

PLANNINGahead

Spring 2025 - Issue 01



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

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



SPRING 2025 FRONT COVER — SOLAR PANELS ARE CLOSE TO BEING PLACED OVER A WATER CANAL IN THE GILA RIVER COMMUNITY IN SACATON, ARIZONA, THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024. (SOURCE: AP PHOTO, ROSS D. FRANKLIN).



VIEW FROM THE TOP

MESSAGE FROM JEREMY LADART – ECONOMIC TEAM LEAD, HQUSACE OFFICE OF WATER PROJECT REVIEW

Greetings, Planning Community!

If a career were like a lifetime, mine has now reached the exciting post-college phase as I complete my 23rd year with USACE. Perhaps it is a fitting analogy as those years are marked by both many accomplishments and by the vastness of the change and unknown ahead. While I am constantly confronted with the fact that change seems to be one of the few constants in life, as a person who thrives on certainty and consistency, I struggle to be resilient in certain moments.

My career began in August of 2002 during a time of immense change. Less than a year before, the horrible 9/11 attacks upended life as we knew it. Those horrific images of the planes hitting the Twin Towers and the Pentagon and the feelings of panic and sorrow are etched in the American zeitgeist. What is not as often remembered is that, just a year earlier, the great technology stock crash of 2000 was lingering

over the job market. Many of my college classmates in the business school I was attending were quite fearful of their prospects and the softness of the job market. I was extremely fortunate to have been pulled aside by the Economics and Finance Department Chair and told about a student co-op opportunity with the Corps of Engineers. My response was, “The Corps of Engineers? I have never heard of it.” He informed me that it was a federal government agency that does water resources projects, and I could learn how to do cost-benefit analysis.

After a series of interviews, I landed the job, and a couple of years later upon graduating I was informed that I had secured a permanent spot in the Department of the Army Intern Program, most recently called the Army Fellows Program. I remember feeling great appreciation for having a job as many of my classmates were struggling through the hiring process. I had somehow lucked into my career, but I didn’t truly grasp

the extent of our agency’s contributions to the American public. I also didn’t know my “why.” Why did I want to be a public servant?

That changed a few years later. The mid-2000s brought a dramatic uptick in the frequency, scale, and magnitude of hurricanes hitting the mainland United States. In 2004, I had the privilege of supporting the Blue Roof mission in Florida following Hurricanes Charlie and Frances. I experienced firsthand what it means for my agency to uplift people in the wake of devastation. Then, on August 29, 2005, things really came into focus for me. Hurricane Katrina hit the central Gulf Coast and devastated Louisiana and Mississippi. At that point, it was the costliest natural disaster in American history, and the devastation was unimaginable. It was heartbreaking. Meeting with people and entire communities whose lives were completely upended, I saw the trauma that comes with that experience, and the



LEFT: JEREMY LADART AND HIS FAMILY ENJOYING TIME TOGETHER IN MOBILE, ALABAMA

vulnerability of our fellow Americans in their most dire time of need. I remember one community where a man told us, “We appreciate you coming here and listening, but no one ever helps us.” That hit me. That was the moment when I found my “why.” I wanted to help those people. I wanted to tell their stories. I wanted to make a positive impact on their lives.

The course of my career has taken several twists and turns, and has seen many changes. From working at the district and headquarters levels to changing Administrations to changes in Congress to priority shifts and everything in between; from a seven-year Water Resources

There is a never-ending onslaught of change that USACE and the Planning Community of Practice are asked to navigate. This has always been, and I suspect always will be, the case.

Development Act (WRDA) drought from 2007-2014 to the deluge of WRDAs coming every two years; from SMART Planning to Planning Modernization; from National Economic Development justification to Comprehensive Benefits and Agency Specific Procedures; there is a never-ending onslaught of change that USACE and the Planning

Community of Practice are asked to navigate. This has always been, and I suspect always will be, the case. When I struggle to find the resilience to face these challenges head-on and find myself questioning my own resolve, I try to remember my “why.” Why am I a public servant? Because people need us. Because I want to help people and make a difference.

So, as I close out another year with USACE and embrace another season of change, I challenge you to ask yourself: What’s your “why”? What motivates you to show up every day and face the challenges ahead? If you know your “why,” you can overcome the obstacles in your way. And together, we can continue to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those who need us most.

Here’s to the next chapter, and the many ways we’ll continue to make a difference, no matter how much the world around us changes. Essays.





CERTIFIED TO LEAD: THE EXPERTISE BEHIND USACE'S WATER RESOURCES CERTIFIED PLANNERS

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With eight new Water Resources Certified Planners (WRCPs) joining the ranks in 2024, and 35 more certified earlier this month, Planning Ahead is highlighting the certification's role within the PCoP and sharing insights from Planning Leadership and current WRCPs about their experiences and perspectives.

The National Water Resources Certified Planner Program is a professional development initiative that advances the technical capabilities of individual planners while enhancing planning competency across the enterprise. The program aims to modernize project planning by fostering a results-oriented, high-performing planner workforce. WRCPs are recognized for their breadth and depth of experience, training, and expertise in the USACE planning process, equipping them to lead

complex water resources planning efforts, conduct technical and policy reviews, and participate in planning task forces nationwide.

The WRCP program assesses candidates across four key areas: education and training; planning experience; knowledge of Planning policy; and communication, leadership, and mentoring. By identifying and certifying WRCPs, USACE ensures that its most capable planners are assigned to address the organization's most challenging, visible, and critical studies and initiatives.

This program not only strengthens the agency's planning capacity but also acknowledges the essential skills and expertise necessary for delivering innovative water resources solutions.

WRCPs play a vital role in upholding the highest professional standards in implementing the Civil Works program. They actively mentor and develop the next generation of USACE planning professionals and contribute to complex regional and national water resources challenges. To stay effective in their roles, WRCPs keep themselves informed about the latest Civil Works guidance and policies, and engage in ongoing professional development to maintain their certification.

To improve the quality and consistency of plan formulation conducted for USACE studies, [a memorandum from HQUSACE](#) issued in August 2024 now requires the use of a WRCP as either the Planning Technical Lead or as an assigned Planning Mentor to the Planning Technical Lead in all feasibility studies initiated during or after FY23. This requirement does not apply to Continuing Authority Program or Planning Assistance to States studies. Due to the increased demand for WRCPs caused by these new requirements, a supplemental round of WRCP applications was solicited in the fall of 2024, with 35 new WRCPs certified in March 2025. The current number of active WRCPs is 148.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WRCPs CERTIFIED IN 2024

HEADQUARTERS (HQUSACE)

- Amy Thompson (HQ)

SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION (SWD)

- Melinda Fisher, SWF
- Susan Henshaw, SWF
- Brian Harper, RPEC

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION (SPD)

- Holly Carpenter, SPK
- Lindsey Floyd, SPK
- Cynthia Fowler, SPD

NORTH ATLANTIC DIVISION (NAD)

- Dan Bierly, NAB
- Karen Baumert, NAN
- Adam Burnett, NAE
- Amy Guise, NAB
- Michelle Hamor, NAO
- Andrew Roach, NAB
- Luis Santiago, NAB
- Jay Smith, NAP
- Amber Metallo, NAD
- Scott Sanderson, NAP

NORTHWESTERN DIVISION (NWD)

- Laura Boerner, NWS
- Justin Brewer, NWO
- Greg Johnson, NWO

- Don Kramer, NWS
- Elliott Porter, NWP
- Valerie Ringold, NWP

SOUTH ATLANTIC DIVISION (SAD)

- Lisa Aley, SAJ
- Tonya Harrington, SAM
- Nancy Parrish, SAC
- Diane Perkins, SAC
- Bret Walters, SAW

GREAT LAKES AND OHIO RIVER DIVISION (LRD)

- Shawna Herleth-King, LRC
- Alex Hoxsie, LRC
- Ramune Matuliuskaite, LRN
- Eric Merriam, LRD
- Christy Stefanides, LRH
- Josh Unghire, LRB
- Ashley Stephens, LRH

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION (MVD)

- Jill Bathke, MVP
- Megan McGuire, MVD
- Katie Opsahl, MVP
- Lesley Prochaska, MVN
- Elliott Stefanik, MVP
- Shawn Vicknair, MVN
- Brandon Davis, MVK
- Sierra Keenan, MVP

Since the inception of the WRCP program, I've been so proud of how the districts within the South Pacific Division (SPD) have embraced the concept and invested time in the rigorous application process. People didn't always get certified on the first or even second try, but they appreciated how the detailed feedback they received in the different areas showed them where they needed to put in effort to fill a gap. As a result, we have a large and dynamic group of WRCPs in SPD who are showing every day that they've got what it takes to lead the biggest and most complicated studies enterprise-wide.

— Josephine Axt, SPD Chief of Planning

HEARING FROM OUR WRCPs

How has your expertise as a WRCP been utilized since you've been certified?

"I appreciate the recent initiatives for mentor-mentee pairings and calls to help with PCoP products."

"Supporting PDTs through the Planning Mentor Program has been great."

What ideas do you see for WRCPs to be (better) utilized moving forward?

"Increased networking and knowledge-sharing across the enterprise."

"More opportunities for WRCPs to give back to the PCoP through webinars, input on policy reviews, etc."

> 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.

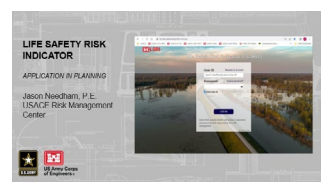
The series provides an opportunity to discuss important and timely topics for the field. Recent webinar topics are highlighted below.

Webinars are held every other Thursday from 2-3 pm eastern. Presentations and the question and answer sessions from each

webinar are archived on the Planning Community Toolbox. Recent webinars are always on the front page: www.corpsplanning.us.

If there is a webinar topic you believe the PCoP would benefit from, please email your ideas to hqplanning@usace.army.mil.

LIFE SAFETY RISK INDICATOR (LSRI) APPLICATION IN PLANNING (30 JANUARY)



INTRODUCTION TO HEC-FDA 2.0 (23 JANUARY)



SMART FUNDING, STRONGER COMMUNITIES: CWIFP UNPACKED (16 JANUARY)



FIND MORE WEBINARS AT:

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



ALOHA FROM RUSS: PERSPECTIVES FROM A PLANNING ASSOCIATES COURSE OWNER

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After 34 years working for USACE, Russell Iwamura retired from his most recent position as the Pacific Ocean Division (POD) Chief of Planning. Russ was involved with the Planning Associates (PA) Program for 16 years, and the PA Program Leadership would like to express its gratitude for everything Russ did for the PA Program and Planning community! Below, Russ shared some of his experiences and perspectives on the PA Program with Planning Ahead and the PCoP.

On 31 December 2024, I set aside my copy of the Planning Guidance Notebook and retired after 34 years with the Corps. Before I did, I looked back on the events that took place over my career (as I suspect most retirees do) and being a part of the PA Program has

to be one of my proudest accomplishments.

I began my involvement in 2008 as an instructor in the Small Boat Harbor Navigation module. At that time, we had one week to immerse the PAs in all things related to small boat harbor planning. Since then, the PA Program

has gone through a number of changes. We went from all in-person instruction, to hybrid in-person and virtual instruction, to all virtual instruction, and then to mostly in-person instruction supplemented with virtual instruction. The program I was involved in also went from separate mission area modules to partially combining modules (deep-draft navigation combined with small boat harbors) to a fully combined mission area (deep-draft navigation, small boat harbors, and inland navigation together). The overall program also went

from a one-year commitment by the PAs to a two-year program with mission areas providing instruction every other year. What has been a constant amidst all that change is the commitment to excellence and providing the best instruction possible to the PAs.

Although I had been an instructor for many years, it wasn't until 2023 that I attended my first PA graduation in person. My initial impression was "Man, there is a lot of hugging that goes on at this event!" And for good reason. The



TOP: RUSS IWAMURA (FARTHEST RIGHT) - RETIRED CHIEF OF PLANNING FOR POD WITH JASON NORRIS (POD), JASON'S DAUGHTER, AND BETH CADE (LRH/INPCX)

BOTTOM: RUSS WITH THE PA CLASS OF 2015 AT THE SMALL BOAT HARBORS COURSE

graduates just completed an arduous two-year program that took them away from family and colleagues. The instructors in attendance get to see the results of their efforts. Enterprise senior leaders witness the emergence of those who will shape the future of the Corps. It was a great event to be a part of and a great way to conclude my involvement in this worthwhile program.

To all those contemplating joining the program when it restarts, I highly recommend taking the leap and applying. Not only will the knowledge gained help in your current position, but the relationships fostered while in the program will aid you throughout your career as you and your classmates rise through the ranks together. Also, as old-time instructors like me leave the Corps, there will be a need for others to step up and fill the gaps. To those considering contributing to the program as a course owner or instructor, my advice is not to hesitate. The satisfaction that comes with teaching others about a mission you are passionate about and developing friendships with those who are equally passionate is priceless. I will carry the memories of my time with the Planning Associates Program long after my departure from the Corps.

> 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:

- Two new pieces of **implementation guidance for the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 for Section 8108(b) and Section 8149** are available on the [Guidance Memo collection page](#). Several other pieces of implementation guidance are slated to be published, and will be posted on the Toolbox when available.

- Engineer Regulation 1165-2-211: Operation and Maintenance of Improvements Carried Out by Non-Federal Interests to Authorized Harbor or Inland Harbor Projects** has been updated, superseding the older Engineer Regulation of the same name and publication number.

- New Economic Guidance Memoranda (EGM) for FY25** have been published to the EGM Collection page. **EGM 25-01: Federal Interest Rates for Corps of Engineers Projects for Fiscal Year 2025** contains federal interest rates to be used for projects for FY2025, including the federal discount rate,

deferred payment interest rates, water supply interest rates, hydropower interest rate, and delinquent payment collection rate. **EGM 25-02: Cost Sharing for Territories and Tribal Nations** provides the updated cost share waiver amount for U.S. Territories and Tribal Nations for FY2025. **EGM 25-03: Deep Draft Vessel Operating Costs Fiscal Year 2022 Price Levels** confirms that the five percent per year maximum cap established in **EGM 17-04: Deep Draft Vessel Operating Costs FY**

2016 Price Levels is still in effect for the Fiscal Year 2022 Price Levels. **Economic Guidance Memorandum 25-04: Unit Day Values for Recreation for Fiscal Year 2025** contains a detailed description of the application of the unit day value method as well as unit day values to be used for FY2025.

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>





RECOGNIZING OUR FY2023 NATIONAL PLANNING AWARD WINNERS

PART 2

OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL EDITIONS OF PLANNING AHEAD WE WILL BE CELEBRATING THE INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM RECIPIENTS OF THE FY2023 NATIONAL PLANNING AWARDS, WHO ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN CIVIL WORKS PLANNING ACROSS THE NATION.

The Planning Excellence award is designed to recognize an individual's contributions to advancing the state of the art of the practice of Civil Works Planning, the **Outstanding Planning Achievement award** recognizes a Civil Works planning project delivery team for the accomplishment of an outstanding planning activity, and the **Noel Clay Planning Champion award** recognizes individuals who have been instrumental to Civil Works Planning success by providing leadership, encouragement, and support to project delivery teams.

PLANNING EXCELLENCE (ENTERPRISE) AWARD

Mark Cornish
St. Paul District

Mark Cornish, a distinguished leader in water resource planning, has been awarded the 2023 Planning Excellence Award for his exceptional contributions to USACE. With over 25 years of service, Mark has become a nationally recognized expert in invasive species management and fish passage, advancing the Corps' Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Mission and environmental compliance efforts.

Mark's leadership and technical expertise have been central to several groundbreaking projects, where his ability to collaborate with multiple agencies and stakeholders has been key to their success. He is particularly known for his work as the Science Team and Environmental Technical Lead for the Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability Program Lock and Dam 22 Fish Passage Project. This project, which will be the first large-scale fish passage structure on a major inland navigation dam, has benefited from Mark's guidance through design and the initiation of a complex monitoring and adaptive management plan. His role has been crucial in bringing together numerous federal, local, and state partners to develop and execute the project.



Mark also serves as the lead biologist on the high-profile Brandon Road Interbasin Project, which aims to prevent the spread of invasive carp from the Illinois River to Lake Michigan. In this capacity, Mark has led the development of the project's mitigation plan and managed a \$2 million study to test a new automated barge clearing deterrent system. His efforts



have fostered collaboration between USACE’s Rock Island and Chicago Districts and ensured regulatory compliance, making significant strides in invasive species control.

Beyond these major projects, Mark has supported numerous initiatives, such as the ongoing Underwater Acoustic Deterrent System test at Lock and Dam 19. His experience with invasive species and fish migration has been instrumental in facilitating cooperation between USACE and state partners, ensuring the study’s success.

In 2023, Mark’s contributions to water resource management have been a model of excellence in both technical achievement and interagency collaboration. His work has not only improved the Corps’ planning processes but also created lasting impacts on environmental sustainability. Mark embodies the modern water resources planner. His technical leadership and collaborative spirit not only advance the state of practice but also strengthen USACE’s mission to restore and protect our nation’s ecosystems.

The Planning Excellence Award recognizes individuals whose leadership and innovation have made a significant difference in USACE’s mission. Mark’s tireless service and dedication to environmental

stewardship make him a deserving recipient of this prestigious honor.

OUTSTANDING PLANNING ACHIEVEMENT (PROGRAMMATIC) AWARD

*Los Angeles District
Pima-Maricopa Tribal Partnership Program Project*

The Los Angeles District (SPL) Pima-Maricopa Irrigation Renewable Energy Project, Arizona I-10 Solar Over Canal Tribal Partnership Program (TPP) Team is recognized as the 2023 Outstanding Planning Achievement (Programmatic) award winner.

The Pima-Maricopa team charted a groundbreaking path in the TPP by piloting a new policy that highlights USACE’s capabilities in non-traditional projects. This novel project was not a typical USACE water resources endeavor; instead, the team had to innovate and develop the study process to determine federal interest from scratch. To do this, they evaluated and integrated significant design work completed by the Gila River Indian Community, demonstrating exceptional leadership and collaboration through regular vertical team meetings, tribal partnerships, and streamlined initiatives. These efforts culminated in

completing the feasibility study and executing the Project Partnership Agreement in ten months.

In close collaboration with the Gila River Indian Community, the project leverages existing infrastructure to achieve long-term sustainability goals. The recommended project involves constructing a galvanized steel solar panel array spanning 1,000 linear feet over the community-owned and -operated irrigation canal within the tribal lands in Maricopa County. This innovative design offsets the community’s electrical power costs associated with operating a 200-mile irrigation system, while conserving water and preserving farmland. The project serves as a demonstration to test the effectiveness of the solar-over-canal concept.

Unlike conventional solar projects that often require repurposing farmland, this initiative avoids unnecessary impacts to agricultural land,

a vital resource for the Gila River Indian Community. With ancestral ties to the Hohokam, who developed the largest irrigation system in North America, the Pima maintain a deep connection to agriculture as a cultural cornerstone. This project reflects their near century-long struggle to return the waters to the reservation and put the land back into agricultural production.

This study captures the essence of a “pilot project.” As the first solar-over-canal initiative in the United States, it provides a groundbreaking model for sustainable clean energy development while advancing the state of the art in water resources planning. The insights and innovations generated have been so impactful that they have been incorporated into national TPP guidance, benefiting the program as a whole. By honoring tribal sovereignty and delivering a first-of-its-kind solution to a economically disadvantaged





community, the team exemplifies the thoughtful and innovative collaboration that embodies the USACE mission.

The collaboration required for this initiative highlights the power of partnerships between the study team, USACE leadership, and tribal stakeholders within the TPP. By integrating Indigenous Knowledge with USACE engineering expertise, the SPL team developed best practices for collaborative water resources planning. This pilot project stands as a testament to USACE's potential to increase tribal capacity, enhance self-determination, and strengthen government-to-government relations. The team's success will have lasting impacts, providing a roadmap for similar projects.

NOEL CLAY PLANNING CHAMPION

Kevin Wittmann
South Atlantic Division

Kevin Wittmann, the South Atlantic Division (SAD) Regional Socioeconomics Branch Chief and Deputy Chief of Planning for the Jacksonville District (SAJ), is recognized as one of the recipients of the Noel Clay Planning Champion Award for 2023 for his outstanding contributions to Planning and Socioeconomics, demonstrating unwavering dedication to implementing innovative policies and mentoring teams across SAD.

Kevin has played a pivotal role in advancing the Comprehensive Benefits Directive (**January 2021 Comprehensive Documentation of Benefits in Decision Document**) across SAD. Notably, he led efforts to develop National Economic Development (NED) policy waiver requests for the Puerto Rico Coastal Study team, which pursued a

comprehensive benefits plan tailored to Stella, a economically disadvantaged community in Rincón, Puerto Rico. His leadership enabled the team to address the significant challenges of erosion along the coastline of Rincón caused by sediment deficits, intensifying storms, and shoreline infrastructure. The resulting nature-based, non-structural plan prioritizes risk reduction, community resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Kevin's ability to navigate complex policy challenges has been equally impactful. During the Ponte Vedra coastal storm risk management (CSRМ) feasibility study, he identified a conflict between Real Estate Acquisition Policy (Engineer Regulation [ER] 405-1-12, Real Estate Handbook) and Planning Policy (ER 1165-2-130, Federal Participation in Shoreline Protection) regarding the economic valuation of donated lands on erosional beaches. Kevin's development of a clarifying policy white paper allowed the Ponte Vedra study to continue, and is even being used to resolve the issue more broadly. He further collaborated with the study team to secure a waiver from ER 405-1-12 for valuing and crediting donated lands, specifically erosional lands, and worked closely with the team to identify historical acquisition costs on CSRМ projects in SAJ to apply to

assumptions for the total project costs on the Ponte Vedra study.

A dedicated mentor and strategic thinker, Kevin has supported numerous complex studies, including the Biscayne Bay and Southeastern Everglades Restoration Study, the Dade Backbay CSRМ Study, and the Central & Southern Florida Section 216 Study. His guidance has been instrumental in developing scopes for challenging and complex planning studies and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, Kevin's leadership in hiring and training a diverse workforce for the Regional Economic Team exemplifies his commitment to building a strong, future-ready Planning Community of Practice.

Finally, Kevin recognized the need for a regional expert dedicated to Other Social Effects benefit analyses. By creating a specialized position and successfully hiring a social scientist to fill this role, Kevin has reinforced SAD's commitment to the planning processes.

Kevin's tireless efforts to address policy challenges, mentor teams, and advance innovative planning solutions across SAJ and SAD embody the spirit of excellence and dedication celebrated by the Planning and Socioeconomics communities.





PCoP NEWS FLASHES

PLANNING COMMUNITY UPDATES

Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024

President Biden signed WRDA 2024 into law on 4 January 2025. You can read the full text of WRDA 2024 on [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) or visit the [WRDA section of the Planning Community Toolbox](#). Please stay tuned for additional information from Headquarters Planning & Policy regarding implementation guidance and continue to follow current Army and USACE guidance for your projects and programs. Specific questions about WRDA 2024 provisions should be elevated through the regular planning chain of command. A key point to remember: WRDA is primarily an authorization bill, providing authorities for USACE activities, projects, and programs. Separate appropriations must be made by Congress before funds can be allocated for the implementation of these authorities.

Updated Review Manager Roles and Responsibilities Guide

Have you ever wondered what happens during the Policy and Legal Compliance Review process when draft and final reports are submitted to the

review team? Look no further than the [Policy and Legal Compliance Review Manager Roles and Responsibilities guide](#). This guide updates and consolidates the previous Policy and Legal Compliance Review Manager SOP and Feasibility Study Vertical Team Coordination Key Tasks document, and also includes attachments on the State and Agency Review process and Headquarters report log-in procedures. This guide is useful not only for review managers, but also for project delivery teams, other vertical team members, and anyone else involved or interested in the policy and state and agency review processes, finalizing the agency response to independent peer review, as well as Chief's Reports processing. The 13 February PCoP webinar provided an overview of the updated guide; the slide deck, recording, and Q&A from the webinar [can be found on the Planning Community Toolbox](#).

Future Without Project In-Progress Review Best Practice

Since April 2024, the South Atlantic Division (SAD) has [required a Future Without-Project \(FWOP\) condition in-progress review \(IPR\)](#) for

all planning feasibility studies prior to the Tentatively Selected Plan milestone. The IPR aims to inform senior SAD leadership and the vertical team of the analysis and modeling results, ensuring alignment and support for study success. Although this is a requirement specifically for SAD studies, an IPR confirming the modeling establishing the FWOP condition is a best practice for all feasibility studies. For more information and related guidance, visit the [Planning Community Toolbox](#).

Hydrologic Engineering Center's Flood Damage Reduction Analysis (HEC-FDA) v2.0

[HEC-FDA v2.0](#) was recently certified for use in planning studies, and as of December 2024, replaced HEC-FDA v1.4.3 as the latest certified version of the HEC-FDA model. See the [HEC-FDA v. 2.01 certification memo](#) for additional information and the transition plan for ongoing feasibility studies using v. 1.4.3. For more information on HEC-FDA's model certification review, contact the USACE Flood Risk Management Planning Center of Expertise or the Hydrologic Engineering Center. To stay up to date on current certified planning

models, visit the [Planning Models page on the Planning Community Toolbox](#). For more information on HEC-FDA 2.0, view the 23 January PCoP Webinar, [Introduction to HEC-FDA 2.0](#).

Updated Levee Safety and Construction Guidance Released

[Engineer Circular 1165-2-218: USACE Levee Safety Program](#) was re-released at the end of November, which updates and supersedes the circular with the same publication number dated 22 April 2021. [Engineer Regulation 1110-2-8165: Inundation Maps and Emergency Action Plans and Incident Management for Dams and Levee Systems](#) was also released, replacing chapters 13 and 16 of the Safety of Dams ER. Additionally, [Engineer Pamphlet 34-1-1: Partnering Playbook: Building Strong Relationships Across the Construction Project Delivery Life Cycle](#) has been published. Visit the [Planner's Library on the Planning Community Toolbox](#) for the latest guidance useful for planning teams and the [Headquarters Publications website](#) for all current agency guidance.



PCoP
Q+A



I've heard about an Infrastructure and Installation Resilience Community of Practice being established; how can this new CoP help planners and study teams?

The HQUSACE Engineering and Construction Directorate recently stood up the Infrastructure and Installation Resilience Community of Practice (IIR CoP) to deliver subject matter expertise, technical competence, methods, and tools to enable preparedness for all manner of changing conditions to enable mission success. These actions will support USACE in delivering projects that are built to last while reducing costs to the agency and the Nation.

The subject matter experts (SMEs) and technical resources in the IIR CoP are intended to assist both Civil Works and Military Programs functional areas with adequately addressing extreme weather driven hazards (e.g., wildfire, heatwaves, coastal compound flooding) and large-scale changes that can impact USACE missions and operations.

While the IIR CoP will continue some of the activities of the recently disbanded Climate Preparedness & Resilience CoP, the IIR CoP will focus on resilience in a broader sense – to include land use, land cover, demographic, socioeconomic, and other complex changing

conditions that impact the planning, design, construction, and operation and maintenance of USACE projects. This focus reflects the USACE Resilience Framework (Prepare, Absorb, Recover, Adapt), which is fundamental to all USACE projects and activities.

For current and future planning studies, USACE has over 40 existing SMEs across the agency who will continue to be a resource as policy reviewers and team advisors. These SMEs are knowledgeable in methods and tools related to infrastructure resilience for water resources projects. These SMEs are also certified to perform technical reviews and will soon be updated in the Certification and Access Program (CERCAP) database.

Stay tuned for additional guidance and news about updates to resilience guidance, tools, and resources. For more information, reach out to IIR CoP Lead Dr. Will Veatch, HQUSACE.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS, ANXIETIES — IF YOUR QUESTION CAN HELP FELLOW PLANNERS, EMAIL US AT HQPLANNING@USACE.ARMY.MIL AND MAYBE YOU'LL SEE IT HERE.