



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

PLANNINGahead

Summer 2021 - Issue 02



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VIRTUAL VIEW FROM HQ

MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CHIEF OF PLANNING & POLICY – ERIC BUSH



HELLO FELLOW CIVIL WORKS PLANNERS!

As I continue on as acting USACE Planning Chief, I am taking a moment here to reflect on what this opportunity has afforded me since I came on board late October last year (before the election, before WRDA 2020, before vaccines). One of my first engagements coming into this position was the USACE 1st Quarter Executive Governance Meeting (EGM), which was also LTG Spellmon’s first EGM as Chief of Engineers.

In the opening minutes of his introductory remarks, the Chief said, *“Everybody has to have an improvement plan.”* I took that intent to heart and set out, with other Planning leaders, to assess ourselves, identify specific areas of improvement, and create momentum. I will lay that out briefly below, but first I should say that I have had and continue to have a great deal of helpful input from our Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency

Operations (DCG-CEO) MG Graham and Mr. Al Lee, our Director of Civil Works. And, our USACE Planning Advisory Board (MSC Planning Chiefs and HQ Planning Deputies), other HQ senior executives, and the “Revolutionize Civil Works” team have informed and guided the way forward.

So, what needs improving? I think there is unanimous consensus we need more **rapid issue resolution**, including decisions on 3x3 waiver requests (can I get an “Amen!” to that?). But there is a lot that contributes to making that yes/no decision on an issue, including things like excellent technical and risk-informed analysis, scopes and schedules based on consideration of human resources, efficient execution of tasks, district quality control, quality assurance by MSCs, timely communications and issue elevation, and adequate maneuver space for decision makers. One thing leaders at all levels experience is being handed only one possible course of action – approve or not. This does not provide adequate maneuver space! We need to do better than that and give our leaders multiple risk-informed courses of action to choose from.

Another thing we can improve is **how we share work** across the entire Civil Works enterprise, especially when we experience surges and downturns in Planning work (which looks like the “new normal” for Civil Works).

A third thing I would highlight is **preparing our workforce to be ready, relevant, and responsive** to future conditions and needs. We have done a lot in this area over the preceding 10 years, but we need to continue to modernize.

After discussing many of these improvements with Mr. Lee and MG Graham, they directed a proposed objective, “Improvements to Feasibility Studies,” to be added to the USACE Campaign Plan. We recently presented this to LTG Spellmon, and he unhesitatingly supported the addition! Please take a few minutes to review and consider these objectives and how you can help move the enterprise toward achieving the goal of **delivering quality feasibility studies on time and within budget**. Though feasibility studies are a focus, this is really about improvements in all aspects of Planning.

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

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



SUMMER 2021 FRONT COVER — PHOTO OF THE AMERICAN SAMOA WATERSHED ASSESSMENT STUDY AREA FROM A USACE SITE VISIT. SOURCE: BEN REDER, HONOLULU DISTRICT



| WINNING: DELIVER QUALITY FEASIBILITY STUDIES ON TIME AND WITHIN BUDGET Key Focus Areas, Goals, Initiatives/Deliverables, and Considerations | KEY FOCUS AREAS | APPLY LESSONS LEARNED | LEVERAGE ENTERPRISE RESOURCES: PLANNING CENTERS OF EXPERTISE | EXPAND PROJECT RESOURCING & BROKERING | ENSURE MEGA-STUDY DELIVERY |
|--|---------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | GOALS | Continual Process Improvement Leveraging Collaboration & Execution Assessment and After Action Reports | Better Utilize Concentrated Expertise of Planning Centers of Expertise (PCXs) | Balanced Allocation of Work Nationwide, with a Focus on Both Expertise and Workload Balancing | Ensure Mega-Study Delivery |
| | INITIATIVES/ DELIVERABLES | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Collaborative Execution Assessment (CEA) Report 2 After Action Reports 3 Planning Toolbox Update, including Planning Guidance Notebook portal | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 PCX Assessment and Recommendations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Planning Strategic Plan ("Resilient Planning Strategy") 6 FY21 New Start Study Instructions | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Mega-Study Guidance |
| | CONSIDERATIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess/identify failure points in current studies Assess/identify failure points post-study Turn assessments into adjustments (Lessons learned) Update and educate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas of expertise Identify commonalities/differences between PCXs Revisit authorities/ responsibilities of PCXs Match funding to execution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage enterprise resources Reinforce and incentivize brokering Ensure accountability for resourcing Document Supplemental Appropriations roadmap for Investigations/Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply consistent criteria: complexity, scope Clarify frequency of Vertical Team engagement Document Mega-study governance structure |

NEW CAMPAIGN PLAN OBJECTIVE, "IMPROVEMENTS TO FEASIBILITY STUDIES"

There is much more to follow to achieve our desired end-state, and I ask that you continue to engage in "improvements" conversations with your District and MSC Planning Chiefs.

In closing, I want to also acknowledge that we now have a nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)), Mr.

Michael Connor, who is a previous Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior and a former Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. We expect Mr. Connor will be confirmed later this year. Our new Principal Deputy ASA and acting ASA(CW), Mr. Jaime Pinkham, is now on board and is engaging in key Civil Works actions at his level, including supporting our

Civil Works budget with the Administration and Congress. Bringing on and enabling new leaders is a team effort – so please be responsive to requests for information and updated fact sheets regarding projects and programs when asked.

It has been a great honor and my privilege to serve (again!) as acting USACE Planning Chief, and I look forward to

continuing in this role for as long as needed. One of the great things about working at the HQ level is I get reminded every day of how amazing our collective capabilities are and the dedication, commitment, and professionalism of the Planning team.

Essays!

➤ 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:

- Chief's Reports for the Prado Basin Ecosystem Restoration, San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange Counties, California; Hudson River Habitat Restoration, New York; Fairfield and New Haven Counties, Connecticut; Coastal Storm Risk Management; and Elim Subsistence Harbor Study, Alaska studies.



- All study teams should familiarize themselves with [Engineer Regulation 1165-2-217: Civil Works Review Policy](#), which supersedes Engineer Circular 1165-2-217 and establishes policy and procedures for a comprehensive accountable review strategy for Civil Works by providing a seamless

process for review of all projects throughout the lifecycle.

- For tips on talking about the Comprehensive Documentation of Benefits in Decision Document policy directive with your study sponsors, a [fact sheet](#) and [USACE Director of Civil Works Mr. Al Lee's transmittal memo](#) provide helpful information about the context and intent of the directive.

- Study teams preparing NEPA environmental impact statements (EIS) should be aware of the [Processing Final Environmental Impact Statements for Civil Works Projects memo](#), which clarifies that public comments will not be solicited as part of the final EIS notice of availability.
- 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 <https://planning.erdc.dren.mil/toolbox/index.cfm>





PLANNING ACROSS AN OCEAN: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THREE PACIFIC ISLAND WATERSHED ASSESSMENTS

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PHOTO OF THE AMERICAN SAMOA WATERSHED ASSESSMENT STUDY AREA DURING A HEAVY RAINFALL EVENT. SOURCE: AMERICAN SAMOA OFFICE OF DISASTER AND PETROLEUM MANAGEMENT

Lindsay Floyd (Sacramento District) and the Honolulu District's Guam, American Samoa, and Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands Watershed Assessment Teams recently spoke with Planning Ahead about their ongoing efforts related to three FY 2019 Supplemental-funded watershed assessments. The teams discussed the unique circumstances they are working under and identified best practices and lessons learned for study teams working in multiple time zones and virtual environments.

Living with tropical storms is a common reality for Pacific Islanders as they can happen any time of the year, and when a storm makes landfall, the effects can be devastating. In 2018, tropical cyclones threatened lives and damaged critical infrastructure on the islands of Guam, American Samoa, and Commonwealth of

the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI), three U.S. territories located in the Pacific Ocean. In response, three watershed assessments, one in each territory, were initiated and funded at \$1.5 million per study by the 2019 Additional Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Relief Act to investigate

measures to increase resiliency and address damages from the storm events. The three studies are tackling several nuanced problem areas in Guam, American Samoa, and CNMI – all while operating in an entirely virtual workspace.

Since kicking off in 2019, the three watershed assessments have had to overcome several challenges. The watershed assessment study areas are difficult to visit regularly, and the study teams must navigate virtual engagement during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the study teams are hybrid teams made up

of members from several different Districts, meaning they must work across multiple time zones. While these are not necessarily unusual challenges for teams at the Corps, the resulting cross-team communication has proven to be a unique and beneficial aspect of all three watershed assessments. These efforts offer valuable insights and lessons learned for virtual teaming strategies.

The Guam, American Samoa, and CNMI project teams share many of the same members, which facilitates natural collaboration and knowledge sharing. These

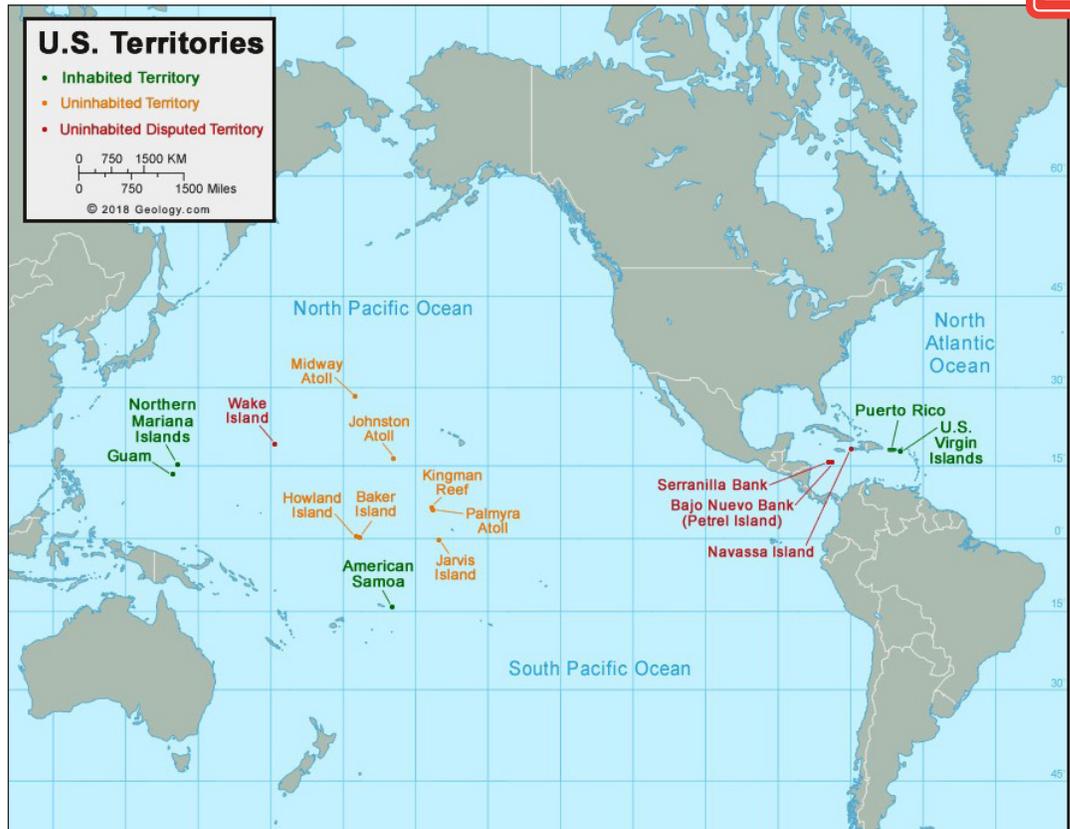


“blended teams” hold weekly meetings to share challenges, successes, and ideas. All teams benefit from each other’s advances and lessons learned, which helps all three studies progress at a robust pace. One key to cross-team knowledge sharing is the role of a Lead Planner that serves as a mentor to all three teams. This role facilitates the plan formulation process and offers valuable insights as to best practices and lessons learned from other watershed assessment efforts located around the nation.

The teams have successfully adapted to an entirely virtual workplace, due to both the COVID-19 pandemic and having diverse geographic work locations.

One key to cross-team knowledge sharing is the role of a Lead Planner that serves as a mentor to all three teams. This role facilitates the plan formulation process and offers valuable insights as to best practices and lessons learned from other watershed assessment efforts located around the nation.

Team members draw from the Alaska, Honolulu, Sacramento, and San Francisco Districts. In fact, most study team members have not had an opportunity



POST-DISASTER WATERSHED ASSESSMENTS ARE IN DEVELOPMENT FOR GUAM, AMERICAN SAMOA, AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, THREE U.S. PACIFIC TERRITORIES. SOURCE: HONOLULU DISTRICT

to meet each other or the watershed assessments’ non-federal partners face to face – yet the teams demonstrate innovative and flexible communication styles. The flexibility demonstrated by all members of the blended teams contributes to the studies’ ongoing success.

For example, teammates accommodate working across four time zones by shuffling their work hours to better synch with colleagues and non-federal partners. The 17-hour difference across all represented time zones poses a significant challenge when scheduling stakeholder engagement meetings, a vital component of any watershed assessment. With study

areas geographically far away from any USACE District, this was an inevitable challenge. To adapt, the teams have leveraged using virtual platforms to meet and engage with partners. As a result, all three studies continue to have productive stakeholder coordination, utilizing WebEx for “face to face” virtual meetings and MS Teams for collaborative document development among study team members. “Site visits” were conducted using Google Earth’s “flyover” feature to create a virtual tour of the islands and study areas. This creative solution proved to be an engaging and informative component of the recently held Shared Vision Milestone meetings.

These strategies helped to create a virtual “boots on the ground” feel and enabled the project teams to connect in meaningful ways with colleagues and partners.

Despite the challenges, all three watershed assessment teams continue to actively collaborate to formulate innovative solutions for the territories of Guam, American Samoa, and CNMI. All three studies held successful Shared Vision Milestones in January 2021 and are working towards Recommendations Milestones in Fall 2021.





PCoP NEWS FLASHES

PLANNING COMMUNITY NEWS

Join the New Economics & Social Science Community of Practice

The Economics CoP has recently been restructured and renamed to the Economics and Social Science CoP, in response to the increasing need to provide and support robust social science analysis as a result of expanded policy emphasis and Administration priorities on accounting for social, environmental, and economic effects of USACE projects. The restructured CoP will remain under the leadership of Dr. Maria Wegner (Senior Economics Policy Advisor) and membership is open to all who have an interest in the social sciences, regardless of functional area or job series. For questions or further information, contact Dr. Maria Wegner or Susan Durden.

Updated Items of Local Cooperation

Are you currently working on a flood risk management or coastal storm risk management feasibility report? If so, make sure to check out the updated Items of Local Cooperation on the [Headquarters Project Partnership Agreements website](#) as a starting point for coordinating with your local Office of Counsel.



2021 Virtual National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration

The [National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration \(NCER\)](#) will be held 26-29 July and 2-5 August, with sessions conducted virtually over a two-week period. NCER is an interdisciplinary conference on large-scale ecosystem restoration hosted by the University of Florida, presenting state-of-the-art science and engineering, planning, and policy in a partnership environment. NCER brings together scientists, engineers, policy makers, planners, and partners from across the country actively involved in large-scale ecosystem restoration. The conference will feature a diverse program consisting of plenary sessions, a two-part regional plenary on the Pacific Northwest, up to 36 concurrent sessions, and a live poster session on 27 July.

Since NCER is being held virtually and does not require travel, attendance approval

for USACE planners has been delegated to individual District offices. If you wish to participate in NCER, please obtain approval from within your own District and [register online](#) as soon as possible. Attendance is secured through a password protected portal. For questions or additional information, please contact Howie Gonzales (Jacksonville District).

Comprehensive Documentation of Benefits - Help is Available

If your team is puzzled by how to apply the [Comprehensive Documentation of Benefits in Decision Document policy directive](#), or want feedback on your approach before you dive into the analysis, work through your District Planning Chief to arrange a no-cost consultation with Headquarters experts who can work with you wherever you are in the process.

Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development - Proposal Period Now Open

The [WRRDA 2014 Section 7001 proposal period](#) is now open and will close on 30 August. All non-federal interests are invited to submit proposals for new Corps

water resources development project study authorities; modifications to an existing Corps water resources development project study authority; modifications to an existing Corps water resources development project authority; and modifications to an existing Corps environmental infrastructure program authority.



PCoP Hot Topics

Can't wait for the next edition of Planning Ahead? Get the scoop on key initiatives and information from Headquarters on investing in our people; implementing clear and efficient guidance and processes; and demonstrating readiness and meeting our partnership commitments in the monthly PCoP Hot Topics newsletter. Find the latest in your email inbox or on the Planning CoP SharePoint. To be added to the newsletter email distribution list, email us at hqplanning@usace.army.mil.



GET TO KNOW HEADQUARTERS: OFFICE OF WATER PROJECT REVIEW

This issue's "Get to Know Headquarters" feature introduces readers to the Office of Water Project Review (OWPR), outlines OWPR's main roles and responsibilities, and speaks with OWPR staff about their work and the important role of OWPR in the project development process.

The Headquarters Office of Water Project Review (OWPR) has its origins with the congressionally established Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, which reviewed most of the Corps' planning studies for civil works projects from 1902 until 1992. The Board was created to address inconsistent treatment of proposed river and harbor projects by Corps officers reporting from across the country and to ensure that all localities and projects were treated fairly before recommending approval or disapproval.

The Board then transitioned to a Washington-level

Central Review Center to manage review of all Civil Works Program decision documents. And in 2004, Chief of Engineers Lieutenant General Robert Flowers established OWPR as the national project policy review office with the goal of providing a strengthened multi-disciplinary HQUSACE team to conduct policy compliance review of decision documents that have not been delegated, as well as to provide support to MSCs and Districts in feasibility study issue identification and resolution.

OWPR Chief Wes Coleman oversees a team with review expertise in economics, plan formulation, and environmental laws and policies. The early involvement of OWPR reviewers in project development is designed to ensure compliance with established Administration and USACE policy as projects are developed – resulting in final reports that can be

approved in a timely manner by HQUSACE, the Office of the ASA(CW), and the Office of Management and Budget.

OWPR staff are involved in a variety of study activities beyond the direct policy review of decision documents. As part of a study's policy review team – or as an advisor to an MSC-staffed policy and legal compliance review team – OWPR staff should participate in study kickoff meetings, charettes, in-progress reviews, issue resolution meetings,

feasibility milestones, and policy exemption meetings (including exemptions for study time or cost). They may also perform review manager duties such as coordinating State and Agency Review and finalizing Chief's and Director's Reports, or mentoring a new MSC-based review manager in these areas. OWPR is also responsible for the development of Director's Reports and Chief's Reports, including the coordination of proposed Chief's Reports for State and Agency Review.

DID YOU KNOW?

Beyond their policy review responsibilities, OWPR staff also use their expertise to support the Planning Community and enhance Civil Works Program execution by creating templates and tools for use by the field, developing policy documents, collaborating with other Communities of Practice on committees and oversight groups, and contributing to educational and training efforts such as the Planning Associates Program and Planning PROSPECT courses.



OWPR STAFF PERSPECTIVES

PLANNING AHEAD ASKED OWPR NEWCOMERS NICK APPLGATE AND JASON NORRIS, REVIEW VETERANS FAY LACHNEY AND JEFF TRULICK, AND OWPR CHIEF WES COLEMAN TO PROVIDE THEIR THOUGHTS ON THEIR ROLES IN THE WATER RESOURCES PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.

NEWCOMERS

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WHAT MOST SURPRISED YOU ABOUT THE WORK OWPR DOES?

Nick Applegate and Jason Norris recently joined OWPR as members of the Economics Team.

While it might not be the work itself per se, I've been very surprised with the amount of collaboration there is within OWPR and the Econ Team itself.

We are in constant communication with each other about critical review issues, sharing experiences and lessons learned. – **Nick Applegate**

One thing that has been surprising to me is the amount of non-review work we do. We provide policy guidance and support to the field, develop policy and guidance, and work on initiatives to help improve the agency's policies and processes. To me, that's been the biggest surprise. – **Jason Norris**

REVIEW VETERANS RESPONSE

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT WORKING FOR OWPR?

Fay Lachney (former Plan Formulation Team Lead) and Jeff Trulick (former Environmental Team member) are both veterans of the policy review process. Congratulations to Fay on her recent retirement in April, and to Jeff on his new position with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works!

I most enjoy working with PDTs to help them through the study process. I've been amazed by the complex, unique issues that have challenged the study teams, while also seeing many commonalities between the studies. I am so impressed by the dedication and expertise of our teams. – **Fay Lachney**

Being able to engage with teams across the country on all mission areas. Such a network of friends across the country, doing great work! – **Jeff Trulick**

FOR MORE ON OWPR, CHECK OUT THE 22 APRIL PCOP WEBINAR, PRESENTED BY WES COLEMAN AND HIS TEAM, ON THE PLANNING COMMUNITY TOOLBOX IN THE PCOP WEBINAR COLLECTION.



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE ROLE OF OWPR CHANGE OVER THE DECADE YOU'VE SERVED AS THE CHIEF?

Wes Coleman is the Chief of OWPR.

Over the past decade, there have been two significant changes. When I became Chief of OWPR, the office operated behind a self-imposed “firewall” that limited interaction among the OWPR staff and the teams executing our studies. That created a perception, and perhaps in some cases a reality, of a “gatekeeper” approach. It certainly fostered an impression that OWPR was a black box organization. Since then, we’ve strived to be more open and transparent – more like an usher than a gatekeeper. OWPR staff are now engaging with teams throughout project development, serving as proponents and trainers for national courses and workshops, and working with subject matter experts throughout the enterprise to hone our processes and to assist in the development of more practical and reasonable policy guidance. The other significant change has been the creation of a “one Headquarters” approach to policy review. Major organizational restructuring in 1996 had eliminated Division review of feasibility reports, with those reports going from the Corps’ District-level offices directly to Washington for review. However, we began piloting an approach that would blend experts from the Divisions with experts from HQUSACE into a single policy and legal compliance review team. This approach had several benefits. It exponentially increased the pool of experts that could be engaged for reviews if the workload demanded it. But more importantly, it presented an opportunity for regional experts to gain broader national experience and for national experts to better understand the challenges a District encounters in project development. The pilot worked very well and now the “one Headquarters” policy and legal compliance review team has become the norm. – **Wes Coleman**

DID YOU KNOW?

OWPR’s policy reviewers and team leads are often called on to advise Headquarters senior leadership and decision makers. With the nuanced application of

USACE and Administration policies to specific studies and projects, OWPR staff serve as a supporting bridge between theory and practice of water resources development projects.



TIPS & TRICKS

WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU WISH PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT OWPR? (ALL)

It is easy sometimes to disparage the person or team charged with reviewing your work, but it is important to understand that OWPR staff are driven to help project delivery teams and District Commanders make recommendations intended to solve some of the Nation’s and the world’s most complex water resources challenges. The passion, dedication, and “One Corps” approach that they bring to the job every day has assisted the entire enterprise in the authorization of an unprecedented number of water resources projects over the last decade. – **Wes Coleman**

Don’t be afraid to reach out if your team is struggling with policy questions, especially early in the study process. We are all in this together. – **Nick Applegate**

Involve OWPR (and other reviewers) early in the study process. OWPR team members are also advisors to leadership, so including OWPR results in shared ownership of decisions at all levels of the enterprise, enabling OWPR to advocate for the study. – **Fay Lachney**

We really are here to help. – **Jason Norris**

OWPR has experienced staff who have all been through the wringer at the field level – they are your best advocates at Headquarters! Engage them early and often and sail through the planning process!

– **Jeff Trulick**



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FY2019 AND FY2020 NATIONAL PLANNING AWARD WINNERS!

Mr. Al Lee, Director of Civil Works, recently announced the FY2019 and FY2020 USACE National Planning Awards. In his announcement, Mr. Lee stated: "It has been an unprecedented time for planning teams nationwide with 13 Chief's Reports in 2019 and a record-setting 28 Chief's Reports in 2020, in addition to the diversity of other planning services we provide to USACE and the nation. There were so many worthy nominees from across the enterprise, and I want to thank each of those individuals and teams for

their excellent work. I greatly appreciate the effort and dedication that went into the nomination process."

Recognizing the diversity of work done by planners, the Planning Community now has national awards in six categories:

PLANNING EXCELLENCE – ENTERPRISE

Recognizing exceptional individual accomplishments on specifically authorized feasibility studies or similar-scale efforts (aka "Planner of the Year – Enterprise")

PLANNING EXCELLENCE – PROGRAMMATIC

Recognizing exceptional individual accomplishments on programmatic planning work (aka "Planner of the Year – Programmatic")

OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT – ENTERPRISE

Recognizing exceptional team efforts on specifically authorized feasibility studies or similar-scale efforts

OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT – PROGRAMMATIC

Recognizing exceptional team efforts on programmatic planning work in programs such as Planning Assistance to States, Continuing Authorities Projects, Tribal Partnership Program, etc.

NOEL CLAY PLANNING CHAMPION

Recognizing an individual's contribution to Civil Works Planning success through the provision of leadership, encouragement, and support while enabling planning teams to overcome obstacles

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN USACE PLANNING

Honoring an individual who has distinguished themselves by making significant and lasting contributions to the USACE Planning Community during their career



LEFT: 2019 OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT – ENTERPRISE AWARD WINNER: HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL TEAM



PLEASE JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING THE FY2019 AND FY2020 AWARDEES AND LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THESE EXCELLENT PLANNERS AND PLANNING TEAMS IN FUTURE EDITIONS OF PLANNING AHEAD!

PLANNING EXCELLENCE – ENTERPRISE

- Justin Brewer (NWO) – 2019
- Danielle Tommaso (NAN) – 2020
- Kelly Baxter (NWO) – 2020

PLANNING EXCELLENCE – PROGRAMMATIC

- Daniel Artho (SPK) – 2019
- Marci Jackson (SAJ) – 2020
- Jennifer Salak (NWO) – 2020



ABOVE: 2019 OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT – PROGRAMMATIC AWARD WINNER: AHSTABULA HARBOR BENEFICIAL USE OF DREDGED MATERIAL

OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT – ENTERPRISE

- Houston Ship Channel (Navigation, SWG) – 2019
- Westminster/East Garden Grove (Flood Risk Management, LRC/SPL) – 2019
- Fire Island to Montauk Point (Coastal Storm Risk Management NAN) – 2020
- Tulsa West Tulsa Levees (Flood Risk Management, SWT) – 2020

OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT – PROGRAMMATIC

- Ashtabula Harbor Beneficial Use of Dredged Material (CAP Section 204, LRB) – 2019
- Silver Jackets Interagency Tribal Workshops Team (Flood Risk Management, SPK, SPN, SPL, SPD, HQ, IWR) – 2019

- Silver Jackets California Flood after Fire Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration (CAP Section 206, SPK) – 2020
- Chicago District Ecosystem Restoration Program Project Delivery Team (LRC) – 2020

NOEL CLAY PLANNING CHAMPION

- Kim Otto (SAM) – 2019
- Jim Hutchison (SPL) – 2019
- Scott Miner (SPK) – 2020
- Melissa Nasuti (SAJ) – 2020

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN USACE PLANNING

- Alicia Kirchner (SPK) – 2019
- Jeff Gebert (NAP) – 2019
- Sue Hughes (SWD & HQ/Retired) – 2020

> 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 hqplanning@usace.army.mil.



GETTING TO THE FINISH LINE – PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL FINAL REPORT AND CHIEF’S OR DIRECTOR’S REPORT (4 MARCH)

REPORT PACKAGE CONTENTS

CHIEF’S REPORT PACKAGE:

- Final Impact Feasibility (IFM) report with appendices
- Report Summary (include map, include with accurate dates, congressional delegation for each area, BIC in the document)
- Project Study Area for CHRP (ER 1105-2-100, Exhibit H-2)
- Planform
- Designated B20 or B200 (as required format)
- Final and legal Review certification (and reports)
- Cost certification and Total Project Cost Summary
- Agency response to BIR for water
- Cost and Agency review comments and letters
- Documentation of Review Meeting
- Any applicable project specific implementation guidance or project recommendations
- Non federal person’s signed letter of support and financial self-certification
- Chief’s Report
- Contract Check and Congressional notification letters

DIRECTOR’S REPORT PACKAGE:

- Include the same information as the Chief’s Report Package
- It does not include State and Agency review letters and plans
- Include chief Director’s Report

FOR DOCUMENTS ARE USED BY STATE (SAC), LOCAL (SAC), AND CMB: Make sure that documents are consistent, accurate, and complete. These leaders and Agencies are making decisions concerning their projects.

NEPA MODERNIZATION AND THE PUBLIC (4 FEBRUARY)

WHAT IS AN AUTHORIZED PROJECT?

An authorized project means a project specifically authorized by Congress for construction, generally through language in an authorization or appropriation act, or a project authorized pursuant to Section 201 of the Flood Control Act of 1951.

ER 1105-2-100, Appendix G, Paragraph G-11.a.

“Combining Authorities Program (CAP) system will be used to identify authorized projects.”

NEPA 2002 – SEC. 401. PROJECT AUTHORIZATIONS.
The following projects for water resources development and conservation and other programs, as identified in the reports filed “Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development” submitted to Congress pursuant to section 1001 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2202a) or otherwise reviewed by Congress, are authorized to the extent set by the Secretary notwithstanding in accordance with the plans, and subject to the conditions, described in the respective reports or documents specifically designated in this section.

POST AUTHORIZATION CHANGE REPORTS (PACRS): MYTHS, MYSTERIES, AND LEGENDS (20 MAY)

NEPA MODERNIZATION CONT.

WHY?

Redline Final Revisions: <https://oas.doe.gov/social/eas/regulations/eeq-final-eeq-redline-example-2020-07-16.pdf>

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



PCoP
Q+A

What changes or initiatives should I expect to see from the “Improvements to Feasibility Studies” Campaign Plan objective referenced by Mr. Bush? What does this mean for me and the studies I’m working on?

To move the enterprise toward the stated goal of *delivering quality feasibility studies on time and within budget*, Headquarters Planning and Policy is tackling three core issues:

1. **Timely and transparent sharing of study issues**
2. **District-centric vs. enterprise-wide approaches to team resourcing**
3. **Appropriate engagement of enterprise expertise, including the Planning Centers of Expertise, early and often**

These issues are not unique to the planning phase of Civil Works project development, but as planners we are committed to addressing these issues early and modeling excellent project delivery for the enterprise.

You can expect to see elevated leadership focus on four inter-related areas:

Applying Lessons Learned – Planning will pair targeted after action reviews with project delivery trends analysis across the full portfolio of studies by the Collaboration and Execution Assessment initiative being piloted by Southwestern Division and the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division in order to identify areas where we can enhance delivery by improving training, clarifying guidance, or identifying and managing risk.

Leveraging Enterprise Resources – USACE has established and codified technical centers of expertise, including seven Planning Centers of Expertise (PCXs). With different charges and responsibilities, the PCXs are not used

consistently for their technical expertise by project delivery teams. In conjunction with the PCXs, Headquarters is examining opportunities to create a climate of technical excellence.

Expanding Project Resourcing and Brokering – Since the initiation of more than 30 studies essentially simultaneously with FY18’s flood risk management-focused emergency supplemental appropriations after Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, USACE rose to the challenge by working across District and Division boundaries. District and Division Commanders “brokered” portions of studies or entire studies to ensure appropriate and adequate enterprise resourcing and execution. This approach should not be the exception, but should be part of the culture of excellent project delivery.

Ensuring “Mega-Study” Delivery – Some feasibility studies for especially large or complex water resources projects are clearly “too complex to comply” with the limited study cost and duration of 3 years and \$3 million. Piloted by the Houston Ship Channel study, Headquarters will establish consistent guidelines for vertical team engagement, decision making, and rapid elevation and timely resolution of study issues for these “mega-studies” that complements existing guidance for design and construction of Civil Works “mega-projects.”

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.