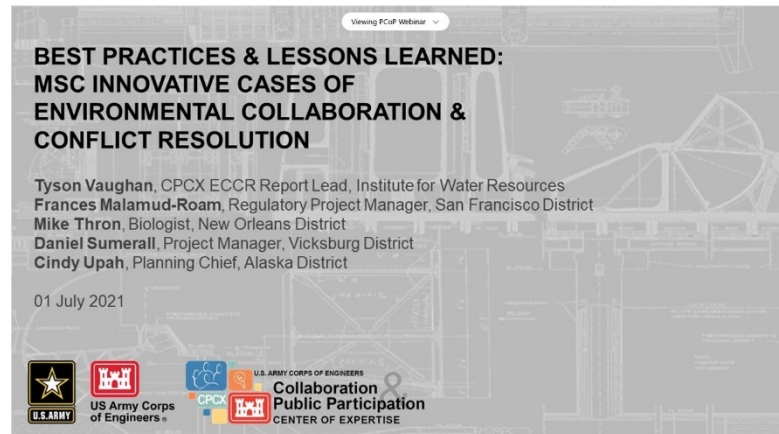


## Best Practices & Lessons Learned: Environmental Collaboration & Conflict Resolution

1 July 2021

Q&A Session

*This webinar provided an overview of best practices and lessons learned from various MSC case studies of Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution (ECCR), along with an introduction from the [Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise \(CPCX\)](#). The webinar was presented by Tyson Vaughan (CPCX ECCR Report Lead), Frances Malamud-Roam (San Francisco District Regulatory Project Manager), Mike Thron (New Orleans District Biologist), Daniel Sumerall (Vicksburg District Project Manager), and Cindy Upah (Alaska District Planning Chief).*



*The cases discussed in this webinar come from the [FY 2020 Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution \(ECCR\) Policy Report](#) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).*

*For more information and resources, visit the [Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice website](#) and the [internal SharePoint site](#).*

*This summary of the Question / Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.*

### **South Pacific Division/San Francisco District: [San Francisco Bay Regulatory Restoration Integration Team \(BRRIT\)](#)**

**How are decisions made and documented within BRRIT and the Policy and Management Committee? Do they have different decision rules and do the regulatory agencies weigh in or abstain on decision making due to their permitting responsibilities?**

Meeting minutes are maintained by the BRRIT and Policy Management Committee (PMC) to document decisions. Decisions are also incorporated into BRRIT's permit decision documents for the agency administration file.

Regulatory agencies with a nexus weigh in on the policy decisions. When a policy-level decision is being made, the document is shared among the PMC members for multiple rounds of feedback before it is finalized. In some cases, the policy change is specific to one agency. While the PMC works on policy-level improvements, the majority of decisions made so far have been permit-specific decisions focused on working within existing policies.

**Are policy decisions made by complete consensus of BRRIT members or is there a voting process?**

The decisions made by BRRIT are not policy altering decisions. Instead, BRRIT works within the various member agencies' existing policies, and it works towards a consensus on how to work within those policies to reach permit decisions. Lack of consensus and policy level issue debates are rare, because

each member agency has authority over a specific set of mandates. However, in an instance where policies conflict, and consensus cannot be reached at the BRRIT level, the issue is elevated to the PMC, which allows the managers to discuss amongst the PMC and work with the project proponent to resolve the issue. Those manager-level decisions are made by consensus. If the issue is between only two agencies, a full quorum vote or consensus is not required.

**What has been found to be the most effective way to match dredged material with an entity who is seeking to beneficially use the dredged material?**

The [San Francisco Bay has a Long Term Management Strategy for Dredging \(LTMS\)](#). BRRIT is currently developing a joint interagency Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document with the [Dredging Materials Management Office \(DMMO\)](#), which is a joint program of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, State Lands Commission, the USACE San Francisco District, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). BRRIT partners with the DMMO when a project is identified during the preapplication meeting as a potential candidate for utilizing beneficial reuse sediments. Beneficial reuse of dredged sediments is encouraged, as sediment supply is a big issue for restoration project success.

**How did BRRIT determine the restoration need of 100,000 acres of functional wetland for the San Francisco Bay?**

BRRIT did not determine the number of acres needed. The Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals project came to that conclusion, based on input from hundreds of scientists looking at the various aspects of the bay tidelands functions. Over 150,000 acres of tidal wetlands have been lost since 1850. It is estimated that 100,000 acres of healthy tidal marshes are needed to support the functions and services that the estuary once provided.

**How did the project resolve the mosquito abatement issue when restoring habitat types that tend to support both mosquitos and their natural predators?**

BRRIT had representatives from the local Mosquito and Vector Control District (MVCD) attend meetings to discuss best management practices that would avoid increased mosquito populations. Each project proponent was advised to discuss their projects with the local MVCD. In many cases, the restoration of diked areas into tidal flows helped reduce mosquito populations.

**Mississippi Valley Division: Interagency Cooperation for Mississippi River Levees Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement II**

**What are some challenges and tips related to the use of the mapping and GIS portals that are available to USACE project delivery teams, particularly concerning the issue of large H&H raster files?**

The ArcGIS portal was a useful communication tool for both the project delivery team and the interagency team for this project. It was particularly useful for those PDT members and external stakeholders that needed to see the most pertinent data and associated attributes such as land cover, river miles, and final project footprints, without running additional GIS analyses. The external ArcGIS portal was limited to read-only and many GIS functions, such as clipping data, were not available. Editing privileges were limited to one or two individuals at each District to reduce the potential for error.

In an instance with data coming from multiple different Districts, it is useful to spend some time on the front end determining the database structure and schema to ensure data is entered consistently, while also accounting for District-specific information. Once the database structure is set up and data is compiled, the data can be pulled out as a geodatabase or shapefile for use in analyses. It is ideal to minimize the number of versions of geodatabases or shapefiles due to how often revisions take place. It is also important to use the ArcGIS portal as the main communication tool with the external partners or others who only need to view the proposed work across a large project area.

**How was the ArcGIS portal used and set up by the project delivery team?**

The ArcGIS portal was the main repository and communication tool for showing the project footprints to the interagency team. The project delivery team first obtained a list of agency personnel who needed access to the ArcGIS portal and their e-mail addresses. Once the portal was set up, invitations were sent out to each person with individual usernames and a link to finish setting up their account and passwords. To set up the ArcGIS portal, GIS personnel at each District worked together to create the appropriate database structures and schema.

For example, project footprints could be inputted directly into the portal by those who had editing privileges; however, most District personnel preferred to work on project footprints offline and then import them into the ArcGIS portal in bulk. However, it is important to ensure the database structure matches exactly; to avoid inconsistency, the importing and exporting of bulk data was done by the project's geospatial coordinator. The project delivery team used the ArcGIS portal mainly as a communication tool because most GIS functions were not available in the read-only version. The geospatial coordinator on this project, Jack Smith (MVD), is able and available to answer technical questions, as is the presenter, Mike Thron (MVN).

**When using Facebook Live or Google Voice calls did the team perform any dry runs or was the Public Affairs Office (PAO) team well-versed in the technology and process?**

The team performed a dry run test for the Facebook Live and Google calls. The New Orleans District PAO office assisted with technical issues and was well versed in the technology used. PAO used Blackmagic® Web Presenter software to switch between the live meeting and the pre-recorded presentations and videos. After the first meeting, it was determined that talking points or "filler material" would be useful to read during the live meeting while waiting on questions and answers to come in. The "filler material" included facts about the project area and reminders about how and when to submit comments. This helped with the flow of the meeting during slow periods.