



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

# PLANNINGahead

Fall 2021 - Issue 03

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# VIRTUAL VIEW FROM HQ

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

## PLANNERS!

As the summer draws to a close, I hope you have all had a chance to take a break, recharge, and spend some quality time with family and friends – particularly as we continue to navigate these challenging times with the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainty that accompanies it. As I look forward to the new fiscal year that is quickly approaching, I wanted to provide an update on a few important topics that are driving discussion here at HQ and about which we are eager to coordinate with planners in the field:

### Revolutionizing Planning

– With emergency supplemental appropriations from FY18 and beyond, the potential multiplier of the INVEST in America Act passed by the Senate, and regular FY22 appropriations, USACE Civil Works is currently facing the potential of needing to deliver a \$30B annual program. Our capability is about \$6B if we compare to recent history. This is a challenging math problem! One of the ways we've solved it in the past is slowing down the completion

of work, including Planning studies – but that strategy has not served us very well and definitely will not work going forward.

I know that USACE planners are up to tackling this enormous challenge – and doing so will require not just small tweaks to our processes and engagement of the full Civil Works team, but comprehensive, revolutionary changes to our policies, methods of delivery, workforce, and portfolio management. Planning leaders and leaders from other functional areas from HQ and all MSCs recently met to discuss ideas for implementing revolutionary changes, both near-term and far-reaching. Acting PCoP Deputy Kendall Zaborowski is currently working with a small group to evaluate and screen the results of this initial brainstorming and organize ideas into potential courses of action. Stay tuned for more details soon – and in the meantime, please send any revolutionary suggestions you have to your District or MSC Planning Chief. There is no such thing as too many good ideas!

### Environmental Justice

– With the current Administration highly focused on environmental

justice, the Chief of Engineers recently sent out a memo to field commanders regarding USACE implementation of environmental justice principles. The Chief's memo contains practical information about how to incorporate environmental justice considerations with emphasis on the Regulatory Program and making permitting decisions, but it also applies to Civil Works. Keeping in mind that Planning has been applying environmental considerations in feasibility studies and investment decisions for decades – let's make sure we're using the policies and tools already at our disposal to ensure we are planning to protect the Nation's underserved communities. Look out for more policy and guidance to come from the Administration, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works (OASA(CW)), and HQ on this important topic.

### Comprehensive Benefits

– Since the issuance of the Comprehensive Documentation of Benefits in Decision Documents policy directive by the ASA(CW) in January, planning teams have been working diligently to consider and document the total range of benefits (and impacts) of water resources project alternatives, including

economic, environmental, and social categories. This is about maximizing benefits across all four accounts and considering trade-offs when necessary. As feasibility studies progress through the formulation and plan recommendation process, HQ is working with MSC Planning Chiefs to document best practices from projects that have applied these concepts so that the information can be shared broadly and we can continue to learn from one another. If you are on a study team working to apply the requirements in the ASA(CW)'s memo to your project, please make use of HQ's offer to provide (free!) consultation services by coordinating with your District Planning Chief.

Finally, keep an eye out for new and updated planning guidance in the near future – WRDA 2020 implementation guidance will be posted to the HQ website as it is approved by the ASA(CW), and we anticipate key guidance on the Coastal Barrier Resources Act and the long-awaited updated Planning Guidance Notebook (new name TBD) in the new fiscal year.

### Essays!



# PCoP NEWS FLASHES

## PLANNING COMMUNITY NEWS

### Planning Quick Takes Handbook

The recently published Planning Quick Takes: Timely Topics for Risk-Informed Planning Studies, formerly known as the Planning Mentor Handbook, contains helpful tools for novice and master USACE planners alike. In addition to a title change, the Planning Quick Takes Handbook now covers a variety of new topics including life safety assessment, climate change assessment, and incorporating the four accounts among others. This resource can be accessed on the USACE Planning Community Toolbox.

### The Newest Items of Local Cooperation (ILCs)

OWPR has been working on developing new ILCs for application to a variety of FMR situations, as well as updating existing ILCs to incorporate standardized HTRW language for Chief's Reports. ILCs for Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRM) and Structural Flood Risk Management (FRM) projects have been finalized and are now available on the Headquarters Project Partnership Agreement website. It should be noted that there are three different CSRM ILCs and two different FRM ILCs available on the

website; the appropriate ILC should be selected based on the type of proposed CSRM or FRM project. Additionally, CSRM ILCs with or without beach improvements and structural and nonstructural FRM ILCs with or without recreation have recently been completed. These recent ILCs are available on the [Headquarters Project Partnership Agreement Website](#).

### Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2020 Implementation Guidance – Coming Soon

The first pieces of implementation guidance are rolling out from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (OASA(CW)) for 32 sections of WRDA 2020, including guidance specific to planners and planning teams. For more information or to follow along as the guidance is released, visit the [legislatives links page](#) on the USACE Headquarters website and keep an eye on the [WRDA 2020 Implementation Guidance page](#) to see when new guidance is posted.

### National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution

The National Center for Environmental Conflict

Resolution, a program of the Morris K. Udall and Stewart L. Udall Foundation, has new interactive and dynamic trainings in environmental collaboration and conflict resolution. A four-day training course on “Collaboration with Native Nations and Tribal Consultation” will be available on 26 & 28 October and 1 & 3, November 2021. The center is also offering a three-day course on “Crafting Collaborative Solutions to Environmental Conflicts” in Washington, D.C. from 30 November to 2 December 2021. These courses are open to all. For more info, please email [training@udall.gov](mailto:training@udall.gov).

### 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](mailto:hqplanning@usace.army).

*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](http://www.corpsplanning.us).*

FALL 2021 FRONT COVER:  
AERIAL VIEW OF RIVER THROUGH URBAN AREA THAT HAS BEEN CONFINED TO A PERMANENT CHANNEL BY LEVEES ON BOTH SIDES. GUADALUPE RIVER, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, USA.  
— ISTOCK



# FY2019 NATIONAL PLANNING AWARDS

*Mr. Al Lee, USACE Director of Civil Works, recently announced the National Planning Award winners for FY2019 and FY2020. In this edition of Planning Ahead, we recognize and celebrate the FY2019 individual and team awardees. In future editions, we will recognize the FY2020 individual and team awardees as well as the Noel Clay Planning Champion and Lifetime Achievement in USACE Planning awardees for both FY2019 and FY2020.*

## PLANNING EXCELLENCE



### **Dan Artho – Sacramento District**

Dan Artho has been recognized with a Planning Excellence Award. Over his nineteen-year career at USACE, Dan has been lauded by his superiors as demonstrating the persistence, innovation, pragmatism, and interpersonal skills needed to successfully advance the goal of environmental sustainability in water resources planning. Currently the Deputy Chief of the Sacramento District’s Planning Division, Dan has worked and provided oversight on numerous significant projects as an

environmental lead and supervisory biologist.

Most recently, his outstanding efforts include the Folsom Dam and Lake Water Control Manual Update project. Dan played a key role in the team’s groundbreaking work revising the reservoir operation rules to include the use of meteorological forecasting to improve risk-informed decision making for this project that protects the greater Sacramento area from floods. The revisions enabled USACE to develop and implement wider risk-informed approaches to dam operations through the use of new advances in meteorological forecasting technology. The project will allow USACE to more precisely implement water releases, thereby promoting important flood risk management activities, as well as having several other secondary benefits including improved water supply storage opportunities and increased reliability of hydropower generation.

Dan has been the recipient of several leadership awards during his career which have recognized his ability to undertake innovative efforts, demonstrate an ability to find group consensus, and contribute exceptional technical abilities. Dan’s extensive experience in environmental planning, including ecosystem restoration and flood risk management, has helped him lead many successful teams and assist numerous project partners in incorporating USACE’s Environmental Operating Principles into all the projects and initiatives in which he has been involved.

### **Justin Brewer – Omaha District**

Justin Brewer, a lead Economist in the Omaha District Planning Branch, has been recognized as a Planning Excellence Award winner. Justin has worked on numerous enterprise-level projects in his ten-year career at USACE that have highlighted his exceptional talents. Described by



superiors as a creative thinker who has excellent technical competence, Justin’s selection for this award was due to his dedication to the economic analysis performed for the Missouri River levee repairs project in the aftermath of the March 2019 flooding. In coordination with the Northwestern Division and the Omaha District System Restoration Team, Justin was key to the team’s development of multiple Project Information Reports (PIRs) required to economically justify repairs for over 350 miles of flood risk management infrastructure along 60 different PL 84-99 Program levee and channel systems



SILVER JACKETS INTERAGENCY TRIBAL FLOOD PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP

across five states – a level of effort never before required in the Omaha District. As a result of his leadership during the PIR development process – including seeing five “mega-PIRs” through multiple agency technical reviews – Omaha District was able to secure nearly \$600 million in levee repair funding.

Justin’s other impressive accomplishments include his work on the economic modeling for the Papillion Creek General Re-evaluation Study. Throughout the study he worked with a team whose efforts were shaped by USACE’s risk-informed decision making paradigm. Despite the study facing scheduling complications due modeling issues, it was completed on time and within budget, due in part to Justin’s development of a sophisticated automated information integration tool. Justin’s has also served as the economic lead on the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe CAP Section 203 study, and has performed extensive work on dam issue evaluation studies.

In addition to Justin’s outstanding work on multiple critical projects, his

nomination for this award recognizes his consistent role as a team player. A natural leader, Justin regularly mentors junior peers, develops new modeling techniques, and remains committed to supporting the Civil Works mission.

## OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT

### ***Silver Jackets Interagency Tribal Flood Preparedness and Emergency Response Workshops Team – South Pacific Division, Sacramento District, San Francisco District, Los Angeles District, and the USACE Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise***

The Silver Jackets Interagency Tribal Flood Preparedness and Emergency Response Workshops Team has been recognized as an Outstanding Planning Achievement Award winner for its delivery of a series of Tribal Preparedness and Emergency Response workshops. The six workshops, which took

place over an eight-month period, were intended to educate Tribes about flood risk reduction programs, provide information about emergency management resources, and create the opportunity for networking with and among partners.

These workshops specifically targeted and highlighted the resources and connections that can be used to resolve the significant and frequent flooding issues experienced by over 40 Tribes across California and Nevada. The over 150 participants at the six workshops included representatives from Tribes, local and state governments, other federal agencies, academics, and non-government entities.

The workshop team is recognized for the extensive coordination and preparation by team members from across USACE. The team created a forum for interagency and Tribal networking, resource development, communication, collaboration, coordination, education, and relationship-building that helped create a foundation for the solution to or prevention of future water resource issues that affect the region’s Tribes. The success of this effort is tangible, as it led to the submission of a Silver Jackets proposal for floodplain mapping with one participating Tribe and the ongoing development of a Tribal Partnership Program study with a second Tribe. Other future collaborative efforts are expected to

originate from these workshops.

The PDT was led by members from the Sacramento District, but also included members from the Los Angeles and San Francisco Districts, the South Pacific Division, and the Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise.

### ***Westminster/East Garden Grove, California Flood Risk Management Project Delivery Team – Chicago District***

In support of the Los Angeles District, the Chicago District’s Westminster/East Garden Grove, California Flood Risk Management Project Delivery Team is recognized with a 2019 Outstanding Planning Achievement Award for the completion of an integrated feasibility report, environmental impact statement, and environmental impact report for the Westminster, California watershed within three years and under three million dollars.

Led by the Chicago District, the multi-district project delivery team leveraged extensive flood risk management expertise and experience to develop a recommendation that will significantly reduce the life safety risk for study area residents by removing all residents in the watershed from the 100-year floodplain by reducing the size of the mapped floodplain area, as well as improve the environmental quality of



the local aquatic ecosystem through conservation and mitigation measures. The project delivery team developed an acceptable project that included sensitive estuarine and coastal habitats through a collaborative planning process with federal and state resource agencies. The result was a plan which ensured the project met the Civil Works Program goal of a sustainable water resource solution delivery.

Working closely with project partners, regional stakeholders, and resource agencies, the project delivery team identified a supportable Locally Preferred Plan, which was recommended in a Chief's Report signed in July of 2020 and included for construction authorization in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020.

***Ashtabula Harbor, OH Beneficial Use of Dredged Material (Continuing Authorities Program Section 204) Project Delivery Team – Buffalo District***

The Buffalo District Ashtabula Harbor, OH, Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Project Delivery Team has been recognized as a 2019 Outstanding Planning Achievement Award winner. The ongoing Ashtabula Harbor project is an innovative example of the sophisticated analysis and creativity essential to effective and high-quality water resources planning. Located on Lake Erie, the Ashtabula Harbor project is particularly noteworthy



WESTMINSTER/EAST GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM

because it is the first of its kind to construct an extensive coastal wetland in a high wave energy environment while also taking a novel approach to the maintenance of federal harbors, the reuse of dredging materials, and the protection of the surrounding ecosystem.

The project delivery team utilized “Engineering with Nature” practices to implement a sustainable dredging solution, opting to place dredged material from federal harbors in a dynamic coastal zone to help restore habitat and nourish eroding shorelines over constructing confined disposal facilities for the storage of dredged materials. Using advanced hydrodynamic and sediment transport numerical modeling in coordination with the Engineer Research and Development Center, the project will involve placing dredged sediment based on predictable sediment behavior and movement in the wetland over the multi-year dredging and planting program.

In addition, the Buffalo District’s inclusion of members from Ohio’s

regulatory agencies and close coordination with the non-federal sponsor allowed for quick resolution of issues, reduced review periods, and minimized scheduling conflicts, leading to the development of a viable alternative within the project’s set timeframe and budget. The Buffalo District recently awarded a \$6.5 million contract for the construction of a beneficial use of dredged material placement area designed to handle approximately 400,000 cubic yards of dredged material.

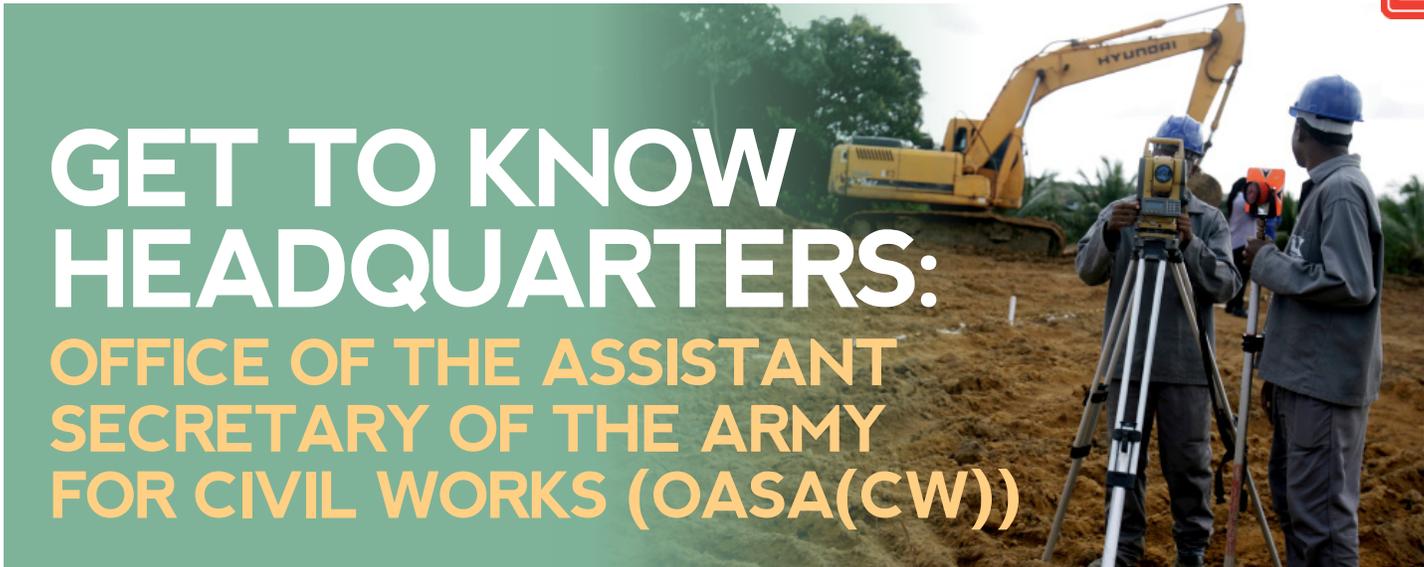
***Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project Feasibility Study Project Delivery Team – Galveston District***

The Galveston District Houston Ship Channel Expansion Channel Improvement Project Delivery Team has been recognized with a 2019 Outstanding Planning Achievement Award for its use of a risk-informed planning model to improve the navigation safety and efficiency of the Galveston Bay System – the largest estuary in Texas – while

also protecting the bay’s ecological significance.

Notably, this project was one of the first to successfully achieve vertical team alignment using a tiered “mega-governance” structure approach. In collaboration with the project’s non-federal sponsor, the Port of Houston Authority, the project team delivered a recommendation for improvements to more than 50 miles of the Houston Ship Channel system and the protection of its status as a national economic asset due to its importance as the leading petrochemical manufacturing and foreign tonnage distribution port in the United States. The now-authorized locally preferred plan (LPP) developed by the team – an estimated \$980 million project – includes extensive channel modifications and a dredged material management plan that includes beneficial use of dredging material to create hundreds of acres of tidal marsh and oyster reef habitat in Galveston Bay. The authorized project has an estimated annual economic benefit of over \$80 million.

The LPP was selected after the completion of a study lasting four and a half years with a \$10.6 million budget, culminating in the signing of the Chief of Engineers Report in April 2020. This award-worthy success is considered to be a “great merger of economic and environmental benefits” by Southwestern Division Commander BG Christopher Beck.



# GET TO KNOW HEADQUARTERS:

## OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR CIVIL WORKS (OASA(CW))

*This issue's "Get to Know Headquarters" speaks with the leadership and staff of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) about their work and their important role in the water resources project planning and review processes.*

Since the Flood Control Act of 1970, the ASA(CW) has been the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Army for the Army Civil Works Program, setting the strategic direction and supervising the USACE execution of the Army Civil Works Program.

More specifically, among other responsibilities, the ASA(CW) directs:

- The development of policy, plans, and programs related to the Civil Works Program.
- The planning program and supporting recommendations of the Secretary of the Army through the executive branch to Congress for Army Civil Works projects.
- The conservation and development of national

water resources, including for flood and coastal storm risk management, river and harbor navigation, environmental restoration and protection, water supply, hydroelectric power, recreation, and related purposes.

- The development, defense, and implementation of policy, legislative, and administrative guidance pertaining to the annual Army Civil Works budget.
- The OASA(CW) achieves its mission through the work of three different groups: Project Planning and Review (PP&R), Management and Budget (M&B), and Policy and Legislation (P&L), with each group led by a Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army.

The PP&R group – led by Mr. David Leach, P.E., and staffed by engineering, economics, and environmental experts – coordinates closely with Headquarters, MSC, and District Planning organizations to ensure that

proposed USACE Civil Works water resources projects are effectively supported throughout the study process. The PP&R group is responsible for the review of proposed Civil Works studies and the ultimate development of Army recommendations on those studies, which means that USACE planners and other project delivery team members are likely to interact with OASA(CW) staff during study milestone meetings.

In particular, study teams will be coordinating early and often with the OASA(CW) as part of necessary Vertical

Team coordination on anticipated policy exception needs, including potential waivers required to exceed legal time (three years) and funding (\$3 million federal) limits, as well as any other policy exception issues that may arise. Gaining and maintaining vertical alignment among District, MSC, Headquarters, and OASA(CW) staff and leadership is critical to the success of any USACE Civil Works study.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*In addition to coordinating with USACE planning teams throughout the feasibility study development and review process, OASA(CW) staff fulfill other important roles, including:*

*managing and performing policy reviews of work products prepared by non-federal interests (e.g., Section 203 reports for proposed water resource development projects); working closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on submitting reports to Congress as requested; approving project-based agreements (i.e., project partnership and water supply storage agreements); and providing guidance and policy interpretations on specific USACE water resources studies.*





# OASA(CW) LEADERSHIP & STAFF PERSPECTIVES

PLANNING AHEAD ASKED OASA(CW) PP&R GROUP STAFF JEFF TRULICK, ANDREA WALKER, DOUG GORECKI, AND MARK KRAMER TO PROVIDE THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE ROLE OF OASA(CW) IN THE WATER RESOURCES PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. WE ALSO HEARD FROM MR. JAIME PINKHAM (PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASA(CW)) ABOUT HIS PERSPECTIVES ON HIS NEW POSITION, AND FROM MR. DAVID LEACH (DEPUTY ASA(CW), PROJECT AND PLANNING REVIEW) ABOUT WHAT HE THINKS IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR USACE PLANNERS TO KNOW ABOUT OASA(CW).

## LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES

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### WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO IN YOUR NEW POSITION?

Coming into this position I had a hunger to learn. Fortunately, in my travels I've encountered many people in the Army Corps of Engineers who have a hunger to teach. I have more to learn and look forward to your help. I have also been impressed by the work being done to solve some of the most challenging tasks at hand. Solutions aren't driven exclusively by money and blueprints. It takes partners, and I have been fortunate to engage with multiple partners during my visits to the field. It also takes inclusivity as the portfolio of our objectives evolves to include justice and equity. I've seen enthusiasm for partnerships that emphasize inclusivity as project blueprints take shape and people feel invested in decisions, implementation, and outcomes. *-Jaime Pinkham*

### WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE A PLANNER IN A DISTRICT/MSC TO KNOW ABOUT OASA(CW) AND THE WORK THE PROJECT PLANNING & REVIEW GROUP DOES?

We are all on the same Civil Works Team advancing important water resource development programs and projects for the Nation. The primary role of the OASA(CW) is to set policy and seek authorization and funding from Congress. The PP&R group is responsible for policy review and focuses on ensuring that Corps project recommendations demonstrate the 3 E's: engineering soundness, economic justification, and environmental acceptability. This will position the project well for approval by the Secretary and the Administration in seeking congressional authorization through the Water Resource and Development Acts, which most recently have been on a two-year cycle. *-David Leach*

### OASA(CW) PROJECT PLANNING AND REVIEW GROUP (PP&R)

- Deputy Assistant Secretary (PP&R)  
Mr. David Leach
- Water Resources Engineer  
Mark Kramer
- Senior Economist  
Doug Gorecki
- Environmental Planner  
Jeff Trulick
- Water Resources Planner  
Andrea Walker
- Executive Services Specialist  
Justine Howard



## AS A RECENT USACE PLANNING EMPLOYEE, WHAT MOST SURPRISED YOU ABOUT THE WORK THAT THE OASA(CW) DOES?

As a newer member of the OASA(CW), what surprised me the most at first was the independence (and associated expectations) of the position. Also, the variety and diversity of issues and actions which the office handles is larger than I anticipated, but is a positive part of the job. One other key aspect is the degree of collaboration between the three OASA(CW) groups, including lateral discussions with the Policy and Legislative group and the Management and Budget group which help ensure better decision-making and enhance the delivery of the program.

*– Jeff Trulick*

## WHAT CAN PLANNERS IN THE DISTRICTS AND MSCS WORKING ON STUDIES DO TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION WITH OASA(CW) STAFF?

Coordinate early and often! The earlier we are brought into wicked study issues, the better, in terms of offering advice and experience. We regularly discuss policy issues with Regional Integration Team (RIT) Planners and Review Managers. Have those team members be your advocate when you foresee a potential issue. Don't wait until a formal policy waiver, exception, or exemption is needed.

*– Andrea Walker*

## WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU WISH PLANNERS KNEW ABOUT THE WORK OASA(CW) DOES?

One important thing planners should know is that in addition to ensuring reports are policy compliant and technically sound, one important role of the OASA(CW) is interacting with OMB. When reviewing Chief's and Director's Reports, we are anticipating the questions and concerns that may be raised by OMB. The tough questions we may ask are not because we do not want to see the project succeed, but because we need to be able to defend the project to OMB, who tend to be very thorough in their review.

*– Doug Gorecki*

Our focus is on the breath of the portfolio rather than the depth of each individual project or program. All of our staff has at one time worked at a Corps District, so we are cognizant of the complexity of the work and the demands of working in a tiered organizational structure. At the end of the day, our goal is the same as our fellow team members at the Corps: to provide the best engineering solutions to the Nation. We appreciate all the hard work we see each day in the reports and project presentations we review.

*– Mark Kramer*



# INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM

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**L**evees play an important role in reducing flood risk to millions of people and trillions of dollars' worth of infrastructure throughout the United States. Responsibility for levee safety is currently distributed across all levels of government (federal, state, and local, and in some cases tribal), and while agencies, tribes and levee owners/operators work diligently to maintain levees with limited resources:

- Much of the levee infrastructure throughout the country is decades old and was built without the benefit of modern engineering practices;
- Levees are designed, constructed, and managed by various entities, using different processes and standards;
- Development continues to intensify behind levees, putting more reliance on the levees' ability to perform and the need

to consider evacuation and land-use planning for managing flood risk; and

- Much of the public continues to remain unaware of their flood risks or actions they can take to reduce those risks.

This lack of a national integrated levee management approach, along with climate change impacts (i.e., increased storm intensity, widespread flooding, displaced communities and vulnerable populations, and increased cost to rebuild flood-damaged infrastructure), has highlighted the need to design solutions for reducing disaster suffering and improving the resiliency of communities behind levees. One program that will strive to accomplish this is the National Levee Safety Program (pursuant to 33 USC Chapter 46), a joint effort led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

USACE and FEMA have been working to outline an approach that involves extensive stakeholder engagement to develop what are intended to serve as the long-term foundational components for the National Levee Safety Program. Those main components include National Levee Safety Guidelines, National Levee Database & Data Collection, and Integrated Levee Management.

## NATIONAL LEVEE SAFETY GUIDELINES

These voluntary best practices will serve as an up-to-date resource designed to achieve the objectives of the National Levee Safety Program – nationwide consistency and increased community resiliency.

The guidelines will be developed with extensive stakeholder input and are intended to be used by a broad audience such as regulators, levee owners/

operators, design and construction professionals, emergency management professionals, states/tribal/local governments, and floodplain managers. It is anticipated that potential topics in the guidelines will range from basic concepts and terminology to consistent approaches for the life cycle of a levee. Strategies to reduce flooding impacts to people, property, and the environment, to include risk management and risk communication, are also initial ideas to be included in the guidelines.

## NATIONAL LEVEE DATABASE & DATA COLLECTION

This component of the National Levee Safety Program focuses on improving data quality and data collection methods along with functionality of the existing National Levee Database with the goal of creating a nationwide resource that



## STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

WINTER 2021	PHASE 1: GATHERING INITIAL INPUT ON PURPOSE & SCOPE	<b>MAIN ACTIVITIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-person stakeholder meetings across the U.S. and territories, leveraging locations with disadvantaged communities</li> <li>Virtual webinars</li> <li>Announcement in Federal Register</li> </ul>
SUMMER 2022	PHASE 2: SOLICIT FEEDBACK ON PRIORITIES & OPTIONS	
FALL 2023	PHASE 3: SOLICIT FEEDBACK ON DRAFT PRODUCTS	

can be used by levee owners and federal/state/tribal/local governments.

An improved National Levee Database (1) will support a common understanding of levee benefits and risks across a wide range of users; (2) can be combined with other datasets to help users who are responsible for overseeing/managing levees with prioritizing flood risk management decisions and activities; (3) can be compatible with locally developed inspection and data collection tools, and (4) can assist with flood risk communication efforts.

### INTEGRATED LEVEE MANAGEMENT

This component focuses on several activities aimed to

improve the way different levee-related authorities, at various levels of government, can be integrated and coordinated to be complementary and efficient:

- Developing scalable oversight and management activities for standing up formal levee safety programs with primary focus on states and tribes serving as the main integrators for levee-related activities and authorities within or adjacent to (when necessary) their geographic boundaries.
- Identifying some key programs, for example like the National Dam Safety Program, in which processes and requirements can be

aligned with the National Levee Safety Program to reduce redundancies.

- Exploring opportunities to provide implementation support, such as financial or technical assistance, to promote establishing levee safety programs or implementation of the National Levee Safety Guidelines.

### UPCOMING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Tying these components together to create a successful and sustainable National Levee Safety Program will require robust stakeholder engagement. The current stakeholder engagement strategy will combine broad stakeholder feedback at

various times over the next 2-3 years through in-person meetings and webinars around the country with targeted feedback from tribes and advisory groups (federal and non-federal).

### UPCOMING USACE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE ENGAGEMENT

In addition to external stakeholder engagement, the National Levee Safety Team will be hosting several webinars throughout the USACE community to introduce the National Levee Safety Program and how it relates to other programs such as PL 84-99, Section 408, and FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.

More information about the program, including opportunities that Districts can share with local levee sponsors to get involved, will become available this fall. Questions about the program can be sent to [hq-leveesafety@usace.army.mil](mailto:hq-leveesafety@usace.army.mil).

## 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 Report** for the Lower Cache Creek, Yolo County, Woodland and Vicinity, California.
- All planners should familiarize themselves with Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020. In addition

to **legislative resources** and other pertinent information, planners can also check out the recently released **press release**. Implementation Guidance for WRDA 2020 provisions will be posted to the Toolbox as it is released.

- The **Planning Quick Takes: Timely Topics for Risk Informed Planning Studies**, formerly the Planning Mentor Notebook, is now available on the toolbox. This document is a great resource for novice planners and mentors alike.

- Available on the Planning Community Toolbox is the Report to Congress on Future Water Resources Development **fact sheet**. This report is sometimes known as the "7001 Report," allows the public to propose new congressional authorizations for USACE's water resources projects. This sheet outlines the most relevant information

about the annual report, and it can be shared with communities and partners to help them develop their proposals for future submissions.

- 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>





# PCoP Q+A

## I just heard about a new Feasibility Report Format and Content Guide being released. Why is this Feasibility Report Guide being issued and what information can I expect to find in the new Guide?

The new Feasibility Report Format and Content Guide is intended to assist planners with developing a standardized feasibility report with an integrated Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Statement that will meet policy and legal compliance review expectations and requirements. This guide is a tool and not a requirement for planning studies to conform to. The information contained in the guide can be used a starting point for nearly all feasibility reports.

In addition to encouraging standardization in feasibility reports across the enterprise – and thus cutting down on review time and report deficiencies – this guide will help users build an effective narrative in their reports.

The guide outlines the specific content requirements for a feasibility report and provides helpful tips, such as suggested page lengths of each section to help authors tighten the report to provide only essential information. The guide also

dives into the intricacies of the report on a section-by-section basis, including: the Introduction; Existing and Future Without Project Conditions; Plan Formulation and Evaluation; Environmental Effects and Consequences; Plan Comparison and Selection; the Recommended Plan; Environmental Compliance; District Engineer Recommendation; and the List of Preparers. Relevant appendices, working files, and annex files are also described.

Although the example feasibility report format in the guide is not mandatory, to the authors hope it will serve as a resource to novice and experienced planners alike, as well as a reference for policy reviewers and technical specialists. This guide shows authors how to incorporate important details to enhance the success of their report, and ultimately the success of the team.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS, ANXIETIES — IF YOUR QUESTION CAN HELP FELLOW PLANNERS, EMAIL US AT [HQPLANNING@USACE.ARMY.MIL](mailto:hqplanning@usace.army.mil) AND MAYBE YOU'LL SEE IT HERE.**

## > 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, with recent subjects including those pictured 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, and recent webinars are always on the front page: [www.corpsplanning.us](http://www.corpsplanning.us).

If there is a webinar topic you believe the PCoP would benefit from, please email to [hqplanning@usace.army.mil](mailto:hqplanning@usace.army.mil).

**REPORT TO CONGRESS ON FUTURE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (7001 REPORT) (29 JULY)**

2022 REPORT - SCHEDULE

**BEST PRACTICES & LESSONS LEARNED: ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATION & CONFLICT RESOLUTION (1 JULY)**

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