

## **Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution (ECCR) in the Federal Government Fiscal Year 2021 Agency Reporting Template**

### **Background**

On September 7, 2012, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Chairman of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued a revised policy memorandum on environmental collaboration and conflict resolution (ECCR). This joint memo builds on, reinforces, and replaces the memo on ECR issued in 2005, and defines ECCR as:

*“. . . third-party assisted collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution in the context of environmental, public lands, or natural resources issues or conflicts, including matters related to energy, transportation, and water and land management..... The term Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution encompasses a range of assisted collaboration, negotiation, and facilitated dialogue processes and applications. These processes directly engage affected interests and Federal department and agency decision makers in collaborative problem solving and conflict resolution.”*

The 2012 memorandum requires annual reporting by Federal Departments and Agencies to OMB and CEQ on their use of Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution and on the estimated cost savings and benefits realized through third-party assisted negotiation, mediation or other processes designed to help parties achieve agreement. The memo also encourages departments and agencies to work toward systematic collection of relevant information that can be useful in on-going information exchange across departments and agencies

The Udall Foundation’s National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution (National Center) has, since 2005, collected select ECCR data on behalf of Federal Departments and Agencies. *Beginning in FY 2021, the National Center is streamlining the data it collects to reduce the reporting burden on Federal Departments and Agencies and provide the most salient information on ECCR use. This updated reporting template is focused collection of ECCR case studies and data on capacity building, including ECCR training. Case numbers and context reporting are optional.*

### **Fiscal Year 2021 Data Collection**

This annual reporting template is provided in accordance with the memo for activities in FY 2021.

The report deadline is Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Reports should be submitted to Steph Kavanaugh, NCECR Deputy Director, via e-mail at [kavanaugh@udall.gov](mailto:kavanaugh@udall.gov)

Departments should submit a single report that includes ECCR information from the agencies and other entities within the department. The information in your report will become part of a compilation of all FY 2021 ECCR reports submitted. You may be contacted for the purpose of clarifying information in your report.

For your reference, synthesis reports from past fiscal years are available at <https://www.udall.gov/OurPrograms/Institute/ECRReport.aspx>.

## 1. Agency Submission Information

Name of Department/Agency responding:	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Name and Title/Position of person responding:	Ms. Stacey Jensen Assistant for Environment, Tribal and Regulatory Affairs, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)  Dr. Hal Cardwell Director, USACE Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise
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Date this report is being submitted:	January 28, 2022
Name of ECCR Forum Representative	Dr. Hal Cardwell

## 2. ECCR Capacity Building and Investment:

Describe any **NEW, CHANGED, or ACTIVELY ONGOING** steps taken by your department or agency to build programmatic and institutional capacity for environmental collaboration and conflict resolution in FY 2021, including progress made since FY 2020.

Please also include any efforts to establish routine procedures for considering ECCR in specific situations or categories of cases, including any efforts to provide institutional support for non-assisted collaboration efforts.

Please refer to the mechanisms and strategies presented in Section 5 and attachment C of the [OMB-CEQ ECCR Policy Memo](#) for additional guidance on what to include here. Examples include but are not restricted to efforts to:

- Integrate ECCR objectives into agency mission statements, Government Performance and Results Act goals, and strategic planning;
  - Assure that your agency's infrastructure supports ECCR;
  - Invest in support, programs, or trainings; and focus on accountable performance and achievement.
  - ECCR programmatic FTEs
  - Dedicated ECCR budgets
  - Funds spent on contracts to support ECCR cases and programs
- a) Please refer to your agency's FY 2020 report to only include new, changed or actively ongoing ECCR investments or capacity building. **If none, leave this section blank.**

USACE Districts routinely coordinate with Federal, state, tribal and local government entities and with non-governmental stakeholders on projects and their potential impacts. Below we describe several ongoing or new steps taken by USACE to support this collaboration and ECCR more generally. First, we note USACE-HQ's Revolutionize Civil Works initiative, and strategic plan elements. Second, we describe the ongoing investment in USACE's Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise, and we specifically highlight the District-level Public Involvement Specialists program. Finally, we describe agency support in other roles (e.g. Public Affairs staff), programs (Silver Jackets) and Memoranda of Agreement that support ECCR.

Within *Revolutionize Civil Works*, a major initiative from USACE-HQ to improve the organization, a focus on partnerships was recently added as the fourth major pillar. This high-level endorsement of the importance of partnerships brings leadership attention and focus to ECCR programs, trainings, and initiatives. The focused attention has resulted in multiple discussion with external partners as well as participation by the Deputy Commanding General for Civil Works and Emergency Operations MG Graham at USACE's Collaboration Virtual Summit in July 2021. More guidance, doctrine and training, was under development in FY21 as part of this initiative and is being rolled out in FY22. Echoing this HQ-level focus on partnerships, USACE's Pittsburgh District reports on progress on its FY19-21 strategic plan including a specific objective to conduct outreach and engage with stakeholders.

USACE continues to fund its *Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX)* to serve as an ECCR focal point for the agency on training, technical assistance, information exchange, innovation and policy support on collaborative process, public engagement, conflict resolution, and risk communication. Information exchange programs of note that progressed during FY21 include active work groups within the interdisciplinary, >1500-person Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice (CoP). CoP Workgroups supported a) Collaborative Technology tool development and piloting, b) information exchange through webinars, brown bag training sessions and an interagency virtual collaboration summit, c) development of risk communication support products and trainings, and d) environmental justice webinars and analysis.

In addition, CPCX and individual USACE Districts continue to identify, support, and train subject matter experts in ECCR through the *District-level Public Involvement (PI) Specialist program*. PI Specialist support includes assessing the need, timing, and approach to public engagement, developing public involvement plans, designing effective public involvement forums and completing public involvement activities. Such activities can be in-person, virtual or blended. District projects will often fund specific activities of the District's *PI Specialist* or will sometimes fund support of another PI Specialist from a different District. PI Specialists plan and facilitate charrettes and public meetings with stakeholders and the broader public and develop and implement project public involvement plans. PI Specialists increase the Districts' collaborative capacity by transferring skills and providing formal and informal training for staff and leadership. PI Specialists help build ECCR capacity by highlighting opportunities for ECCR -relevant trainings/webinars across the District. Furthermore, PI Specialists at a specific District provided access to a broader cadre of PI Specialists across USACE, enabling the District to bring in outside expertise to assist with critical facilitation challenges.

Saint Paul District's PI Specialist successfully advocated for increased resourcing and funding for increased engagement with the public and resource agencies and especially indigenous nations in support of International Joint Commission (IJC) activities.

During FY21 the PI Specialists program has expanded, with Southwestern Division now having a PI Specialist in each of its four Districts and two Districts incorporating the PI Specialist responsibilities in position descriptions and Individual Development Plans. Each District has allocated labor, travel, and training resources for their PI Specialist. The PI Specialist role is also now incorporated into the Command Review Visits that facilitates a new level of awareness for leadership on available ECCR expertise.

*CPCX Liaisons at the USACE Division-level* synchronize activities of and share opportunities for the District-level PI Specialists within their region. Over the course of the last year, the Division Liaisons and PI Specialists provided facilitation assistance to internal program managers in the Regulatory, Tribal, Civil Works, Dam Safety, Public Affairs, Emergency Management, Continuing Authorities Program, and Planning Offices. They also provided support through facilitation and presentations to external stakeholders to include state water, emergency, planning, hydropower, and energy offices.

#### **Additional Programs that support ECCR**

Each District maintains staff capabilities in the Public Affairs Office (PAO), and some Districts support specific Outreach Specialists to assist the District with stakeholder engagement and public involvement activities. USACE Districts also host USACE coordinators of state-led interagency Silver Jackets teams, who share knowledge on flood risk and natural disasters to enhance response and recovery efforts. The Silver Jackets program promotes significant interagency collaboration on flood risk issues and supports ECCR activities.

Omaha District's Dam Safety Program established full-time staff position as a Risk Communication Manager to strategically communicate dam risk and related program activities to internal and external audiences to improve operational understanding, reduce potential conflicts during emergencies, and recruit stakeholders to build community resilience. The internal and external relationships and information exchange improves understanding of emergency management opportunities and constraints across federal, state and local agencies that is critical to life safety. These benefits are priceless.

USACE promotes ECCR through multiple Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with other agencies and non-governmental organizations. A small sample of existing MOA's and MOU's is described below.

USACE used its MOA with Udall Foundation's John S. McCain III National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution (NCECR) in at least two instances in FY21: the NCECR is supporting USACE in a stakeholder assessment as part of the Columbia River Treaty review and was tapped to design and deliver training for USACE on collaboration with Tribal Nations. In FY21 Walla Walla District pursued two MOA's with federal fisheries agencies to find environmentally acceptable solutions and has similarly redoubled coordination efforts with state environmental offices under Clean Water Act Section 401 procedures. St. Louis District formed River Resource Action through an MOU with the USFWS and Missouri and Illinois to facilitate collaboration with natural resource

partner agencies for USACE projects along the Mississippi River. St Louis District reports on a Federal Facility Agreement with USEPA, DOE and the state of Iowa for its Formerly Utilized Site Remedial Action Plan work at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant. Los Angeles District forged an MOA with the U.S. Forest Service to support the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Ambassador for the Los Angeles River watershed.

USACE’s Pittsburgh District has used different types of agreements – including Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) and Handshake Partnership Agreements – to establish local partnerships on its reservoirs. Notable instances include the Berlin Lake Handshake Partnership Agreement and MOU for Partnership with the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) that help USACE reservoir projects maximize opportunities and find efficiencies.

- b. Please describe the trainings given in your department/agency in FY 2021. Please include a list of the trainings, if possible. If known, please provide the course names and total number of people trained. Please refer to your agency’s FY 2020 report to include **ONLY** trainings given in FY 2020. **If none, leave this section blank.**

**NATIONAL EFFORTS**

In FY21 CPCX resumed a full schedule of ECCR-related trainings delivering all materials virtually. Efforts included 11 formal courses and trainings; 11 interactive workshops; 7 webinars; and 1 enterprise-wide Summit. These events reached more than 1500 students and participants. While the focus of CPCX training is USACE staff, interagency participation was a key ingredient in many of the activities. Additionally, CPCX shared information with USACEs Collaboration & Public Participation Community of Practice including three e-news distributions (Keeping Up with the CoP) news, a Collaboration Corner newsletter issue of the annual featured cases in ECCR, and daily emails full of resources for October’s International Facilitation Week.

An increased area of focus this year for CPCX was supporting interagency training on collaboration. CPCX delivered multi-day workshops on Interagency Conflict Transformation for District Regulatory programs in Honolulu and Jacksonville and a half day of Teambuilding for the USACE Infrastructure Systems – Recovery Team and their partners (e.g. FEMA). Additionally, the Dam and Levee Safety Training Team converted Communication Planning workshops to a virtual format and received the USACE Dam Safety Team of the Year award.

An additional emerging area of focus for CPCX is Serious Games and Applied Learning Environments. In September, CPCX staff provided a workshop on Serious Games and Applied Learning Environments to support stakeholder involvement in the technical analysis for water resources planning. The subject audience for this pilot workshop/training consisted of both USACE leadership staff at the Los Angeles District and some of the Southern California non-Federal partners in flood risk and water management. Outcomes of the workshop included enthusiastic support of a continued dialogue around an issue that is currently in litigation, with a common interest in mediating a solution if possible.

CPCX FY21 National Trainings	Attendees
CoP-hosted webinars on NEPA, Collab 101 and ECCR Cases (3 webinars)	330
Recovery Support Function team building – USACE with DHS, DOT partners	25
Dam and Levee Safety Stakeholder Engagement Coaching Calls (4 webinars)	645

Communication Planning for Dam Safety workshops (7 workshops)	146
Virtual Collaboration Summit	100
Risk Communication & Public Involvement (3 sessions)	80
Public Involvement-Communication (2 sessions)	55
Public Involvement and Teaming in Planning	26
IWR Communications Supervisor Training	25
Leadership Development – Interpersonal Skills (3 sessions)	43
Teambuilding, Team Leadership, and Effective Communications for Planning Associates	7
Serious Games Training Workshop - Los Angeles	25
Interagency Conflict Transformation for Honolulu District Regulatory and NMFS	12
Interagency Conflict Transformation Training for Jacksonville District	20
Interagency “Managing by Network” class	16

In a nice testament to these efforts, Walla Walla District reported realizing moderate to high benefit at very low cost from training and perspectives offered through engagement with USACE’s Collaboration and Public Participation (CPP) CoP.

**REGIONAL EFFORTS**

USACE’s South Pacific Division hosted six regional virtual training webinars on ECCR-related topics involving four District offices (San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Albuquerque), USACE’s Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise, and USACE Headquarters. While 30-65 staff people attended each webinar, video recordings will allow more to take the training. Similarly, PI Specialists from USACE’s Southwestern Division participated in workshops and trainings hosted by USACE IWR, Tribal Nations, Udall Foundation, and state Emergency Management offices.

Related to ECCR training (including Risk Communication), multiple USACE Districts continue to support risk-informed decision-making certification, and several staff have completed a graduate-level certificate program for risk evaluation and communication.

**3. ECCR Case Example**

Using the template below, provide a description of an ECCR case (preferably **completed** in FY 2021). If possible, focus on an interagency ECCR case. Please limit the length to **no more than 1 page**.

<b>Name/Identification of Problem/Conflict:</b> International Souris River Study
<b>Overview of problem/conflict and timeline, including reference to the nature and timing of the third-party assistance, and how the ECCR effort was funded.</b>
The International Souris River Study was an International Joint Commission (IJC) effort to study potential changes in operations of three reservoirs in Canada and one in the US to support flood control and water supply. The study began in 2017 and concluded in 2021. Extensive, facilitated public involvement occurred throughout the four years. The IJC sponsored their staff to facilitate Public

Advisory Group meetings and Public Hearings. They also sponsored contracted facilitation for Indigenous Advisory Group calls with indigenous facilitators. In addition, other agencies including USACE with North Dakota sponsored the St. Paul District Public Involvement Specialist to facilitate and provide process design support for meetings.

**Summary of how the problem or conflict was addressed using ECCR, including details of any innovative approaches to ECCR, and how the principles for engagement in ECCR outlined in the policy memo were used.**

The team successfully provided recommendations to the IJC with broad public, agency, and indigenous support. The study group was often surprised at the high level of buy-in and support. This was attributed during debrief to the extensive, facilitated outreach performed over the course of the study. Collaborative process development for engagement meetings with representatives of the outreach focus was used for all the advisory group workshops and meetings and was especially critical for the effectiveness of the indigenous engagement activities.

**Identify the key beneficial outcomes of this case, including references to likely alternative decision-making forums and how the outcomes differed as a result of ECCR.**

ECCR benefits included shortening the overall duration of the effort due to the reduction of controversy by bringing the stakeholders and nations along throughout the study. The team provided ample opportunities for input, incorporated that input into the study, and then explained how that input was used. Therefore, major setbacks in forwarding and implementing recommendations were avoided. There were no surprises that required re-opening the study or that derailed the recommendations.

**Please share any reflections on the lessons learned from the use of ECCR.**

The effort was not originally fully scoped or resourced at the level of engagement that was requested by the IJC. While funding was about the equivalent of 0.5 FTE spread across multiple agency partners and contract facilitators, during the lessons learned evaluation of the study effort this was deemed to be about one third to one fourth of the actual effort.

Collaborative virtual engagement requires twice as much planning and resource development as face-to-face meetings due to the need for multiple facilitators to handle the virtual meetings. Managing a virtual meeting in a fair and equitable manner is more challenging, especially if few participants are on camera and may require the use of polls and other collaborative technology tools to sustain engagement.

## Other ECCR Notable Cases

Briefly describe any other notable ECCR cases in FY 2021. (OPTIONAL)

### I. EXTERNAL FACILITATORS

#### **Missouri River levee system L-536 large-scale realignment**

The Missouri River levee system L-536 large-scale levee setback was an almost three-year effort involving USACE, Atchison County Levee District, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Natural Resources Conservation Service, Missouri Department of Conservation, and many other local, state, and federal agencies, as well as close contact with five heavily involved landowners. The L-536 project is a premier example of a diverse group collaborating (on a weekly basis for multiple years) to accomplish planning, design, real estate acquisition, permitting, and construction solutions after one of the region's worst floods in recorded history. The completed L-536 project results in the creation of, and connection to, a Missouri River habitat complex now almost 7,000 acres in size, a true pearl along one of the nation's most degraded rivers.

Initially, TNC played a neutral third-party role, hosting a August 2019 multi-agency partner workshop to discuss partner roles and responsibilities, possible levee repairs, and to coordinate/ streamline different agency processes. TNC facilitated the team of a dozen plus agencies, hosting weekly team calls over two years to help coordinate planning, design, construction, permitting, environmental law compliance, weather delays, media requests, etc. These meetings became weekly mini-workshops in interagency collaboration and conflict resolution. During the year of planning and design leading up to construction, a potentially project-killing issue arose every two weeks, yet this team remained mission-focused and found solutions with expert-level ability. TNC's role eventually evolved as a co-sponsor to the project, ensuring that real estate was secured for the project and that affected landowners were fully reimbursed. Total expenditures by TNC, including staff labor, production of a short documentary, development of a "Levee Setback Playbook," and hiring multiple rounds of surveyors and land appraisers totaled approximately \$600,000.

Development of "Levee Setback Playbook" will serve as an ongoing, programmatic effort to institutionalize this level of creativity and collaboration for future projects. A Regional MOU between the USACE Northwestern Division and NRCS Central Region, which enabled the collaborative work at L-536, is now being updated and revamped to include lessons learned from L-536. This updated Regional MOU could serve as an example for other USACE Districts and Divisions and NRCS.

#### **Brandon Road Interbasin Project**

The Rock Island District Governance Team for the engineering design phase of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project consists of senior leaders from the Rock Island District, Mississippi Valley Division and from the project sponsors, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The first Governance Team meeting was held in May of 2021 and was facilitated by a neutral third-party firm, Virtual CEO. The facilitator aided the discussion between Governance Team members allowing for open and candid discussion on a challenging project that has multiple concerns and issues. The key outcome of the meeting was the signing of the Project Charter by each team member, committing to the vision, mission, goals, and objectives to collaboratively achieve the project purpose and agreement to utilize the identified issue resolution process. The Governance Team will continue to meet semi-annually or as needed to make decisions and will continue to use a facilitator for these meetings. The facilitator will conduct surveys and interviews of Governance Team members prior to meetings to gauge the level of member trust, communication, collaboration, and satisfaction of project

progress. The facilitator will then report out on these findings and facilitate discussion to address issues or concerns resulting from this feedback.

### **Willamette Valley System Environment Impact Statement (EIS) Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation**

Portland District's Willamette Valley System (WVS) Environmental Impact Statement is underway to assess alternatives for the continued operation and maintenance of the 13-dam system and associated revetment on the Willamette River. NMFS and US Fish and Wildlife Service (the Services) are Cooperating Agencies on the EIS. In March 2018, plaintiffs filed a complaint against USACE and NMFS in the U.S. District Court alleging ongoing violations of Sections 7 and 9 of the ESA due to the USACE's alleged failure to comply with the reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) set forth in the 2008 NMFS Biological Opinion. The Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in August 2020. During the development of the EIS alternatives as well as interim measures (including those ordered by the Court) there has been conflict between USACE and the Services technical teams. USACE determined that ESA Section 7 consultation would benefit from third party neutral facilitation to help navigate these conflicts to develop a Biological Assessment that is satisfactory to both USACE and the Services. With the support of CPCX, the District awarded a third-party facilitation services for three interagency workshops. The cost of the award is \$33,106.55 and the contract includes options for an additional six workshops for a cost of about \$50k. Outcomes will be available for FY22 ECCR reporting.

### **Portland Metro Levee System (PMLS) Virtual Public Meeting**

USACE's Portland District partnered on the flood risk management of the Portland Metro Levee System (PMLS) with the Columbia Corridor Drainage Districts Joint Contracting Authority. Following the alternatives analysis, one of the drainage districts hired a consultant to act as a neutral, third-party facilitator of a virtual public meeting at the start of FY21. The virtual public meeting was to follow-up with stakeholders who raised concerns on the Draft Report that went out for public review. An initial presentation was designed to address known concerns and, set a constructive tone for attendees to express their concerns. Attendees said that they felt their concerns had been heard. All the facilitators, presenters, and key leadership were in a physical conference room together during the meeting, which aided real-time coordination and demonstrated alignment among the partners. Clear assignments for monitoring the chat and responding to comments/questions allowed for interactions between the team and leadership during the meeting, resulting in efficient responses (eliminating overtalking) and alignment when responding to questions.

## **II. USACE FACILITATORS**

### **CPCX:**

#### **Lowell Creek Flood Diversion Feasibility Study Townhall Meeting/Public Outreach**

USACE's Alaska District sponsored the use of CPCX third-party facilitators to support a townhall and public meeting for the Flood Service Area Board to inform the public of the Lowell Creek Feasibility Study and solicit comments during the public review period. Facilitators assisted in planning and developing the best way to communicate the difficult subject of reducing risk to life safety. There was a short timeline from requesting the facilitators' support to the public meetings due to a request from the sponsor to hold the public meeting coming late in the public review period. Due to COVID, the meeting was held

virtually, and included additional preparation and practice with the sponsor to ensure the platform was functional. Beneficial outcomes include providing the project sponsor, stakeholders, and general public a clear understanding of the study, a means to provide feedback on the study, and confidence in the work performed by USACE.

### **Barrow Coastal Erosion Design Charrette**

In January 2021, USACE's Alaska District held a facilitated virtual design charrette that incorporated an open house for the general public in a rural community with little to no internet access. Supported by CPCX, the District team worked with the local sponsor, Alaska Native Villages, community leaders, and local media to plan a four half-day charrette. The project area is located at the northern-most city in the United States, Utqiagvik, AK. Although internet service is available in the city, the service is spotty and unpredictable, cost-prohibitive for many Alaska Native households, or simply unavailable in some remote locations with an interest in the project. In addition to the challenges of bringing a virtual charrette to a poorly wired locale, the sponsor also requested a virtual open house for the general public during the charrette. The facilitators designed a hybrid-style engagement that would allow attendees to participate equitably via webinar or phone. Some key solutions included 1) creating presentations that could be downloaded with the limited bandwidth available, as well as mailing hard copies of the presentations to all charrette attendees; 2) having a minimum of two facilitators so one could focus on the webinar attendees while the second could focus on telephone only attendees and text messages and 3) having a local participant designated to assist attendees with troubleshooting technical issues and providing local support. Finally, the open house was made possible by partnering with the local radio station, which broadcast the open house audio live, thereby allowing listeners in the broader region to call into the webinar and ask questions live.

### **Transportation Charette for Inner Harbor Navigation Channel Lock Replacement Study**

In September 2021, USACE's New Orleans District conducted an all-day transportation charrette facilitated by CPCX. The purpose of this charrette was to reduce uncertainty about USACE's ability to adequately address transportation issues related to the Inner Harbor Navigation Channel (IHNC) lock relocation and replacement of the St. Claude Bridge. Stakeholder participants included the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Port of New Orleans, and the Regional Planning Commission. As a result of the charette, New Orleans District is recommending a transportation study be conducted by a local transportation engineering firm to determine the impact that relocating the lock and replacing the St. Claude Bridge will have on transportation. While this will require additional time and funding to complete, it is necessary to demonstrate the agency's good-faith effort to evaluate impacts to the public and prove an appropriate level of analysis to meet policy and legal requirements. An additional community engagement plan prepared by CPCX will provide the public the opportunity to review and comment on the controversial project.

### **LOCAL USACE FACILITATORS:**

#### **Los Angeles River Urban Waters Federal Partnership Ambassador**

The Public Involvement Specialist in Los Angeles District assumed the role of "Ambassador" to the Urban Waters Federal Partnership for the L.A. River. This position serves as a federal liaison and convener for a network of partners focused on the restoration of the Los Angeles River Watershed. The Ambassador provides essential coordination and facilitation services to the partnership of local entities and

representatives of federal agencies with a goal to advance their mission of protecting and revitalizing natural and cultural resources and serving the public within the Los Angeles Basin. With the assistance of CPCX and USACE's office of Interagency and International Support, the L.A. District forged an MOA with the U.S. Forest Service to provide additional support for the Ambassador in FY21 and FY22.

### **Mahoning Water Control Manual Update**

In FY19, Pittsburgh District kicked off a Water Management Update process that will look at the operations of three reservoirs. There are many competing interests in the basin (e.g., recreation, water quality, and flood risk reduction) that would like to see improvements to their interests with the changes in reservoir operations that could result from this process. In May 2020, members of USACE's Pittsburgh District Mahoning Water Control Manual Update team held a virtual reservoir management scenario building workshop with key stakeholders. In December 2020, USACE hosted a second workshop to explore the model results and discuss the tradeoffs between those results using a collaborative gaming format called a Multi-Hazard Tournament. This second workshop used the information the stakeholders provided from the earlier scenario brainstorm workshop. Pittsburgh District took what stakeholders described as their interests in regard to particular reservoir water levels or outflows. The team then created, modeled, and measured management scenarios and their resulting conditions against the metrics that stakeholders also said were important to them. The second workshop was held 1) to share the scenarios evaluated, and to determine whether any additional scenarios should be created and evaluated; 2) to explore how the created management scenarios help meet regional water requirements and goals; and 3) to discuss the evaluation findings and the tradeoffs between the scenarios. These meetings were facilitated by the Pittsburgh District's Public Involvement Specialist.

The workshop's "serious gaming" format allowed stakeholders to step back from their individual preferences to some degree. Additionally, the creation of teams promoted a more collaborative discussion within the small groups. The competitive element motivated some participants to try to focus on the larger optimization objective rather than on the individual concept of 'winning' as they looked at potential reservoir scenarios. The transparency in showing the participants the tools and potential impacts was beneficial in that the information sparked conversation between stakeholders and the Pittsburgh District. It also helped to show participants that these decisions are not being made in a vacuum. This workshop process allows USACE to better understand the values and interests of the stakeholders and incorporate them into the Water Management Update.

### **Upper Guadalupe River, San Jose, CA Flood Risk Management General Reevaluation**

The Upper Guadalupe project leveraged facilitation support to guide the study team and stakeholders through the USACE planning process for the flood risk management project on the Upper Guadalupe River in densely populated San Jose, California. This was done through a series of four planning charrettes held in February 2021 with partners, agencies, and key study stakeholders. The Sacramento District Public Involvement Specialist facilitated the charrettes using cost-shared study dollars. One priority during planning was avoiding the contention between USACE and permitting resource agencies regarding how to most appropriately avoid and mitigate impacts to habitat for listed salmonids in the Upper Guadalupe River. Past work on this project had required substantial conflict resolution and teaming effort to work through issues, which had delayed the project many years and increased coordination costs. The charrettes thus included agencies and key stakeholders to head off the development of similar issues. The result was consensus on study conditions and initial solutions, significant data sharing, and relationship- and trust-building that the team has continued through follow-

on coordination. The relationships and trust established enabled the team to hold further productive meetings and achieve timely study milestones throughout FY21.

### **National Hurricane Program Interagency Coordinating Committee on Hurricanes**

The purpose of the Interagency Coordinating Committee is to aid the National Hurricane Program with its federal hurricane planning and operational support provided to state, local, and tribal governments. For a second consecutive year, the COVID pandemic forced the annual meeting to move to a virtual format. The team acquired the facilitation services of the Kansas City District Public Involvement Specialist. USACE worked closely with FEMA and NHP partners to develop and execute a four-day virtual meeting agenda. Each session included guest speakers and stakeholder feedback activities to replace what is typically an interactive 3-day in-person agenda. Feedback was positive from the 171 participants (55% federal, 38% state, 7% other) who attended. During the meetings, the Public Involvement Specialist leveraged virtual facilitation tools (i.e., polls and break-out rooms) to enable stakeholder interaction and feedback. A significant change from last year was the use of a Virtual 360 Room (<https://gather.cdmsmith.com/v/A0zrNKXmzvQ>) that allowed emergency managers who were not available to participate virtually to access content both during and after the meetings. One key lesson learned is that during large virtual meetings it is ideal to engage attendees (through polling, open discussion, etc.) every 20-30 minutes. Sessions should not exceed 2 hours, to avoid virtual fatigue.

### **CA Silver Jackets and FEMA Collaboration Technical Assistance (CTA) Inter-Agency Dam Safety Tabletop Exercise, San Diego County, California**

The CA Silver Jackets team and USACE Readiness Support Center successfully led a virtual interagency dam safety tabletop exercise in March 2021 as part of FEMA's Collaborative Technical Assistance (CTA) Program. The USACE L.A. District Public Involvement Specialist facilitated the meeting of over 60 participants including FEMA, CA Department of Water Resources, CA Governor's Office of Emergency Services, San Diego County Office of Emergency Services, and City of San Diego Public Utilities. Per existing Emergency Action and Emergency Response Plans, participants responded to an unfolding chain of multi-hazard events, addressed post-disaster recovery, and engaged in an After-Action Review of their scenario responses. Most importantly, connections were made during the workshop between key stakeholders including law enforcement/public safety and public works infrastructure professionals, which will further strengthen future readiness to respond to disaster. The Silver Jackets team was funded through the USACE National Flood Risk Management Program. This first-time collaboration between USACE Silver Jackets and FEMA's CTA program was a success. As a result, partners from both programs look forward to future opportunities to collaborate and support other communities nationwide.

### **Alamo Dam Safety Tabletop Exercise**

USACE's Los Angeles District Dam Safety Program executed a series of facilitated dam safety tabletop exercises. For the Alamo Dam, they brought on board a team of facilitators including three USACE Public Involvement Specialists from around the nation to support the lead facilitator, an experienced table-top facilitator from Albuquerque District. Involvement of the facilitation team resulted in better pre-coordination with a key stakeholder, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. This was critical to set expectations on risk communication roles due to complex jurisdictional overlaps between the two federal agencies. By having crucial early discussions before the workshop, valuable workshop time was maximized through avoidance of potential "rabbit holes" on roles and responsibilities. Public Involvement Specialists also

advised on improved delivery of workshop materials, such as spatial clarity of jurisdictional responsibility via better maps and other exhibits.

### **2021 Ohio River Basin Inspection Tour (ORBIT)**

The Ohio River Basin Inspection Tour (ORBIT) was held virtually in September 2021 to engage conference participants around the varied interests of the shared water resources of the Ohio River Basin and foster discussion between local, state, and federal government officials, industry stakeholders, ORBIT Commissioners, and local USACE leadership. USACE's Pittsburgh District used various technologies to emulate the event's original in-person river tour format. For example, the team provided a video of the Montgomery Lock and Dam tour that was strategically paused at points to allow stakeholders to add their perspectives and to foster group discussion. The USACE team used webinar tools that allowed both whole-group presentations and facilitated breakout sessions. The modified format was successful; participants were able to gain an understanding of USACE infrastructure and to converse directly with regional leadership about topics most important to them. Keys to the success: first, facilitators created a detailed agenda for their session of ORBIT that helped to reduce confusion and clarify responsibilities for all those helping to execute the effort; second, several effective video presentations helped participants to engage.

### **Honolulu Harbor Dredging – After-Action Review for Coral Damage**

After an accident during dredging the Honolulu Harbor resulted in damage to around 17,500 corals in May 2020, the Corps held a series of after-action reviews one-on-one with each of the federal and state stakeholders: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. This series of meetings is the first half of a longer AAR process that is projected to occur next year. The meetings were co-facilitated by a neutral USACE facilitators who were not directly involved in the project. The primary cost of the AAR engagement was time, since holding the AARs virtually saved cost. The engagement is currently too early in the process to evaluate qualitative or quantitative benefits. However, the challenges of conflict between USACE and the other federal and state agencies were addressed by USACE making the time for detailed one-on-one dialogue to build inter-agency trust.

### **Galveston District, Metro Houston Regional Watershed Assessment**

In the aftermath of August 2017's catastrophic flooding from Hurricane Harvey, USACE's Galveston District and Harris County Flood Control District completed a Watershed Assessment with a specific focus on flood risk management efforts within the Metropolitan Houston Region. USACE hired a third-party consulting team to hold a series of public meetings to solicit and address feedback from stakeholders and to educate stakeholders on how the flooding occurred and possible options to move flood waters out of the area quickly. These collaborative efforts provided an opportunity to share Harris County's ongoing planning efforts and leverage state agencies' planning and investigation capabilities. As the assessment neared completion, the team faced challenges of reaching stakeholders during COVID. Using various multiparty conferencing platforms, the facilitator helped the team and stakeholders adapt and complete engagements virtually. The team was successful in completing the assessment on time and within budget.

**4. ECCR Case Number & Context Data (OPTIONAL)**

Context for ECCR Applications:	Case Numbers
Policy development	_____
Planning	10
Siting and construction	3
Rulemaking	_____
License and permit issuance	_____
Compliance and enforcement action	_____
Implementation/monitoring agreements	_____
Other (specify): _ Emergency Management and Disaster Response Preparedness Exercise	2
Aquatic Pest Management	1
<b>TOTAL # of CASES</b>	<u>16</u>

Report due Friday, January 28, 2022. Submit report electronically to: [kavanaugh@udall.gov](mailto:kavanaugh@udall.gov)