



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

PLANNING ahead

WINTER 2015 - Issue 01

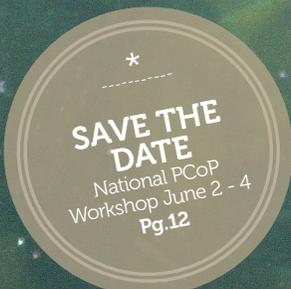
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Theodore A. "Tab" Brown, P.E., SES
 Chief, Planning and Policy, HQUSACE
 Directorate of Civil Works
 Planning Smart, Building Strong

Fellow planners,

I wanted to take a few moments to give you an update on where we are on our Planning Modernization initiative, one of the four pillars of Civil Works Transformation.

As you may know, Planning Modernization's objective is manage a risk-informed planning program that delivers timely, cost effective and high quality water resources investments recommendations for authorization. A robust approach to investing in our people, enhancing our processes, and improving our project delivery and program has implemented. This has been coined as the 4 P's.

I'm proud to know that Corps planners continue to help decision-makers identify water resources problems, formulate and evaluate solutions, and characterize the inevitable conflicts inherent in any solution throughout the life-cycle. These are just a few highlights from a busy year:

People We will continue to invest in our Planners' knowledge and experience. We began a comprehensive update of the Planning Core Curriculum with the transformation of the online Civil Works Development Process (PCC1). This year, we will launch Planning Essentials (PCC2) and will beta-test the new Plan Formulation & Evaluation Capstone (PCC3). We will continue the bimonthly PCoP Webinar Series; roll out Planner Certification and begin formal and informal mentoring.

Process We continued to drive implementation of SMART Planning and 3x3x3. The passage of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) in June 2014 legislated several changes for our Planning Program that we will implement in 2015. These provisions include the elimination of recon studies, strict time lines and costs for conduct of feasibility studies, environmental streamlining, expansion of contributed funds,

sponsor empowerment and a new authorization process. We are working closely with the Assistant Secretary of the Army to publish Implementation Guidance for WRRDA provisions. We are also updating the Planning Guidance Notebook with these changes.

Projects WRRDA 2014 also included over \$25 billion in project authorizations based on the recommendations of 34 Chief's Reports completed between WRDA 2007 and WRRDA 2014. During that period, we completed a total of 36 Chief's Reports with a total recommended investment value of \$28B, with 24 Chief's Reports being completed since the issuance of SMART Planning in February 2012. Eleven Chief's Reports were signed in 2014, the highest number of Chief's Reports in a single year since 2006. Eighteen Civil Works Review Boards were convened to consider the recommendations of District Engineers for new flood damage reduction, navigation and ecosystem restoration projects. To put this in perspective, between WRDA 2000 and WRDA 2007, 46 Chief's Reports were completed at a total recommended investment cost of \$5.8B.

In the last year the portfolio of Chief's Reports grew to 64 (34 newly authorized, 8 signed and awaiting authorization (\$3B), 8 draft Chief's Reports undergoing final State & Agency and NEPA reviews (\$3.7B), and 13 additional draft Chief's Reports with Civil Works Review Boards expected to be completed through FY 2015 (\$2.8B)). We are currently tracking up to 29 Chief's Reports that could be signed through calendar year 2015, 1-1/2 years after enactment of WRRDA 2014. This improved execution rate is a function of: 1) the aggressive management of the Corps' study portfolio utilizing risk-based planning principles; 2) the establishment of vertical team alignment throughout the study process, ensuring corporately-supported studies; and 3) the efficient funding of studies and a commitment to funding studies to completion.

Program For FY14, nine new start studies began their reconnaissance studies with the support and engagement of our Planning Centers of Expertise. Several of these study teams are getting ready to sign Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreements and move into feasibility. We were appropriated funds for up to 10 new start studies in FY15 with the Omnibus spending bill approved in December.

As we look ahead into 2015, I remain confident that we, as Planners, will continue to provide valuable solutions to the Nation and our partners. I look forward to the continued execution of our mission, and welcome your feedback on how it's going in the field.

Essayons, Tab



PLANNING ASSOCIATES:

Congratulations to the Class of 2014 and Welcome Class of 2015

The Planning Associates (PA) Program is an advanced training opportunity in water resources planning offered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Each class engages in an intense 20-course long program that is rich in broadens planners' competencies to develop planners skills in planning and policy at the most difficult technical levels. The Planning Associates Program focuses on solving complex water resources challenges and strengthening the leadership talents of planners. The Program curriculum provides experiential training in the Corps'

Associates Program, based on the premise that the program can be more cost efficient, reach a broader segment of the planning community, and provide more direct benefits to the Planning Community of Practice, Districts, MSCs, and the Corps.

The Planning Community of Practice would like to congratulate the Planning Associates Class of 2014 in successfully completing the PA Program. Their ceremony was held on 15 September 2014 at USACE Headquarters. Graduates include: Bob Needham (Galveston



District); Charlie Hanneken (St. Paul District now HQ); Katie Opsahl (St. Paul District); Athline Clark (Honolulu District); Joél Benegar (San Francisco District); Cindy Upah (Omaha District); Gigi Coulson (New Orleans District); Charyl Barrow (Seattle District); Angie Dunn (Jacksonville

District-now HQ); and Kendall Zaborowski (Chicago District). MG John W. Peabody, Planning and Policy Chief Tab Brown, and Planning Community of Practice Deputy Sue Hughes spoke at the ceremony.

Additionally, we congratulate and introduce the Planning Associates Program Class of 2015: Jason Smith (St. Paul District); Danny Allen (Ft. Worth District); Chris Bouquot (Huntington District); Kim Carsell (Sacramento District); Kelly Keefe (Jacksonville District); Dan Linkowski (St. Paul District); and Greg Kohler (St. Paul District). Good luck as you continue on this journey.

Civil Works business programs. Each course uses case studies, individual and group projects, instructional training and experiences. With courses offered across the country, participants also have networking opportunities with leaders inside and outside the Corps.

A key focus area of Planning Modernization is People: People trained, equipped, and capable of solving problems leading implementation of the Planning Program. In FY15, a key task is to "revision" the PA Program. The purpose of the PA Program Revisioning is to recommend an approach for revising the Planning

THE PA PROGRAM HAS A STORIED HISTORY WITHIN THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS—FROM ITS START IN 1962 AND REINSTATEMENT IN 2002 AFTER AN 8-YEAR HIATUS. MANY PA GRADUATES HAVE GONE ON TO ACCEPT LEADERSHIP POSITIONS ACROSS THE CORPS, INCLUDING:

- 1** DIVISION PLANNING CHIEF
- 2** DISTRICT CIVIL WORKS CHIEFS
- 8** DISTRICT PLANNING CHIEFS
- 8** DIVISION AND DISTRICT SECTION OR BRANCH CHIEFS
- 12** PERMANENT POSITIONS AT HEADQUARTERS



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE PA PROGRAM?

THE PA PROGRAM IS TARGETED TO JOURNEYMAN-LEVEL PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD OF WATER RESOURCES, WHICH IS GENERALLY AT THE GS-11 AND GS-12 LEVEL OF FEDERAL SERVICE. PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOMINATIONS ARE USUALLY MADE IN AUGUST. THE PROGRAM RUNS THE ENTIRE FISCAL YEAR, BEGINNING IN OCTOBER OF EACH YEAR AND ENDS THE FOLLOWING SEPTEMBER. EXPLORE PAST PA CLASSES ON THE PLANNING COMMUNITY TOOLBOX AT [HTTP://PLANNING.USACE.ARMY.MIL/TOOLBOX/](http://planning.usace.army.mil/toolbox/)





Feature News Items

THE ECO-PCX:

YOUR KEY TO ECOLOGICAL MODEL SELECTION AND APPROVAL

The National Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise (ECO-PCX) is a virtual Center of Expertise drawing on ecosystem restoration

mitigation planning. Project Delivery Teams should coordinate with the ECO-PCX on all ecosystem models used in ecosystem restoration and mitigation planning.

for application to a specific study. Coordination with the ECO-PX should occur during the development of a conceptual ecological model and identification of study

problems and opportunities. A conceptual model is an excellent tool to communicate the stressors and drivers of the system, inform the level of detail required, and facilitate selection of a model. The ECO-PCX is available to help study teams work through this process to select a model which will be most useful for application on a specific study.

developed internally and approves models developed by others. During the model approval process, USACE may provide direction on how the model should be applied on USACE studies and projects to ensure the model application is compliant with USACE policy. Numerous models developed by other federal and state agencies have been approved for project-specific and regional use. Recent examples include regional use approval of the Texas Stream Index of Biotic Diversity and project-specific approval of numerous applications of the NOAA Habitat Equivalency Assessment model.

Where can I go for more information?

»» Guidance on planning models is further described in Engineering Circular 1105-2-412, Assuring Quality of Planning Models.

»» Explore the breadth of the Ecosystem Restoration activities online at the Ecosystem Restoration Gateway: <http://cw-environment.usace.army.mil/restoration.cfm>

problems and opportunities. A conceptual model is an excellent tool to communicate the stressors and drivers of the system, inform the level of detail required, and facilitate selection of a model. The ECO-PCX is available to help study teams work through this process to select a model which will be most useful for application on a specific study.

What is the difference between model certification and model approval?

»» The model certification and model approval processes are essentially the same. USACE certifies models

When and how should the ECO-PCX be engaged in selecting a model?

»» Early communication with the ECO-PCX is key in selecting the right model and level of detail necessary



Contact Nathan Richards early in the process to coordinate model selection. Nate works for the St. Paul District in Rock Island. He manages review of ecosystem models for the ECO-PCX and has managed over 75 model reviews since 2011. To initiate the process, schedule a 30-minute call with Nate to discuss:

1. What are the study goals, objectives, constraints, and potential measures? How will with project conditions differ from without project conditions? How will potential alternative plans differ?
2. Conceptual Ecological Model - What are the ecosystem stressors and drivers?
3. Has the Project Delivery Team identified existing models that may be applicable for use?

experts from Districts, MSCs and labs throughout the country. A key responsibility of the ECO-PCX is to assure that quality, effective ecological models are used in ecosystem restoration and



Prior to working for the ECO-PCX, she worked as an Ecosystem Restoration Plan Formulation Regional Technical Specialist in the Rock Island District. If you have questions about ER planning, Jodi can provide assistance or get you in touch with someone who can.

About The ECO-PCX

The ECO-PCX was established in 2003 to provide guidance and improve the quality and effectiveness of the planning process for large and complex water resources projects as they relate to ecosystem restoration and mitigation planning. The ECO-PCX directs and coordinates technical review, review plan development, study management, report prep, training, modeling, and research and development. Jodi Creswell serves as the Operational Director of the ECO-PCX and manages day-to-day operations of the center.



DID YOU KNOW?

[THE ECOSYSTEM MODEL LIBRARY](#) PROVIDES INFORMATION ON OVER 250 EXISTING ECOSYSTEM MODELS INCLUDING MODEL REVIEW AND APPROVAL STATUS.

IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, MORE THAN 50 ECOSYSTEM MODELS WERE APPROVED OR CERTIFIED.



HINTS FOR EASIER MODEL APPROVAL

DURING A FEASIBILITY STUDY, MODEL SELECTION AND MODEL REVIEW SHOULD BE IN-PROGRESS OR COMPLETE BY THE ALTERNATIVES MILESTONE.

MODEL DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW OR EXISTING MODELS ARE OUTLINED IN TABLE 2 OF EC 1105-2-412 (PAGE A-9). IF THE MODEL HAS ALREADY BEEN TECHNICALLY REVIEWED, APPLICABLE REVIEW DOCUMENTATION SHOULD INCLUDE REVIEWERS' QUALIFICATIONS, THEIR CHARGE TO REVIEW, COMMENTS AND RESPONSES, AND ANY PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MODEL.

DON'T OVERLOOK QUALITY CONTROL OF YOUR SPREADSHEETS TO ENSURE COMPUTATIONAL CORRECTNESS AND USABILITY.

Planning Community Webinars



> THE PLANNING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE WEBINAR SERIES OFFERS PLANNERS AND THEIR COLLEAGUES AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE INFORMATION AND LEARN MORE ABOUT TRENDING TOPICS.

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT PLANNING AND THE PRACTICE OF PLANNING? IF THERE IS A TOPIC YOU THINK THE PCOP WOULD BENEFIT FROM, PLEASE EMAIL hqplanning@usace.army.mil.

IN 2015, WEBINARS CONTINUE ON THE FIRST AND THIRD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM 2-3 PM EASTERN. WEBINARS AND THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM EACH SESSION ARE ARCHIVED ON THE PLANNING COMMUNITY TOOLBOX.

THE TOOLBOX ALSO CONTAINS LINKS TO OTHER WEBINARS AND WEBINAR SERIES OF INTEREST TO PLANNERS - FIND THEM ALL ON THE TOOLBOX'S TRAINING PAGE.

FIND MORE WEBINARS AT:
The planning community [Toolbox](#)



Hails & Farewells

The end of 2014 saw several new faces within the Headquarters Planning

Community. We bid farewell to two retirees, and a hearty “glad you came back” to one.

Senior Policy Advisors

Ms. Janice Rasgus retired in Oct 2014 after beginning her career with USACE in 1974. She had responsibility for a wide range of policy interpretation, application, development, and implementation, especially overseeing the WRDDA implementation guidance process for USACE. Jan was highly praised for providing exceptional leadership in the Corps, especially in the Planning and Policy fields. In her extensive public service, Ms. Rasgus has demonstrated the highest levels of leadership, competence, professionalism, and selfless devotion to duty. Reflecting those values, Jan has returned to HQ and can be found shepherding WRRDA implementation guidance.



Ms. Rennie Sherman retired in Jun 2014. She worked for USACE Headquarters since 1972 and last served as a Senior Policy Advisor in the Planning and Policy Division and the Business Line Manager for the Aquatic

and lasting impact on meeting the needs of the Corps and the Nation.

Mr. John Furry retired in June 2014 after starting with the Huntington District in 1979. Mr Furry’s was

USACE on several interagency committees and work groups. While at Corps HQ, John was also involved in several large-scale ecosystem restoration projects and developing of an Environmental Justice policy for Civil Works.

Ms. Jeanette Gallihugh has been selected as a Senior Policy Advisor in the Planning and Policy Division. Jeanette brings over 24 years of federal government experience and leadership to this vital Civil Works mission area. Prior to this selection, Jeanette served as a Senior Biologist in the Office of Water Project Review for the past 9 years. Prior to this

IN HER EXTENSIVE PUBLIC SERVICE MS. RASGUS HAS DEMONSTRATED THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF LEADERSHIP, COMPETENCE, PROFESSIONALISM, AND SELFLESS DEVOTION TO DUTY.

Ecosystem Restoration program. Throughout her career she has made outstanding contributions and innovations in technical, supervisory and leadership positions that have had broad

also a senior planning policy advisor. His responsibilities also included being the Designated Federal Officer to the Chief of Engineers’ Environmental Advisory Board, and he represented



position she served for 10 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has also served with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Corps Regulatory Field Offices in Utah and Nevada. Jeanette will be working on a number of initiatives in Planning and Policy, including WRRDA 2014 implementation.



Florida Section as a NEPA Environmental Lead on a variety of projects including navigation, flood risk management, and ecosystem restoration projects.

Ms. Katie Williams has joined the SWD RIT in their Planner position. Prior to this selection Katie was an economist with the Galveston District and worked on navigation projects. She previewed her role as SWD Planner by serving the SWD-RIT Endowed Chair last summer. In her spare time, Katie teaches a graduate school economics class. Prior to joining the Corps, she worked at the

North (RPEDN) out of the St Louis District, primarily on planning ecosystem restoration projects. This included projects on the Mississippi River under the Environmental Management Program, projects for the Kansas City District under the Missouri River Recovery Program, and MVD efforts to respond to drought conditions that were threatening to shut down navigation traffic on the Mississippi River.

Mr. Ray Wimbrough has joined the RIT Planner team as the NAD RIT Planner. Prior to this selection, Ray

Ms. Mindy Simmons was also recently selected as a Senior Policy Advisor in the Planning and Policy Division. Prior to this selection, Mindy served as a Senior Program Manager in the Programs Integration Division, HQUSACE and as a RIT Endowed Chair. She has also served in the Portland District within the Planning organization, USACE and the National Marine Fisheries Service. Among her duties within Civil Works Planning will be to serve as the Business Line Manager for the Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration program, and as the Designated Federal Officer for the Environmental Advisory Board.



Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as an economist.

Mr. Charlie Hanneken is bringing his MVD experience to Headquarters as the MVD RIT Planner. Prior to this selection Charlie served MVD's Regional Planning and Environment Division

served as a Planning Technical Lead at the Jacksonville District on numerous projects primarily focused on Ecosystem Restoration, but also in Navigation and Flood Risk Management capacities.

Welcome to New Regional Integration Team Members

Ms. Angie Dunn has moved to Headquarters as the NWD/POD RIT Planner. Prior to this selection Angie served as a planner in the Jacksonville District where she worked in the South





THE YUBA RIVER FLOWS OUT OF THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAIN RANGE NORTHEAST OF SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA. IN THE MID-1800S, THOUSANDS OF MINERS DESCENDED UPON THE YUBA RIVER DURING THE GOLD RUSH. ONE OF THEIR MAIN TECHNIQUES WAS HYDRAULIC MINING, USING WATER CANNONS TO SHOOT HIGH-PRESSURE FLOWS TO WASH AWAY HILLSIDES.

YUBA RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION STUDY



The Sacramento District recently completed a reconnaissance study for the Yuba River of northern central California. The Yuba River Fish Passage study is one of the new start studies launched in FY14. The study team anticipates signing a 3x3 compliant Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) with the study sponsor, the Yuba County Water Agency, this spring.

The Yuba River flows out of the Sierra Nevada mountain range northeast of Sacramento, California. In the mid-1800s, thousands of miners descended upon the Yuba River during the Gold Rush. One of their main techniques was hydraulic mining, using water cannons to shoot high-pressure flows to wash away hillsides.

The dislodged material was then sluiced, or rinsed, to expose the gold. It has been estimated that the amount of soil washed downstream in the Yuba River watershed alone totaled more than three times what was excavated for the Panama Canal.

To prevent sediment from continuing to flow into the Yuba River and agriculturally rich Sacramento Valley, two major debris dams were constructed. Daguerre Point Dam was completed in 1906 and Englebright Dam in 1941. Both of these dams are operated and maintained by the Sacramento District.

A third dam, New Bullards Bar, was constructed by the Yuba County Water Agency in 1970. It stores drinking water and generates hydroelectric power.

New Bullards Bar and Englebright Dams continue to function as intended, but they block historic habitat of anadromous fish species. In the past, salmon and steelhead trout traveled far upstream after returning from the ocean.

Daguerre Point Dam has long since met its intended purpose; it does not have the capacity to store more sediment. At about 25 feet tall, it is the smallest of the three dams, but under certain flow conditions, it may, too, impede fish passage.





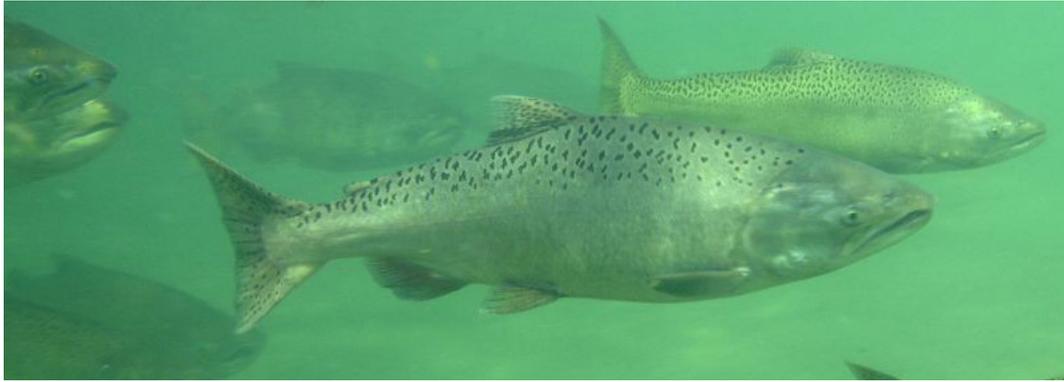
Particularly affected by the three dams are spring-run Chinook salmon, a federally threatened species. According to Brian Mulvey, a Sacramento District fish biologist, “spring-run Chinook salmon would take advantage of the snow-melt in the spring to swim up to high-elevation spawning grounds.”

step in determining what more can be done to improve fish passage conditions.

A great deal of research has already been conducted on the Yuba River. Part of the Reconnaissance report includes information from the study sponsor, the Yuba County

To scope the study to 3x3, the study team relied heavily on documenting and evaluating the uncertainties related to the study using the IWRM (Integrated Water Resource Management) Suite tools, including the online risk register. Going forward, this knowledge will be fundamental for the feasibility study.

For more information about the Yuba River and the Corps’ study, please visit the Sacramento District’s website, <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/EnvironmentalProjects/>

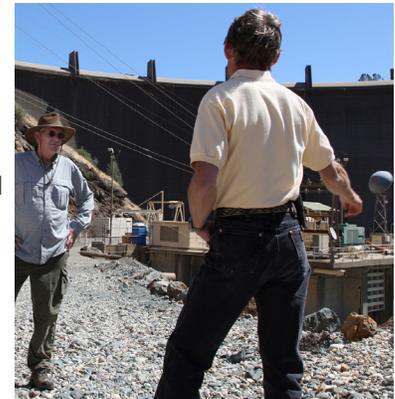


The Sacramento District’s reconnaissance study examined the loss of habitat connectivity and other ecosystem restoration problems and opportunities along the Yuba River.

Water Agency. “Our non-federal partner has a vast amount of knowledge about the watershed,” said Joana Saviñon, Sacramento District project manager.

As two of these dams are Corps operated and maintained, there is also significant amount of in-house knowledge about the watershed and the dams, including two Biological Assessments completed in 2013.

Given that the Corps cannot remove the dams or make major structural modifications or changes to the dams’ authorized purposes without Congressional authorization and appropriation, the feasibility study is the next



What’s New on the Planning Community Toolbox



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

> SEVERAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE UPDATES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN POSTED TO THE PLANNING COMMUNITY TOOLBOX:

>> WRRDA IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE – FIND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE AS IT IS PUBLISHED UNDER THE POLICY AND GUIDANCE UPDATES ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE TOOLBOX. GUIDANCE FOR WRRDA SECTIONS 7001, 1030, AND 1032 HAS BEEN PUBLISHED SO FAR AND MORE IS EXPECTED SOON.

>> PLANNING BULLETIN 2015-01: VERTICAL TEAM ALIGNMENT IN STUDY SCOPING OUTLINES REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL STUDIES ENSURING VERTICAL TEAM ALIGNMENT ON A STUDY’S SCOPE, BUDGET AND TIMELINE.

>> WHAT IS VERTICAL ALIGNMENT? CHECK OUT OUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. WHEN THERE IS A NEW QUESTION – OR AN UPDATED ANSWER – THE FAQs ARE IN THE “OTHER

NEWS” FEED ON THE FRONT PAGE.

ALSO ON THE TOOLBOX, YOU CAN FIND LINKS TO RECENTLY COMPLETED CHIEF’S REPORTS, PLANNING COMMUNITY WEBINAR PRESENTATIONS, AND MORE.

VISIT THE TOOLBOX ONLINE AT www.corpsplanning.us



THE NEW PLANNING CORE CURRICULUM BUILDS ON THE CONTENT OF CLASSES LIKE CIVIL WORKS ORIENTATION (FORMER PCC1) AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES (FORMER PCC2), REEXAMINED AND REDESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF TODAY'S CORPS PLANNERS.



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



A LOOK AT THE NEW PLANNING CORE CURRICULUM

Do you remember what you learned when you took the Planning Core Curriculum courses? As part of the Corps' Planning Modernization initiative, we are taking a fresh look at how we train our planners and the content of that training. Our goal is to improve planner knowledge and experience through training, mentoring, and challenging work in order to create a sustainable national and regional planning operation and organization.

In this issue of Planning Ahead, we talked to Sierra Keenan, a graduate of the 2013 Planning Associates program and a planner in the St. Paul District. Sierra shares some of her experiences and previews the changes being developed by the Planning Essentials course team.

The Planning Core Curriculum is undergoing a major refresh and new courses will be introduced in FY15. The Planning Core Curriculum provides a decision-focused application of the six-step planning process through three courses:

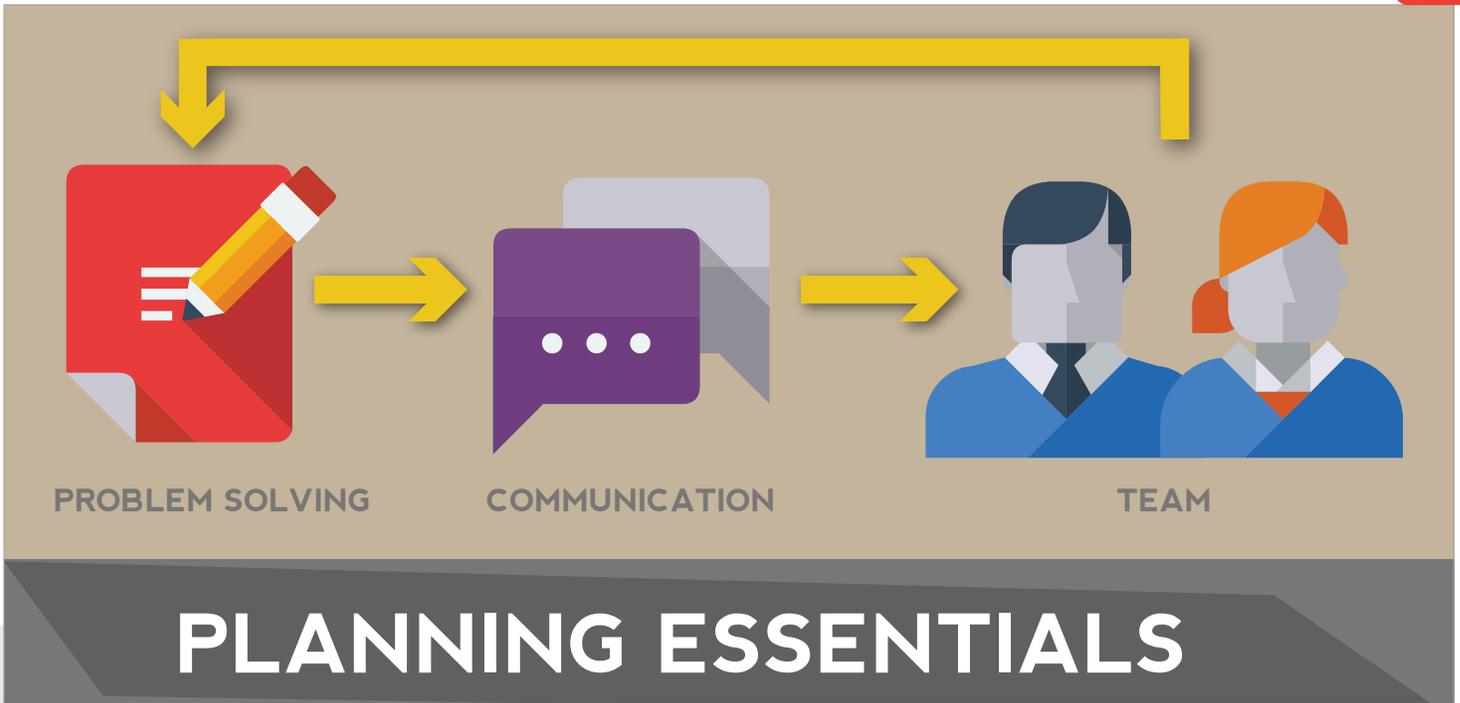
- Civil Works Project Development Process
- Planning Essentials
- Plan Formulation and Evaluation Capstone

The Civil Works Project Development Process class has been available online since FY14. The content of the course is open to all and available on demand – however enrollment via the USACE Learning Center and tuition is required to take the test and earn the certificate. The Planning Essentials and Plan Formulation and Evaluation Capstone courses are in development and production for initial roll out in fiscal year 2015.

My work with the Planning Essentials development team is an exciting challenge. We are breaking new ground and the course will be the first of its kind for the USACE Learning Center, delivered online in a combination of self-paced individual and real-time group sessions. The online components will be delivered through Blackboard Learn, an online learning management system commonly used by universities.

The core of Planning Essentials is problem solving, teams, and communication – we will continue to return to these foundational elements of planning throughout the course. The new Planning Essentials modernizes the Planning Principles and Procedures class, with additional content related to risk-informed decision making, critical thinking, and technical writing. This integration of new technology and revised content increases the course relevancy for today's Civil Works Planning culture and ensures planners can get the training they need when they need it.





PLANNING ESSENTIALS

Problem Solving – At its heart, planning is problem solving and the six-step process is our problem solving framework. Through case studies, online modules, written exercises, and a virtual classroom, students will understand and apply problem solving techniques.

Teams – Teamwork and the critical roles of the interdisciplinary PDT, stakeholders, sponsors and the vertical team is emphasized in every lesson. This is the first course in the Planning Core Curriculum to examine the relationships among each discipline’s work effort throughout the entire planning process.

Communication – Telling the story with a great report, preparing clear and concise briefing materials, presenting to the public, or writing a Decision Management Plan – effective communication is our key to success! The course covers communication fundamentals, public involvement and assignments for students to practice active listening and apply four common communication methods used in the Corps (e-mails, reports, meetings, and presentations).

» IT’S BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO WORK WITH THIS TALENTED GROUP, RELYING ON OUR WEB-BASED TOOLS TO COLLABORATE ACROSS DISTRICT BOUNDARIES AND TIME ZONES. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS TEAM PULLING TOGETHER VIRTUALLY TO CREATE PLANNING ESSENTIALS IS EVIDENCE TO ME THAT AN ONLINE CLASSROOM CAN AND WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

» IN ADDITION TO WORKING ON THE PLANNING ESSENTIALS TEAM, I AM ALSO A LIAISON WITH THE CAPSTONE COURSE TEAM TO ENSURE A SEAMLESS TRANSITION BETWEEN THE COURSES. THE CAPSTONE COURSE WILL BE DELIVERED AS AN IN-

PERSON COURSE USING CASE STUDIES, LECTURES, AND PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES TO PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PLANNERS TO APPLY CRITICAL THINKING AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS.

» WITH EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINED BUDGETS, WE INFORM DECISIONS EVERYWHERE, NOT JUST NEW PROJECTS. IT IS AN EXCITING TIME TO BE A PLANNER! THE REFRESHED PLANNING CORE CURRICULUM IS THE STEPPING OFF POINT IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MODERN PLANNERS SOLVING OUR NATION’S WATER RESOURCES PROBLEMS.





WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

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

Planning Community News Flashes

Save the Date!

» Mark your calendars for the National PCoP Workshop, June 2 - 4. Hosted by South Atlantic District, the organizing team is getting underway for the three-day workshop at the Sam Nunn Federal Center in Atlanta, GA.

The purpose of the Workshop is to train District-level leaders in the planning processes to provide them the information and skills necessary to deliver timely, cost-effective and high quality vital and essential enduring water resources solutions. The training will emphasize the practices, policies and procedures that are being implemented by the Planning Community of Practice in support of Planning Modernization and Civil Works Transformation. Participants are expected to bring back materials, information and key messages to colleagues in their District/MSO.

Plenary Sessions will address critical issue areas to the Planning Community, while breakouts will

emphasize the practices, policies and procedures necessary to address key obstacles identified at the Planning Summit (Fall 2014), grouped in three tracks:

- 1) Aligning Expectations: Decision-Making and Review Roles and Responsibilities
- 2) Delivering on our Commitments: Project Delivery and the Corps Planning Program
- 3) Sustaining Change: Supporting and Building Planner Capability

WRRDA Implementation Guidance

» Headquarters continues to develop implementation guidance for the provisions in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works). These guidance memorandums, when published, provide the policies and procedures to be used in implementing the new law. Keep an eye on the Planning Community Toolbox – several sections

will have a significant impact on Planning!

Are You Up-to-Date in the Planner Database?

» The online Planning CoP Subject Matter Expertise database records, organizes and reports the knowledge, skills and abilities of USACE Planners in each of the sub-Communities of Practice. Update your experience and training or search for planners based by division, district, or categories such as level of experience, business expertise or training – all in an easy-to-use online tool. Login today at <http://sme.iwrmsuite.us/>

New Online Risk Register

» Now your entire team can access your study's Risk Register and other study documents, including the Decision Management Plan and Decision Log, in an easy online format. The Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Suite is being developed to facilitate the use of these tools by Project Delivery Teams, review teams, and project

advisors. Explore the tools, including a Test Study, online at <http://www.iwrmsuite.us/>

Recent Chief's Reports & Civil Works Review Boards

» Congratulations to the project teams that saw Chief's Reports signed last quarter: Brazos Island Harbor Channel Improvement Project, Texas and the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), Florida. The Central Everglades Planning Project was one of five national planning pilots that first applied and tested the tenets behind the SMART Planning approach.

This fall also saw successful Civil Works Review Boards for the Upper Ohio River Navigation Study, the Manhattan Kansas Levee Study, and the West Shore Lake Pontchartrain flood risk reduction study in Louisiana. Congratulations and Essays!