted to retrieve the 72 receivers, we usually needed about 10 full days, which we had to schedule around the weather, including Hurricane Isabel in September 2003."

"If I did the study again I would use acoustic receivers with modem capabilities - this allows the scientists on board the vessel to download the information from the receiver's memory without having to retrieve the gear off the bottom of the sea," she said. "However, this equipment was not yet developed when we started our work and it's very expensive."

Fabrizio was still satisfied with the equipment used and was confident it would work because she performed pilot studies prior to performing this study at the HARS.

When it came to field deployments and retrievals of the receivers, Fabrizio said that the most important aspect was the skill of the captain and the capabilities of the vessel. "Never underestimate the complexity of these tasks! Hire a captain who has years of experience and is a good trouble shooter - he or she is worth every penny!"

She added, "It was also very interesting learning from, and working with the captains of the vessels that assisted us on this study."

The results of the study answered questions about the length of time fish reside at the HARS, but there are additional data that were obtained that still need to be analyzed. "In complex studies such as these, it is not unusual for the analysis phase to require as much time, or sometimes more, as the field work," said Fabrizio.

"Some of the findings we will examine further include the black sea bass's increased activity during dusk, the bass's dispersal out of the HARS early in the summer, and both species preference for the shallow complex habitats at the HARS."

"Data from this study will benefit both the public and the environment. Scientifically defensible data will be used by the EPA to create the new HARS criteria, a more realistic picture of human and ecological risk will be ascertained and dredged material that poses an unacceptable risk for introduction into the food chain will not be disposed in the ocean," Greges said.

For additional information about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District dredging projects and studies, please contact the author at Joanne.castagna@usace.army.mil

Dr. JoAnne Castagna is a technical writer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District.

PLANNING CENTERS OF EXPERTISE

NATIONAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING CENTERS OF EXPERTISE

Ken Orth, CEIWR-GW
Ted Hillyer, CEIWR-GR
Bruce Carlson, CECW-PC

A national meeting of the technical leaders of the Planning Centers of Expertise was held at Headquarters, USACE on 28-29 June 2005. The purposes of the meeting were to meet each other and gain familiarity with all of the Planning Centers of Expertise (PCXs), exchange products and ideas developed by the Centers, discuss an approach to resolving one or two major problems facing the PCXs and to set an agenda for future activities. The meeting was well attended; each of the six PCXs had at least one representative present (except for the Flood Damage Reduction Center that was tied into the meeting via teleconference). Representatives of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (CW), the Environmental Advisory Board, Engineer Research & Development Center, Headquarters and the Institute for Water Resources, were also present.

All of the basic objectives were met, and indeed surpassed the expectations of the meeting organizers. The most pressing needs were identified to be lack of specific funding for the CPXs and the ability to implement the newly published ECs. Other items needing immediate action were identified as:

- Modify DR Checks to make it planning friendly.
- Reconcile national PCX structure with the previous requirement to designate District centers of expertise (by business line within each MSC).
- In the spirit of shared support, the Centers need to share more products -PgMPs, PA curricula, SOPs for ITR, etc.
- PCXs need to help the MSCs with delegated policy reviews- are they doing that?
- Need rosters of technical experts for each Center/business line.
- Communicate the Commanders a corporate commitment to the Centers (from Chief, or Director of Civil Works).

The next meeting of the PCXs is scheduled for March 2006 to be hosted by the Ecosystem Restoration Center. There are also opportunities PCX representatives to meet with the Planning Advisory Board in the spring of 2006 and the Planning Associates course owners meeting in the summer or 2006. It was also established that when there were no scheduled face to face meetings, there would be quarterly teleconferences of the PCXs starting in September 2005.

Complete documentation of this meeting has been prepared and has been posted on a newly established PCX website. <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iwr/plannersweb/PCXmeeting28june.htm>

For additional information on the meeting or other data on the Planning Centers of Expertise please contact Ted Hillyer at: Theodore.M.Hillyer@usace.army.mil

PLANNING ASSOCIATES UPDATE

From the Northwest to Texas

Hi! My name is Amy Frantz and I'm a Planning Associate from Huntington District. I'd like to share our recent experiences from the Hydropower, Water Supply, Recreation and ESA module, which was held in Portland, OR and the Watershed Module which was held in Jefferson, TX.

Portland District is the Center of Expertise for Hydropower and has expertise from the Hydropower Analysis Center and Hydropower Design Center. Our courses in Portland were intense since we covered a topic a day and tied them all together with a fantastic field trip to Bonneville Dam.

At Bonneville, we were able to tour the facility and see fish migrating through the fish ladders. We also went to their juvenile fish bypass fish facility and the hatchery associated with the mitigation of the salmon. As with most of America's infrastructure, the hydropower projects are aging and deteriorating over time.



PA's at Bonneville Dam

So what is watershed planning? It's not necessarily project oriented. A watershed study can result in a watershed management plan. Or it can recommend projects to the sponsor that don't necessarily have a Federal interest or projects that can be constructed by other entities.

The Watershed Module included Headquarters' and other Federal agencies' perspective on watershed planning and management plans. There were also sponsors from all over the country who shared with us their perspectives on watershed studies and who were honest about the job the Corps is doing on watershed studies.

We were visited by the former HQ Planning Chief, Bill Dawson, who graciously came out of retirement to spend time with us and share his knowledge and expertise. We were surprised by a visit of our new HQ Planning Chief, Tom Waters, who started his new job by coming to Texas and visiting the PAs. He gave us a warm welcome and gave us inspiring words of encouragement.



PA's in Portland, Oregon

There were two field trips during the watershed course. The first trip went to the Corps project Lake O the Pines. The staff gave a great tour of the facilities and was very helpful answering all of our questions. The second tour included a trip down Big Cypress Bayou and a steam boat trip at Caddo Lake.

Our last day, we will be hearing about existing Corps studies from project managers from around the Corps.

Next month you'll be hearing from Boni Bigornia discuss small boat harbors and intergovernmental relations.

PLANNING WEBS AHEAD

Websites for Large Studies

Web pages may be a better way to organize large amounts of information. The Northeast-Midwest Institute has a large-scale ecosystem restoration web page that references some Corps projects. In fact, the Institute is using the web page in lieu of a paper report, as the Washington non-profit research organization feels the web is a better way for displaying this information. Menus and links make for quicker retrieval of information; it is easier to keep up-to-date; enhances wider dispersion through search engines; and allows interactive communication in their "Comments" page.

Northeast-Midwest Institute: <http://www.nemw.org/restoration.htm>
Great Lakes and Ohio River Division: <http://www.lrd.usace.army.mil/>
Lower Columbia River: <https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/pm/lcr/envres.asp>
Louisiana Coastline: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/prj/lca/>

Career Doldrums? During these dog days planners might consider thinking about their careers. Strengths are great where both technical and interpersonal competencies are necessary. As careers advance the interpersonal competencies become more important. But a weakness may stall a career, and getting accurate and helpful feedback is difficult. A mentor is invaluable, furthermore some summer reading--The 12 Bad Habits That Hold Good People Back and What Your Boss Doesn't Tell You Until It's Too Late--may help identify and change a weakness. Outplacement Firms emphasize that networking is 10 times as effective as answering ads, so what about Zen or prayer?

South Pacific Region's Mentoring Web Page:
http://rbc.spd.usace.army.mil/learning_and_sharing/rbcmentoring/mentoring.htm

New Planning ECs 1105-2-404 to 409 are available with a roll-out VTC planned for 1 August, stay tuned:
<http://www.usace.army.mil/publications/eng-circulars/ec-cw.html>

P.S. Please submit your experiences, stories and opinions about using the web for review of planning documents.



Everyone is encouraged to submit planning-related questions of general interest to me, Monica Franklin at: monica.a.franklin@usace.army.mil, and I will send them along to our ace team of experts for thoughtful responses. Thank you and let's keep those questions coming!

Dear Planner:

Why is Savings and Slippage applied to federal programs? What is the purpose of Savings and Slippage?

*Sincerely,
Slipping in Sacramento*

Dear "Slipping":

Savings & Slippage (S&S) is a result of overprogramming - the recognition of goals that are higher than indicated possible by the use of the funds specifically budgeted or appropriated because we do not generally execute every dollar on every project. It is an amount of funds that are expected to become available in the overall program through savings from costs lower than estimated or from slippages in schedules of projects into a future year. Basically, we historically know that every study, PED and project will not proceed as budgeted or even as appropriated, so we know that some funds will become available from such projects, to be used on others that may be advancing faster than expected or cost more. We don't specifically know which project will experience such savings or slippages but we know that somewhere in the program, it will happen. A certain amount of program funds are therefore overprogrammed through an estimated Savings & slippage amount.

For the FY 06 budget, the General Investigations Account used a 15% S&S while the Construction account used 5%. This shows that there are more savings and slippages expected in the General Investigations account than in the Construction account. This is because there are greater uncertainties in Recon, Feasibility and PED activities going forward than there are once a project is proceeding in construction. The S&S is reflected as a bottom-line subtraction at the end of each of the account tables, either in the President's budget or in the appropriations report. For the implementation of S&S to each project, Congress mandated that the "S&S" be applied on a "pro-rate" basis since 1987, as opposed to any particular project or program suffering the entire brunt of that programs S&S reduction.

The House FY 06 Energy and Water Appropriations markup discusses S&S extensively and recognizes that the Congress has been know to apply an "inflated" S&S factor in an attempt to "squeeze" more projects into a program with limited program funding in an appropriations bill. Conversely they also state that the Corps has sometimes "taxed" all projects in a particular appropriations bill to obtain funds to increase funding for particular program and projects in excess of the levels included in the Appropriations Act, and then subsequently restored these reductions to those "taxed" projects later in the year, when funds became available and can be effectively used by them. As savings and slippages occur on activities carried out by the Corps, the funds are then subsequently moved (reprogrammed) to other projects as they are needed and within the rules established with the congressional committees for such actions.

VRY,
Planner

PLANNING CoP CALENDAR

Planning Ahead submission deadline.....	third Friday of every month
Request for 2006 Planning Associate nominations.....	June 2005
Planning Centers of Expertise Leaders' Meeting.....	28-29 June 2005
Planning Advisory Board Meeting hosted by SWD.....	October 2005
Planning CoP Conference.....	9-11 May 2006

If you would like to post an item to the monthly calendar, please contact Monica Franklin at Monica.A.Franklin@usace.army.mil.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Baltimore District, Planning Division is interested in hiring an Economist, at the GS-12 level, in the Civil Projects Development Branch. Assignments typically involve studies or program segments relating to deep draft navigation, flood control, or environmental projects.

We are located in downtown Baltimore with easy access to the Light Rail, subway, and bus lines as well as to many garages for those who choose to drive to work. We participate in a subsidy program for those who choose to use public transportation to and from work. The formal announcement of this position will be published by the NECPOC. For additional information contact Ron Mardaga, 410-962-4938.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO PLANNING AHEAD?

This newsletter is designed to improve the communication among all the planners and those we work with throughout the Corps. We hope that future editions will have mostly information and perspective from those of you on the front lines in the districts. We hope that these notes become a forum for you to share your experiences to help all of us learn from each other. We can't afford to reinvent the wheel in each office. We welcome your thoughts, questions, success stories, and bitter lessons so that we can share them on these pages. The articles should be short (2-3 paragraphs) except in some cases where you just have to say more, and should be a MS Word document. We highly encourage that you send pictures to accompany your article.

The deadline for material for the next issue is: 25 August 2005.

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(Editor's Note: In the email address, the character following the @ sign is a lowercase "L". This is also true for the single line of text. The character immediately following "subscribe" is also a lowercase "L". If these are not typed correctly, you will receive an error message.)

To obtain a 'help' file, send only the word 'help' in the text of the message (nothing in the subject line) and address it to majordomo@usace.army.mil.

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To read past issues of Planning Ahead, visit:
<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwp/news/news1.htm>