

PLANNING AHEAD

Notes for the Planning and Policy Community

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Vacancy Announcements

Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (OASA-CW) Developmental Position – Economist

James Smyth – ASA(CW)

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) is accepting nominations for a developmental position as an economist in Project Planning & Review (PP&R). The length of the assignment is not to exceed 120 days. The position is open to an economist at the GS-14 or GS-13 level at their current grade. A temporary promotion to the GS-13 level is available for a well-qualified GS-12 economist. The duties consist of plan formulation and economic review of Corps of Engineers civil works projects. The individual must be familiar with Corps civil works policy, planning process, and economic evaluation techniques and methods. Prior experience with the preparation and/or review of feasibility or

continuing authority projects, particularly flood damage reduction, navigation, and hurricane and storm damage reduction purposes, is highly desirable. The individual must be able to perform an objective and unbiased review, work as a member of a team, and have good communication skills. The individual will be expected to work collaboratively with others in PP&R, HQUSACE, and Office of Management and Budget. PP&R will do all possible to make this an interesting and productive experience and will work to help the individual get exposure within the Army (Pentagon) and HQUSACE.

Selection will be made from all applications received by June 20, 2003. The form of the application should be similar to that used to apply for a Corps of Engineers position in RESUMIX. Emphasis should be on education and experience in the areas noted above.

The PP&R group is located in the General Accounting Office Building at 441 G. Street, NW, Washington, DC. This is the building where Corps Headquarters is located. The building is conveniently located in downtown Washington and near several subway lines. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) will work directly with the home office of the individual on the necessary financial arrangements. Short-term rental accommodations are available throughout the Washington metropolitan area.

For additional information, contact James J. Smyth, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Project Planning & Review), Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) at (202) 761-0016 or james.smyth@hqda.army.mil. Applications should be submitted to Mr. Smyth at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), 108 Army Pentagon, Washington, DC 20310-0108, at the e-mail addresses noted above, or may be sent via fax to (202) 761-0050. Submission via e-mail directly is preferred.

The Water Resources Planning Master's Program – On-Line Classes

[Pat Mutschler](#) – CECWP-PC

I am almost finished my second term in the Master's Program at Johns Hopkins, where this semester I am taking an online class in Environmental Impact Assessments. For the most part the class has been a great experience. Originally only eight students registered for the class, and Dr. Toussaint (or Dr. T, as he signs his messages) divided us into two equal-sized groups, based on introductions we submitted to the class web page bulletin board. Our backgrounds are varied – government employees and contractors coming from three continents.

The workload is pretty intense: five individual assignments, four group assignments, two exams, and a final ten-page paper. The downside is that I am constantly busy with either reading or writing for the class. The up side is that no single assignment is vital to the final grade, so I have been able to work around both my job travel schedule and my home commitments. While on temporary duty in south China, one group mate was able to participate in our most recent assignment via discussion boards – the ultimate work around.

I was a bit concerned about the group projects at first. How were four people who had never met going to coordinate schedules and tasks in order to complete a project in a short timeframe? We arranged to meet in the designated “Group 1 chat room” every Wednesday night and Saturday morning to discuss

the projects and share ideas and insights. It was incredibly fruitful to have input from other working professionals. In between our chat sessions, we would post WORD files with our thoughts and ideas, so that everyone could be prepared for the discussions. The chats were usually over in 45 minutes to an hour, but there was one Saturday when we met for about an hour and a half! None of us seemed aware of the time. The group really clicked – no pun intended – and we had a lot of fun and lively debate.

Unfortunately, a student in the other group withdrew and Dr. T. merged the two groups. Now there are seven of us in the single group and the logistics get a bit cumbersome. We had to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement based on a hypothetical scenario provided by Dr. T. Getting seven persons to commit to a specific meeting time and then to agree to a process for completing the work – not to mention agreeing on the final content – was challenging. We did well on the assignment, but it was definitely more difficult with more voices to be heard. I suspect, though, that our experience was similar to that of many Corps virtual teams.

All in all, I am impressed with how the online courses are managed at Johns Hopkins. The web-based school and tools are professional and well organized. The professor is amazingly responsive and supportive. His comments are constructive, and his input is well timed. He provides us with a set of notes at the start of each week providing needed background for the 150 or so pages of reading he assigns for that week. The classes are more flexible in some ways than the traditional “sticks and bricks” classroom, but they do require more self-discipline, and I think more study time. If this were a traditional course, I would attend class for two hours once a week, and study for a few hours each weekend to stay caught up with the workload. In the on-line setting I log into the discussion board usually twice a day, and spend six to eight hours a week on the readings, discussion sessions, and assignments.

I plan to take the Differential Calculus and Linear Algebra class this summer in a traditional setting. I am truly not looking forward to that class, but upon completion there will be no more restrictions on which classes I can take to wrap up my program.

I strongly encourage Planners to look into the Johns Hopkins or one of the other four Masters Programs being offered. The classes are having a real impact on my understanding and effectiveness in the office, as well as providing an enriching personal growth experience. Give it a try! 

A Place for All Seasons, Barber Pool Conservation Area, Boise ID – Master Plan Successfully Completed

Cindy Boen – CENWW-PL and Debbie Willis – CENWW-PM

As the seasons change along the Boise River, so do the wildlife habitats and inhabitants. Abundant in wildlife activity, the Barber Pool Conservation Area (BPCA) is located approximately six miles from downtown Boise; it hosts over 200 bird species, and 60 reptile, amphibian, and mammal species, including bald eagles, mule deer, and elk. The area is owned by the Idaho Foundation of Parks and Lands and managed by Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. Because of the rich variety of habitats and species in a relatively compact area, BPCA is significant to conservationists, scientists, and the general public and, in fact, has attained a certain stature and recognition as the most important piece of native riparian habitat along the metropolitan reach of the Boise River. The BPCA has been awarded the title of “Idaho Unique Wildlife System” by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. However, with rapid urban

growth and development pressures around BPCA, a concerned group of local folks came together to establish the Friends of the Barber Pool Conservation Area. This group, made up of representatives of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands, Ada County, Boise City, The Nature Conservancy, The Land Trust of Treasure Valley, Golden Eagle Audubon Society, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, has worked hard to preserve, protect, and enhance this important resource.

In 2002 the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation invited the Walla Walla District to work with this group to help develop a Master Plan for the BPCA. Using Section 22 authority – Planning Assistance to States – District professionals worked with the Friends of the BPCA to produce a master plan that included an inventory of the natural resources of the BPCA; current ecological, human, and aesthetic uses of BPCA lands (i.e., habitat and recreational use, and existing facilities); ecosystem components; and conditions necessary to sustain desired wildlife and plant habitat. The master plan provides a plan of action to protect the resource, to provide educational and recreational opportunities, and to anticipate future management needs. It is fair to say that based on community input there is overwhelming support for the preservation and enhancement of conservation resources at BPCA.

The Master Plan, which includes numerous current and historic photographs, is available at the Walla Walla District [website](#). A nice photograph of the entire Barber Pool area is at the Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands [website](#). For additional information contact: Cindy.A.Boen@usace.army.mil (509-527-7246) or Debra.k.willis@usace.army.mil (208-345-2065). 

Nonstructural Assistance Provided

National Nonstructural/Flood Proofing Committee

The National Nonstructural/Flood Proofing Committee (NFPC) conducted a workshop for the St Paul District on implementing nonstructural measures. Topics covered included: nonstructural measures, opportunities for using nonstructural measures, plan formulation incorporating nonstructural measures, NED analysis and NER analysis relative to nonstructural measures, plans and specs for nonstructural measures, and examples of nonstructural measures implementation across the Corps. The NFPC reviewed actual projects in the St. Paul District to suggest opportunities that may exist for implementation of nonstructural measures. This assistance was provided using a combination of Flood Plain Management Services and project funds.

The NFPC provided assistance to the Savannah District in nonstructural plan formulation relative to the Augusta, Georgia, Feasibility Study. A short presentation demonstrated nonstructural measures and opportunities that exist with implementation of nonstructural measures. This was followed by a field trip to Augusta with the Project Delivery Team to view the flood damage problems. Opportunities were discussed for nonstructural solutions to reduce the flood damages. Included in this discussion were ecosystem restoration and recreation opportunities that could transform the present stream corridor with high flood damage potential into one full of greatly reduced flood damages and greatly enhanced community vitality. This assistance was provided using project funds.

Flood proofing was the main topic for the NFPC workshop conducted in conjunction with the Sacramento District and the State of California on. This one-day workshop provided a forum for discussion of flood proofing measures and related opportunities. The NFPC served as the catalyst for an extremely active dialogue between government entities including city, county, State, and Federal. FEMA

was also present to provide insight into the relationship of flood proofing opportunities and the National Flood Insurance Program. The success of the workshop was evident by the State of California requesting additional flood proofing workshops in other areas of the State. This assistance was provided using Flood Plain Management Services funds.

The NFPC provided assistance to the Galveston District on development of a flood plain management plan (FPMP) for the Clear Creek Basin near Houston, Texas. A one day workshop was held to discuss not just what should be in the FPMP based on the authorizing legislation but what opportunities are available through the FPMP process. This is an opportunity for local communities to achieve through a sound, comprehensive flood plain management plan for the basin, a vision for the future that not only reduces flood damages but also maximizes the beneficial aspects of a stream and flood plain corridor. This assistance was provided using project funds.

Headquarters POC is [Ken Zwickl](#). 

Texas Water Allocation Assessment: Review of Corps Water Supply Authorities, Policies and Related Land Resources Issues

Ted Hillyer and Bill Werick – CEIWR-PD

In 1997 Texas began to plan for meeting the water supply needs of a rapidly growing population. Sixteen regions were created based on water sources, river basins, economic growth centers, and other factors. Each new Regional Water Planning Group (RWPG) studied available water supplies, and projected demands for the next fifty years. The RWPGs forecast municipal and industrial water shortages of over 3 million acre-feet yearly by 2050, and they recommended over \$17 billion of improvements to meet the shortfall. For many entities improvements won't be possible without assistance, and local and state resources may not be sufficient. In response, the Texas Congressional Delegation requested that potential for Federal assistance be studied.

After the Congressional wheels turned and funds were appropriated as part of the Texas Water Allocation Assessment, the Ft. Worth District contracted with the Institute for Water Resources (IWR) for a study. The resulting report is a joint effort of IWR's Planning and Policy Studies Division and the consulting firm Planning and Management Consultants, Ltd. of Carbondale, IL. The report lays out the potential for the Corps to help by using both individual authorities, and a new approach that spans Corps program areas and that requires a higher than usual degree of collaboration.

Some parts of the report focus solely on Texas (chapters on Specific Issues Related to Texas, Assessment of the Corps Role in Texas Water Supply, and Conclusions) while other parts apply in or out of Texas (chapters on Corps Water Supply Authorities and Policies, Other Related Issues, How Authorities and Policies Limit Corps Involvement). Also, one appendix covers Legislation Pertinent to Water Supply and another covers Authorizations for Water Supply, Water Quality and Related Infrastructure Projects and Studies.

The Corps cannot, under existing authorities, subsidize construction of new water supply infrastructure. The report recounts how the Federal interest in navigation and flood control developed over the history of the United States and considers and rejects (with some qualification) the idea that similar arguments could be made to support a Federal interest in water supply. The assessment identified three core issues that were answered affirmatively for navigation and flood control: (1) is Federal

involvement constitutional? (2) will benefits spill over state or local political boundaries? and (3) are benefits unlikely to be realized without Federal intervention? These questions are not likely to be answered affirmatively for water supply.

The report identifies the two avenues offering the most promise. The first is the Corps authority to reallocate space in existing reservoirs. The second is for the Corps to use a new collaborative approach, especially in its regulatory mission. This latter offers enormous promise, but it will only work if the Corps, water utilities, stakeholders and non-governmental organizations interested in water supply issues commit themselves to joint development of water supply solutions rather than proceeding individually in their roles as designers and critics. The Corps can be especially helpful because it helped develop a new collaborative approach called shared vision planning. This shared vision approach is important in Texas, because the transfer of water from one region to another is both feasible from an engineering and economic perspective and problematic from a political and environmental perspective.

As developed in the report, the delivery and even the level of Federal help might be improved by a new Federal-state cooperative effort such as the California Bay-Delta system (Calfed), initiated in 1994 to address environmental and water management problems including water supply in California's Bay-Delta system. The report's brief analysis of Calfed suggests that the tangible outcomes of that process disappointed many, especially those who might have thought it would open the door to substantial Federal investment.

Water shortages in Texas are in large part regional. Some areas will likely have abundance of water over the next several decades, while others are likely to experience minor to significant shortages. Thus, the issue is geospatial and shortages could be greatly reduced in many cases by transferring water from areas of high concentration to areas of low concentration. The difficulty in achieving regional and interstate reallocations is that of reaching a consensus among stakeholders and the various agencies – local, state and Federal – involved in planning and approving such transfers. Economic and environmental impacts of large-scale water transfers must also be analyzed and assessed.

The 145-page report, [Texas Water Allocation Assessment](#), can be found on the [Ft. Worth](#) web site. 

Instructions for Contributors 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.

- Use MS WORD
- Use "normal" style
- Use Times New Roman font, 11 point
- All text should be left justified with start of each paragraph indented by one tab stop.
- Each article should have short title with only initial letter of each word capitalized
- Following each title should be author's name and organization
- Last line should be contact information – phone number or e-mail address 

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Submissions Deadline

The deadline for material for the next issue is 13 June 2003.

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