

Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution in the Federal Government
Fiscal Year 2023 Report
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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 Environmental Conflict Resolution 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 ECCR 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 ongoing information exchange across departments and agencies.

The Udall Foundation's John S. McCain III National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution (NCECR) 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 to provide the most salient information on ECCR use. This updated reporting template is a focused collection of ECCR case studies and data on capacity building, including ECCR training. Case numbers and context reporting are optional.*

Fiscal Year 2023 Data Collection

This annual reporting template is provided in accordance with the memo for activities in FY 2023.

The report deadline is Friday, January 26th, 2023.

Reports should be submitted to Steph Kavanaugh, NCECR Deputy Director, via e-mail at 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 2023 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 26, 2024
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 2022, including progress made since FY 2021.

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 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)
- Dedicated ECCR budgets
- Funds spent on contracts to support ECCR cases and programs

- a) Please refer to your agency's FY 2022 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. We group the actions first according to priorities outlined by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)), and then into additional areas of collaborative capacity building.

Administration Priorities

In FY23, USACE continued to support ASA(CW) priorities for the Civil Works program:

1. *Upgrade the Nation's waterways and ports to strengthen supply chains and economic growth.*

Environmental collaboration and conflict resolution tools and capacity building are helping USACE's fulfil its navigation mission and strengthen supply chains and economic growth. Responses to Question 3 in this report highlight cases where USACE employed a neutral third party to support upgrades to harbors and waterways; responses in Appendix A highlight collaboration cases without a 3rd party.

2. *Build innovative, climate-resilient infrastructure to protect communities and ecosystems.*

Environmental collaboration and conflict resolution tools and capacity building also help USACE engage communities and partner agencies to increase flood and climate resilience for communities and ecosystems. Cases cited in question 3 below include examples where USACE used a neutral third party to support community flood resilience; responses in Appendix A highlight collaboration cases without a 3rd party.

3. *Modernize civil works programs to better serve the needs of disadvantaged communities.*

In FY23, USACE continued to invest considerably to support the Administration's priority and directives related to Environmental Justice (e.g., Justice40). USACE HQ designated a full time Environmental Justice Program Manager. CPCX delivered a "Designing for Diversity" training program that helped almost 400 staff plan equity-centered outreach and engagement for projects. Every Civil Works district and division office appointed one or two EJ Coordinators and completed EJ Strategies. Many districts have coordinated their strategies with others district staff that are involved in stakeholder and public engagement including Public Involvement Specialists, Tribal Liaisons, Silver Jackets Coordinators, and Outreach Specialists. Several districts have also been securing funding, learning about EJ map databases available (SOVI, CEJST, and EPA EJScreen), and identifying other tools to support effective engagement.

Walla Walla District developed an EJ map book to assist USACE leaders to understand the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities within their area of responsibility. Some districts like Baltimore continued investing in EJ Working Groups.

In addition, responses to Question 3 report examples of USACE using third party neutrals to enhance collaboration to better engage underserved communities to solve their water-resource related problems. Appendix A documents many cases of collaboration that are not facilitated by a

neutral third party but that advance USACE effectiveness at engaging disadvantaged communities to manage water resources.

4. *Invest in science, research, and development to deliver enduring water-resource solutions*

Delivering enduring water resource solutions requires effective engagement of many groups with different interests, cultures, and values. This report highlights efforts to train USACE staff in effective collaboration techniques, including the use of new technologies to better engage more people. Such investments include:

- Measuring and evaluating the benefits of environmental flows at Kinzua Reservoir in an interagency effort through the Sustainable Rivers Program (Pittsburgh District).
- Hosting the Ohio River Stakeholder Engagement Meeting for the Sustainable Rivers Program (Huntington District).
- Promoting learning and problem solving through the Ohio River Basin Alliance (Lakes and Rivers Division and Districts)

5. *Strengthen communications and relationships to solve water resource challenges*

This report focusses on examples and successes of USACE building relationships and improving communication with the many communities, organizations, and people it serves. Understanding the breadth and variety of USACE successes in environmental collaboration and conflict resolution will help USACE work with its partners to solve water resource challenges. In particular, USACE invests in the following positions and programs with a primary focus on strengthening communications and relationships. Details are provided in the next section.

- Public Involvement Specialists (detailed in Appendix B)
- Tribal Liaisons
- Outreach Coordinators
- EJ Coordinators
- Silver Jackets (detailed below)
- Planning Assistance to States
- Continuing Authorities Program Section 165(a) Pilot program
- Participation in State Partnering meetings (Huntington and others)

Additional Areas of Collaborative Capacity Development

1. Centers and programs that promote collaboration

USACE hosts several centers and programs that promote collaboration. USACE funded (for the 15th year) its Collaboration and Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX) that serves 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. The interdisciplinary team of seven staff members supported CPCX for an equivalent of three to four FTEs. FY23 funding totaled about \$1.0 million.

CPCX continued to manage and expand the more-than 3000-person interdisciplinary Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice (CoP). CoP Workgroups supported

a) collaborative technology tool development and piloting, b) information exchange through webinars and brown bag training sessions, c) development of risk communication products, and d) environmental justice outreach and engagement resources.

CPCX and individual USACE districts continue to identify, support, and train subject matter experts in ECCR through the district-level Public Involvement Specialist (PI Specialist) program. PI Specialists increase district collaborative capacity by transferring skills via formal and informal training for staff and leadership. During FY23, many new members were selected to fill vacant or replace seats, with about 30 seats filled at the end of the FY. Total hours committed to public involvement by all 30 PI Specialists is equivalent to about 3-6 FTE. See Appendix B for further details on this program's investments and accomplishments.

Further, all eight USACE civil works divisions (a collection of districts in a region of the US) support liaisons to CPCX to synchronize activities of, and share opportunities for, the district-level PI Specialists within their region. Two of the eight liaisons were designated in early FY23. Total liaison efforts are equivalent to 1-1.5 FTE.

The Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise maintains an IDIQ contract with 9 organizations experienced in working with Native American communities around the country who provide third-party neutral support. In FY23 the TNTCX continued implementing a national Tribal engagement plan for the Air National Guard, completed a regional Tribal engagement plan for USACE Southwestern Division including two virtual Tribal Summit events (59 Tribes), held multiple listening sessions for the Engineering with Empathy project (20+ Tribes nationwide); continued cultural keystone species projects under the Sustainable Rivers Program with numerous Tribes in California (tule) and Oklahoma (rivercane); continued district and MSC support for Tribal engagement across the nation including Alaska in the Planning, Regulatory, and Operations business lines. TNTCX staff completed a detail with IWR regarding co-management potential and missed opportunities (2014 WRRDA) and continued supporting the OSTP multi-agency implementation of the Indigenous and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) guidance. Finally, the TNTCX continues to serve as the Navajo Nation Program Lead and facilitated the signing of the MOA between SPD and the Navajo Nation.

The Sustainable Rivers Program (SRP) is a national partnership between USACE and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to improve the health of rivers by changing dam operations to restore and protect ecosystems, while maintaining or enhancing authorized uses and other project benefits. At the end of fiscal year (FY) 2023, SRP worked in 23 USACE districts and 7 divisions. Individual projects affect more than 90 USACE reservoirs, 40 rivers, and 12,000 river miles. It is the largest scale and most comprehensive program for implementing environmental flows (e-flows) below USACE reservoirs and continues to grow. Five new rivers joined the SRP in FY23, Bayou Courtableau, and the Alabama, Arkansas, Tombigbee, and Minnesota rivers. The FY23 budget was ultimately increased to \$7 million and includes considerable funding to location-based teams to enable collaboration and conflict resolution through stakeholder meetings and environmental flow (e-flow) workshops that are vital to the long-term success of this program.

Silver Jackets are interagency teams that are state-, territory-, or tribe-led teams that promote significant interagency collaboration on flood risk and other natural hazard issues and support ECCR activities. Fifty-six (50 states, DC, the Navajo Nation, and 4 territories) Silver Jackets teams across the country identify flood risk priorities and look across partner agencies and organizations

for solutions. USACE funds Silver Jackets coordinator positions at each district – along with other supporting team members – who support the state / territory / tribe Silver Jackets team leaders with logistics. The Silver Jackets coordinators also connect internal USACE communities of practice and applicable USACE programs to the priorities and needs of any given Silver Jackets Team. Of note, Honolulu District continues to make progress toward establishing a new Silver Jackets team in Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Planning Assistance to States and Tribes provides technical assistance and comprehensive planning services on a cost-shared basis to non-federal interests. Section 8119 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2022 provided a cost share waiver for economically disadvantaged communities seeking assistance under this program. USACE districts are funded to conduct outreach and engagement to increase awareness of this opportunity to provide assistance to underserved communities at full federal cost. Several new PAS studies have been initiated to provide assistance to underserved communities, with additional new studies being scoped. In coordination with the Floodplain Management Services program, an FPMS and PAS Outreach plan was developed to provide guidance and objectives for USACE Divisions and Districts in conducting outreach and providing technical assistance to underserved communities.

Section 165 of WRDA 2020, as amended authorized a Pilot Program for Continuing Authority Projects in Small or Disadvantaged Communities. The 10-year Pilot Program directs the Secretary of the Army to study, design, and implement up to 20 CAP projects at 100% federal cost for economically disadvantaged communities. USACE districts were funded to conduct outreach and engagement to increase awareness of this opportunity to provide assistance to underserved communities at full federal cost. Availability of the Pilot Program was announced in the Federal Register and across social media platforms which generated increased interest in Civil Works small programs and instigated considerable new effort by USACE districts in engaging with smaller communities within their areas of responsibility.

2. Designated staff roles throughout the agency

In addition to the new district-level Environmental Justice Coordinators and the Public Involvement Specialists described above, every USACE district maintains several Public Affairs staff, and some districts also have specific Outreach Specialists to assist with stakeholder engagement and public involvement activities. Kansas City District has been particularly successful at maintaining three full time Outreach Specialists (two in Planning and one in Project Management). Other collaboration-focused positions at districts include SJ Coordinators and Tribal Liaisons.

3. Funding Contracts and Tools

One way districts secure access to facilitation is through Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts. For years, the Institute for Water Resources has maintained an IDIQ contract that includes facilitation support. Some districts use this existing IWR mechanism to access facilitation and public participation support. In FY23, this IDIQ mechanism was employed for multiple initiatives, totaling about \$4.2 million, significantly more than last FY. The major projects that employed this contract included Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (New Orleans District); Columbia River (Portland District); and Willamette Valley EIS (Portland District). In FY23 USACE held initial

discussions on developing an IDIQ contract to specifically focus on environmental collaboration and conflict resolution.

4. Communication Planning

While Communication Plans are a requirement for most USACE projects, CPCX's release of the new Communication Planning Workbook with Environmental Justice and Public Involvement Considerations has inspired several teams to review and update their plans, such as Charleston, Buffalo and L.A. districts. South Pacific Division released another planning template for public involvement s tailored to Feasibility Studies.

5. Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

In FY23, St. Paul District signed an MOU with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for the purpose of facilitating long term channel maintenance dredging and placement of dredged material for the Upper Mississippi River System Nine-Foot Channel Project, Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program - Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects, recreational beach enhancement activities, water level management projects, Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program projects, and any future ecosystem or environmental restoration projects in the Mississippi, St. Croix, and/or Black rivers.

Huntington District developed a Memorandum of Agreement in FY23 to evaluate opportunities for operational changes at Summersville Lake (WV). Huntington District, USACE HQ, the office of the ASA(CW) and others coordinated with the City of Summersville on the memorandum. Additionally, USACE's Nashville District supported the evaluation effort as a neutral third party.

Several other MOUs completed in FY23 are documented throughout the report, including three new MOUs with tribes.

- b. Please describe the trainings given in your department or agency in FY 2022. 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 2021 report to include ONLY trainings given in FY 2022. **If none, leave this section blank.**

NATIONAL EFFORTS

In FY23, CPCX increased the number of courses and webinars delivered, including training and coaching sessions on Designing for Diversity. Trainings included:

- 10 formal multi-day courses
- 23 webinars
- 5 online coaching sessions
- Quarterly newsletters emailed to the Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice (CPP CoP)

Webinar participation averaged close to 200 for each of the six agency-wide CPP CoP webinars. Participation counts for all 21 webinars totaled 2173 and 200 students graduated from the 11 courses. The target audience was USACE staff for most of these activities, although some interagency partners participated as well.

USACE FY23 National Trainings and Information Transfers	Total Sessions	Total Attendees
CPP CoP webinars (Highlights of the Managing by Network Training; Thinking about Risk; Strategic Writing around Risk; FY22 Most Notable ECCR Cases; Positive Language of EJ; Webex vs. Teams; International Facilitation Week webinars, and one Centers of Expertise webinar - CPCX 101.	12	1858
Designing for Diversity Training Webinars and Online Coaching Sessions	8 Training & 5 Coaching Sessions	375
Public Involvement – Communication (PROSPECT 091)	2 sessions	58
Risk Communication & Public Participation (PROSPECT 104)	2 sessions	47
Public Involvement and Teaming in Planning (PROSPECT 407)	2 sessions	50
CPP CoP e-Newsletters	4	3000+

REGIONAL EFFORTS

Kansas City District invested in training eight staff in Partnering and Facilitation Training and then promoted these graduates as an internal resource for supporting internal and external meetings.

San Francisco District hosted as district-wide webinar on CPCX 101; 20 attended.

Many individual staff members also attended external trainings in facilitation, risk management, public participation, and environmental collaboration.

3. ECCR Case Example

Using the template below, provide a description of an ECCR case (preferably **completed** in FY 2023). If possible, focus on an interagency ECCR case. Please limit the length to **no more than 1 page**.

Name of Problem/Conflict: International Red River Watershed Board (IRRWB) Indigenous Nations Round Table
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.
<p>This January 16-17 Roundtable brought together 38 representatives of Indigenous Nations from both sides of the Canada-United States border whose traditional territory is located within the Red River Watershed (ND). The IRRWB Indigenous Collaboration Task Team (ICTT) obtained a facilitator who assisted the group to identify priorities, identify opportunities for indigenous knowledge to be integrated into IRRWB activities, and develop 13 actionable recommendations, four of which have already been accepted by the IRRWB for inclusion in its Work Plan. This facilitator was instrumental in planning and leading the Indigenous Work Group (IWG). The IJC - Canada Section paid for the indigenous facilitator.</p> <p>The St. Paul District IJC Team for the IRRWB was instrumental in supporting the workshop and overseeing the process for Board discussion and approval of the recommendations. The MVP IJC Team is led by the District Commander, U.S. Co-Chair of the IRRWB, and also include the districts Tribal Liaison and a public involvement specialist as Secretary to the Board who helped coordinate the Outreach and Engagement Committee and ICTT work that led to the formation of the Indigenous Work Group and the Indigenous Nations Round Table.</p>
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.
<p>ECCR approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract with facilitator with cultural and language ties to the participants.• Form an advisory / work group exclusively of people from within the cultural target group to inform the event planning, do the outreach to the communities to encourage participation.• Compensate members of the advisory group and event participants for travel expenses and stipend for time to acknowledge the worth of their expertise and contributions to the IJC objectives.• Exclude participation of people from different cultures so that those attending are comfortable speaking freely in a manner that is meaningful to them.• Incorporate a meal into the event.• Invite Board members / IJC Commissioners and advisors of other cultures to participate in a Meet and Greet following the event to hear firsthand the impressions from the participants willing to engage in discussion about the event and their hopes for future collaboration.• Allow time for “representatives” to consult with their communities/councils both before and after the event to be prepared to participate and approve the final products for distribution.
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.
<p>The key beneficial outcomes of the facilitated roundtable were full participation from all the indigenous communities in the Red Basin; building trust that culture and ideas are respected and allowed to develop both in parallel and in collaboration with the existing IJC Board system; and ongoing support from the IWB and ICTT for advancing the remaining nine recommendations and implementing the first four.</p>
Please share any reflections on the lessons learned from the use of ECCR.
<p>Allow sufficient time to build relationships, trust, and to allow for other cultures governance systems to operate as usual. Sometimes building trust means NOT being in the room while the core work is being done by groups that are traditionally marginalized by the existing system of governance.</p>

Other ECCR Notable Cases

Briefly describe any other notable ECCR cases in FY 2023. (OPTIONAL)

This section includes additional notable ECCR cases from across the agency. Notable collaboration cases (without a neutral third-party) that were reported by the field as part of this data call can be found in Appendix A. Each USACE Division also specified their *most notable* case from the year, as indicated below or in the appendix. USACE employs both external and internal third-party neutrals to assist with a wide range of initiatives.

I. EXTERNAL FACILITATORS

Louisville District Green River Basin Sustainable Rivers Program Workshop – Great Lakes & Ohio River Division’s Most Notable Case

The Green River Basin Sustainable Rivers Program (SRP) Workshop facilitated by a professor from Campbellsville University August 29-31, 2023, exemplifies a collaborative and comprehensive approach to environmental management, highlighting the concerted efforts of various stakeholders. The participation of over 60 representatives from diverse organizations, including academic institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the USACE, underscores a shared commitment to addressing environmental challenges and optimizing the benefits of Corps infrastructure. One of the outcomes of the workshop was the creation of a list of potential projects that would benefit the ecosystem in the Green River Basin, including those that could be addressed through the SRP as well as any additional opportunities that exist for environmental benefit. In addition, a geographic information system comment tool was developed to help house input or data collected from workshop participants that could be referenced during future efforts. By actively involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, the workshop not only facilitated the exchange of knowledge but also provided a platform for conflict resolution and consensus-building. The diverse array of stakeholders, the emphasis on knowledge exchange, and the focus on sustainable practices underscore the significance of working together to address environmental challenges, make informed policy decisions, and pave the way for a more resilient and ecologically sound future for the Green River Basin.

New Orleans District Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock Replacement Study: Community Impact Mitigation Plan

The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock Replacement Study remains a cornerstone project for USACE’s New Orleans District, yet it continues to be met with significant opposition from local communities, the neighborhoods of St. Claude, Holy Cross, Bywater, and the Lower Ninth Ward. To better understand and navigate this complex social landscape, USACE has engaged CPCX, CDM Smith, and their local subcontractor, Bright Moments, to focus on comprehensive community engagement strategies and branding. In July and August of 2023, Phase 1 of the Community Opportunities Plan of Action was rolled out (Phase 2 occurred in December 2023 and will be reported in the FY24 ECCR report). This phase revisited mitigation measures that had been proposed as far back as the mid-1990s, with the aim of understanding their current relevance and appropriateness for potential inclusion in a Community Impact Mitigation Plan. Listening sessions were organized in multiple neighborhoods, facilitating direct dialogues between the project team and the community members. This phase served not only to gather feedback but also to demonstrate that USACE was committed to hearing and integrating community

perspectives into project planning. Additionally, CDM Smith's online Gather Room platform hosts a virtual open house to accommodate those who cannot attend in person and serves as a means for community members to provide feedback directly to the project team and includes an informational video that explains the history of the lock itself and the importance of its replacement.

<https://gather.cdmsmith.com/v/YbjN3GAnqA7>

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

USACE's Portland District is in the midst of a National Environmental Policy Act EIS and ESA Section 7 process for the continued operations and maintenance of the Willamette Valley System. This effort will identify major actions to address project effects on three fish species listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA. CDM Smith was contracted to provide support with the logistics, facilitation, note taking, and supporting tasks for two workshops in FY23. The first workshop was a facilitated meeting focused on kicking off review of the draft Biological Assessment (BA) for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The second workshop focused on a facilitated discussion on the Corps' response to comments received from the Services' review of the draft BA as well as an update on the Corps adaptive management plan tied to the action.

Rock Island District Brandon Road Interbasin Program

The Brandon Road Interbasin Project is a complex ecosystem restoration project with innovative technological deterrents to invasive species spread. The project is designed to prevent upstream movement of invasive carp and other aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes while minimizing impacts to the Illinois Waterway users. The project will focus on the downstream approach channel to the Brandon Road Lock & Dam in Joliet, Illinois. Significant project-related engagements in FY23 increased collaboration and reduced conflict between USACE and its stakeholders and include:

- **24-25 OCT 2022** - An interagency collaboration between experts from USACE, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service held a second project Cost-Schedule-Risk Analysis in Rock Island (IL) which provided valuable data for the design team. This effort is essential in the development of a Certified Total Project Cost Estimate, which is a key factor to negotiate a Project-Partnership Agreement with the project sponsor. Having this multi-agency group collaborate on this cost estimate leads to a more accurate and credible cost estimate, which reduces conflict between the partners.
- **02 FEB 2023** -USACE senior leaders met with senior executives from the states of Illinois and Michigan for a fourth Partnership Session to address various challenges and opportunities. The firm Virtual CEO facilitated the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to maintain and build on the successful partnership between USACE and the Illinois and Michigan state agencies; provide an open forum for all parties to candidly discuss team and project strengths and opportunities for improvement; and discuss and resolve open issues that could impede project completion. At the meeting, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the USACE signed the Accelerated Funds Amendment to the Design Agreement, which will allow Increment 1 designs to proceed with federal funds until the Project Partnership Agreement is signed.

- **08 JUN 2023** - Leadership from USACE the States of Illinois and Michigan as well as senior Congressional staff conducted a Project Partnership Agreement negotiation session allowing both sides to gain a better understanding of concerns.
- **21 SEP 2023** – USACE held a virtual Navigation Workshop to engage members of the navigation industry. By engaging the navigation industry during the design process, USACE hopes to learn about important constraints and issues that could potentially cause problems during construction or operations.

Rock Island District Cedar Rapids, Iowa Flood Risk Management Program - Cedar Rapids Flood Risk Mitigation Project Facilitated Partnering Meetings

In June 2008, the City of Cedar Rapids (City), Iowa, was devastated by a flood of record proportions. As a result of that devastating flooding, Rock Island District and the city of Cedar Rapids are implementing the City of Cedar Rapids' Comprehensive Flood Risk Management Plan. FY23 saw multiple significant engagements related to the Cedar Rapids Flood Risk Management Project including two facilitated partnering meetings. These meetings included City and USACE representatives and leadership and were facilitated by the firm Virtual CEO. The partnering meetings focused on improving communication, ensuring governance along with issue escalation was effective, and discussing how to remove hurdles to deliver the project more efficiently. The facilitated partnering meeting provided an opportunity to: maintain and build on the successful partnership between the USACE and the City of Cedar Rapids; provide an open forum for all parties to candidly discuss team and project strengths and opportunities for improvement; and discuss and resolve issues that could impede timely project completion. During the first meeting, real estate teams from both organizations worked to identify action items that had potential schedule impacts. Utility teams worked to mitigate risks to schedule as it relates to utilities. Hydraulic teams reviewed storm design and ponding as it relates to permitting. During the second meeting, the team worked to develop an Integrated Program Management plan that outlines the combined schedule of USACE and City actions as well as the communication pathways for reviews and key decisions.

FY23 challenges for the Cedar Rapids Project included: Coordination of design and real estate requirements with the Union Pacific Railroad and the City of Cedar Rapids, coordination with the City of Cedar Rapids on USACE real estate requirements, and coordination with USACE HQ on a request for approval of non-standard estate for the Union Pacific Railroad areas. These challenges were addressed by conducting recurring technical coordination calls with Union Pacific Railroad, developing a strategic communication plan, recurring real estate coordination with City of Cedar Rapids, vertical team alignment on Non-Standard Estate package, and facilitated discussions with District and City of Cedar Rapids senior leaders to escalate and resolve issues the project team is unable to resolve.

St. Paul District International Red River Watershed Board (IRRWB) Strategic Planning Workshop

With the 2021 upgrade from a provisional watershed board to full watershed board status, the International Joint Commission's International Red River Board assumed new responsibilities. The Co-Chairs of the Board decided to engage external facilitators to guide the group through a strategic planning process August 28-30 to help reach consensus on priorities and strategic objectives. Originally one of the facilitators was to be indigenous and one non-indigenous to support incorporating indigenous perspective and approaches to Board business. However, during the process two indigenous facilitators

withdrew and so a second non-indigenous facilitator was retained. The facilitators were contracted by the IJC.

The facilitators used their considerable combined strategic planning experience to focus the work and discussions to produce useful strategic objectives and task lists. Fun and interactive activities were interspersed throughout that helped build energy, positivity and closer bonds. Meeting face to face was critical to being able to read when there were major or insignificant issues at play. Also, the gathering built a “neural network” of common understanding of the definitions, the conditions, the interesting facts, the open issues, the possibilities among all the people present. It results in a “bigger, better-connected brain” for solving problems after being in the same room and eating meals together than the participants are individually or even collaboratively when remote.

However, the lack of an indigenous facilitator ultimately caused this effort to be unsuccessful. Systemic bias against marginalized and underrepresented groups such indigenous people, may have been a factor. Indigenous input was to be “considered” in most of the groups planned activities, but none of their specific recommendations accepted. These recommendations were held to a different process and standard compared to the other challenging recommendations the group somehow found a way to adopt. This was very painful for the attending indigenous member. Facilitators and leaders need to recognize that these biases exist and build into the process tasks where work groups address perspectives / recommendations from the marginalized groups explicitly – and provide extra support to break the “glass ceiling” on getting the input into the main line of activity.

Alaska District Placer Mining Resource Network – Pacific Ocean Division’s Most Notable Case

Placer mining is the mining of stream bed (alluvial) deposits for minerals. Placer Mining in Alaska supports state goals of resource development, however, when implemented indiscriminately and not in compliance with state and federal regulations, results in major impacts to natural resources. USACE’s Regulatory Division has partnered with the USFWS, the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the Bureau of Land Management to develop tools for the placer mining community to improve compliance with state and federal permitting requirements, including Clean Water Act requirements, and reduce impacts to natural resources, including waters of the U.S.

USFWS hired a facilitator who supported the year long, multi-meeting effort. In addition to facilitate meetings, the facilitator administered a survey to the placer mining community to identify goals for improvement. After several meetings during the first quarter, Alaska District and the contracted facilitator facilitated a one-day Partnering Workshop on May 3 to develop an action plan for the goals identified in the survey. Additional subgroup meetings, led by the Corps, have occurred quarterly to implement the decisions made during the workshop. While this is an ongoing process, this effort has resulted in a greater understanding of the placer mining community’s needs and has built better working relationships with state and federal partners. Additionally, the development of the tools committed to during the partnering workshop will provide the placer mining community with improved capacity to continue mining while remaining in compliance with state and federal regulations.

L.A. District Seven Oaks Dam Mediation

Two environmental groups asserted Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7(a)(2) claims against the USACE in Federal Court. Subsequently, the non-Federal Sponsors for Seven Oaks Dam intervened as defendants. The Court stayed the case for several years to facilitate settlement negotiations, after which the parties re-initiated settlement efforts through mediation. The costs of mediation are split evenly (50%) between (a) Plaintiffs and Plaintiff-Intervenors and (b) Defendant USACE and Defendant-Intervenors. The parties agreed upon a mediator and process that included each party providing the mediator with a position paper outlining the factual issues in the case as well as the range of options to settle the dispute. The parties initiated the mediation process in 2022 and hope for a potential settlement in 2024. Because the parties have voluntarily agreed to participate in mediation, they recognize the potential savings of costs and resources, and the ability to be involved in generating a settlement that addresses their particular needs. The parties continue to build trust as they work through the mediation process and hope to reach a solution that is better than one that might be reached through costly litigation.

II. USACE FACILITATORS

CPCX:

Pittsburgh District Ala Wai Flood Risk Management Study Community Meetings

The Ala Wai Watershed is at risk for widespread flooding across the basin, which includes the lives and livelihoods of the 200,000 residents living along the Makiki, Mānoa, and Pālolo streams, the Ala Wai Canal, and the wider community within the City and County of Honolulu. The current, re-launched study aims to reevaluate the feasibility and benefits of a federal project, while considering the community input throughout the process. The Ala Wai community and stakeholders have had a mixed response to this effort over the years and thus the team sought CPCX assistance with facilitating community meetings and recommending public involvement processes. The study team includes USACE and City representatives working on every aspect of technical analysis and study execution to identify optimal solutions. This intensive, community-informed public engagement strategy now contains the following elements:

- The mayor and the USACE District Commander coordinate with one another, conducting regular engagements with their staff to ensure project success from start to finish.
- A management measure tracker with 223 individual potential flood management measures that were proposed by the project development team, local residents, or local stakeholders. This tracker details the status and rationale and evaluation status for each flood management measure.
- A plan formulation tracker that details 8 different alternative plans that the project team actively examined, made up of a service of management measures.
- Workshops and structured meetings aligned with study milestones (hybrid -- i.e., simultaneously virtual and in-person -- when possible)

- In total, there have been 14 public engagement opportunities since the effort began in November 2021. These include both virtual and in-person opportunities as well as virtual, asynchronous engagement through the website and documents available there.

Miami-Dade Back Bay CSRM Feasibility Study Charrettes

Miami-Dade Back Bay CSRM Feasibility Study consists of collaborative scoping of two locally preferred plans through charrettes and focused meetings including agency and public stakeholders. A wide range of local stakeholders including tribal nations were asked to participate in scoping and developing plans. In coordination with Miami-Dade County, the study team hosted a weeklong charrette 14-18 November to re-initiate the Miami-Dade Back Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study. The initial recommended plan, presented in 2021, was not supported by the community. Thus, the team is coordinating with stakeholders, agencies, and the public to identify a new alternative with more focus on nonstructural and NNBF measures that are supported by Miami-Dade County and the community. This alternative would integrate and refine measures of the original recommended plan that received broad support and modify/replace measures that raised local concerns. CPCX and NAB facilitated the charrette and assisted with the Coastal Resilience Meeting and public meetings. Next steps included review and synthesis of the concepts developed at the charrette and establishment of Communication Plans and Community Engagement Strategy.

Mississippi Valley Division Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study

The Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study is a five-year, \$25 million study to identify recommendations for ensuring effective long-term management of the lower Mississippi River basin from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to the Gulf of Mexico. The Lower Miss Study will require an extensive external engagement and communications plan for the seven-state geographic scope. The study team has initiated external engagement, in coordination with the CPCX, through a series of planning charettes with federal and state agencies, levee boards and academic experts. In the fall, the team held a kickoff webinar followed by four planning charettes to initiate the collaborative planning process and begin to identify problems, opportunities, constraints and suggested ways to better manage the lower Mississippi River. Meeting facilitators included staff from CPCX and USACE districts. Approximately 150 stakeholders participated in one or more of the planning charettes and approximately 100 participated virtually. At times the team was challenged by the hybrid approach, especially when it came to facilitating discussions during breakout groups with in-person and virtual participation. The team found that taking notes of the discussion in the room and displaying those notes on the Webex for virtual attendees to see helped bridge the gap and overcome audio issues. The team also had two facilitators assigned to every breakout session, one for online participants and one for in-person participants. Monitoring the Webex chat and hand-raising feature was also critical to ensure the virtual participants were engaged. The Charettes, including the cost of facilitators, was funded from the Project budget.

OTHER USACE FACILITATORS:

Section 519 Fox River Connectivity and Habitat Study Public Meetings

The Fox River Connectivity and Habitat Study is recommending a plan for ecological restoration of the Fox River study reach that includes several dam removals. The project delivery team (PDT) anticipated that the fall NEPA public review period with the affected communities would be slightly contentious. In mid-November the PDT, including the nonfederal sponsor (NFS) the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), decided to hold three (which is unprecedented) meetings in the communities along the Fox River to ensure inclusivity and venues that most could travel to within 20-30 minutes. The Fox River Connectivity and Habitat Study lead planners contacted the district's Public Involvement Specialist (PIS) as a neutral third party for those public meetings with the affected communities. Discussions with the PIS included locations to hold the meetings, key messages, who should attend and their role, advertisement of meetings, how to conduct the verbal public comments during the meeting to ensure inclusivity and equity, and materials needed for a successful public meeting. During the verbal public comment period the PIS ensured that all commenters felt welcomed and heard during their three-minute speaking window. Overall, the meetings were productive, professional, and positive, at a cost of \$4000. The attendees stated that they really appreciated the team's professionalism even through their feelings of anger at the dam removal recommendations.

Huntington District Kentucky Dam Emergency Action Plan Workshops

In 2023, the Kentucky legislature passed a law authorizing the Energy & Environment Cabinet to require all high hazard or significant hazard dams to have a current Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Two workshops in eastern Kentucky were facilitated by the Huntington District's Public Involvement Specialist, Kentucky Division of Water, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to help inform dam owners about this new law and assist them with creating an EAP. During the workshop, participants worked through a fillable EAP template that made the process less formidable for dam owners and ensured their dam complies with all state and Federal dam safety requirements. Outcomes included strengthening of interagency relationships, increased awareness about the EAP process, and providing a template for future EAP workshops.

Louisville District Beattyville, KY Planning Charette

On April 19 the district hosted a Planning Charrette facilitated by HQ with 35 attendees, representing a diverse range of stakeholders, to achieve mutual flood risk management objectives and resolve conflicts for the betterment of Beattyville, Kentucky. Stakeholders actively participated in discussions, shared valuable insights, and contributed to the formulation of objectives and alternatives. The emphasis on public engagement and the involvement of diverse community groups underscored a holistic approach to environmental decision-making. The commitment to ongoing communication and the next steps in creating alternatives demonstrate a sustained effort to work together for the benefit of Beattyville. This effort was funded using project funding from the Beattyville, KY GI project.

Pittsburgh District Sustainable Rivers Program - Ohio River Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement Meeting

The Ohio River is of national ecological and socioeconomic significance, containing a diverse aquatic community and providing vital services to over five million people. Altered hydrology has been identified

as an urgent threat to the ecological sustainability of the Ohio River by altering water quality, sediment transport and distribution, floodplain connectivity, and availability of/access to critical habitats. On October 4, 2022, participants in the *Ohio River Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement* campaign gathered in three locations in the Pittsburgh District, the Louisville District, and the Huntington District, facilitated by Environmental Planners at these districts. These in-person locations were linked via videoconference, created a sense of continuity between the three districts that the Ohio River flows through. It also allowed for participants to provide expertise and insight on proposed measures, without being restricted by physical location. The overall goal of this effort was to identify specific opportunities to maximize ecological sustainability at each of the locks and dams that create navigation pools along the length of the Ohio River. Across the three districts, 62 participants discussed identified opportunities and formed workgroups based on the different types of measures that could be implemented including e-flows, infrastructure and hydropower, and habitat improvement and connectivity.

Pittsburgh District Allegheny River Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Planning Initiative

A sustained decline in commercial traffic on the Allegheny River has resulted in reduced lock staffing, fewer operational hours, less funding, and an overall reduction in LRP's ability to support commercial/recreational traffic. To create dialog with stakeholders, LRD convened a series of meetings with commercial and recreational interests to discuss the ongoing degradation of the Allegheny River navigation system. The LRP goal for these meetings was to inform stakeholders of current and future challenges to navigation in the system, elucidate stakeholder priorities, and support an action plan to address the funding challenges. Through facilitation provided by LRP's CAP Program Manager and Community Planner, the stakeholder group identified economic, policy, research / development, and organization-based strategic priorities, with the overall goal of securing the long-term viability of the Allegheny River for commercial and recreational lockages. The group detailed over 25 specific actions and prioritized these to focus on the most critical that would lay the groundwork for future efforts. Ultimately, the commercial and recreation interests used this momentum to form a regional coalition to promote the financial support of navigation infrastructure on the Allegheny River.

St. Paul District Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) Partnering Meeting

In November 2023, three USACE districts (MVP, MVR, and MVS) hosted a partnering meeting with state and federal resource agencies to develop shared understanding of responsibilities, communication expectations, and conflict management processes and to build relationships, trust, and norms. NESP funded a USACE facilitator external to the program to develop the agenda and identify tools and techniques used to build relationships and communication strategies. Some of the facilitation techniques used included live anonymous polling, round robins to hear from all parties, and "Vegas rules" to encourage honest conversations on sensitive issues. One of the lessons learned was that USACE tends to have more staff at meetings than partner agencies. At this meeting, there were approximately twelve USACE staff including PMs, planners, and biologists from three districts. The seven partner agencies each sent one or two staff, which meant that the total number of USACE staff outnumbered the total number of partners. This demographic made the partners skeptical of the anonymous polling results since the USACE staff could easily tip the results. In the future, it might be helpful to designate one person from each agency to respond to the poll so that the results would be equally representative of the partnership.

Galveston District Matagorda Ship Channel SEIS – Southwestern Division’s Most Notable Case

SWG held a targeted stakeholder meeting and public scoping meeting for the Matagorda Ship Channel Improvement Project SEIS on 6-7 June in Port Lavaca, TX. The purpose of the June 6 targeted stakeholder meeting was to present plans for the Phase 2 sediment analysis in advance of letting a contract for sediment sampling. The sampling plan and environmental compliance are the responsibility of USACE, but coordination with EPA is critical to achieving complimentary outcomes. The goal was to present the plan and answer questions. Anticipated conflict was avoided because the facilitator was able to establish rapport and invite stakeholders to share their differing perspectives while keeping the focus on the technical presentation goal of the meeting. Additionally, the transparent and detailed presentation of the technical sampling plan satisfied most questions and critiques from stakeholders.

The 7 June NEPA Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Meeting included a facilitated discussion and Q&A session following a general presentation. The facilitator (a Risk Communication Manager on the CPCX roster of internal facilitators) worked to manage conflict between those with opposing viewpoints.

Southwestern Division Tribal Nations Summit

The purpose of the Tribal Summit was to engage with federally recognized Indian Tribes that have interest within the boundaries of Southwestern Division (SWD) to strengthen communication and relationships and reinforce mutual commitment to sustainable water resources across the region. The Southwestern Division engaged the Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise (TNTCX) to support planning and facilitating the Tribal Summit. Two half-day meetings were held January 23 and February 1. The 51 Tribal Nations with interest in the SWD Civil Works boundaries were invited to the Tribal Summit along with representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army – Civil Works, USACE HQ, SWD, and SWD districts. The general format of the meeting was to provide a brief overview of the USACE programs followed by a listening session for the tribal representatives to provide feedback. The feedback was used to make recommendations for improvements (including but not limited) to tribal relationships, communication, and consultation improvements within SWD.

South Pacific Division Table Top Exercises (TTX)

Tijuana Bi National Dam Safety Tabletop Exercise, South Pacific Division’s Most Notable Case

A catastrophic dam failure in the Tijuana River Watershed could easily overwhelm local emergency response capabilities in the U.S. and Mexico. Communication among responders has been limited in the past but is essential to prevent catastrophic consequences. The exercise was held to test cross-border communication, validate the Barrett Dam Emergency Action Plan and Emergency Response Plan, and gain an understanding of bi-national disaster response capabilities with counterparts in Mexico. This was USACE’s first binational and fully bilingual emergency response and preparedness tabletop exercise.

Four USACE Districts were involved: The Project Manager was from SPL, SPA provided the facilitation team lead, SPK provided the bi-lingual Master of Ceremonies, and all three Districts provided interpreters. Leading up to the actual tabletop exercise, the facilitation team organized a series of

“meet and greet” multi-agency and individual meetings with regional stakeholders. These meetings allowed the team to introduce the tabletop exercise purpose and scenario, and allowed individuals to introduce themselves, practice interpretation, and ensure the technology was working for everyone. By the time the exercise was held, there were no surprises for any participants. The facilitation team pulled off a very challenging but successful bi-lingual workshop as noted in this article [Binational flood exercise strengthens vital communication channels > Sacramento District > Sacramento District News Stories \(army.mil\)](#). The partners were especially grateful for the partnerships created by USACE and the Silver Jackets Team. The process of building up this flood risk preparedness group created a shortcut to channels of communication, preventing lives lost in the future.

San Francisco District Participates in Marin City TTX

A high tide and heavy rain can cause Marin City access roads to flood multiple feet and prevent people from going in or out of the community for hours. On 14 DEC, the San Francisco District and Marin City Community Services District hosted a flood preparedness table top exercise to review the actions Marin City, Marin County, Caltrans, and other state and federal agencies will take to prepare and respond to flooding on Marin City access roads and reduce flood risk to people entering or leaving Marin City. This exercise was a culmination of the year-long planning effort, the Marin City Emergency Action Planning Project, funded in part by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Floodplain Management Services Program. The meeting was facilitated by San Francisco District leadership and staff and the USACE Readiness Support Center.

Utah Emergency Action Planning Support

Sacramento District Water Resource Planner provided facilitation support to three communities in Utah to bolster their emergency action planning efforts. Emergency Action Planning (EAP) workshops were held in Salt Lake City, UT; Mapleton, UT; and Grand County, UT. Each project held an EAP workshop, facilitated by the Sacramento District Water Resource Planner, that informed the community’s emergency action plan (EAP) and held a tabletop exercise to test the newly developed or updated EAP. Each project was 12-months, spanning FY 23, and had a \$140,000 budget from Floodplain Management Services funds. The EAP workshop held in Grand County, Utah, was not a day too soon as three days later Grand County needed to respond to a flash flood emergency caused by a 100-year storm. The three EAP projects utilized the USACE Readiness Support Center to create ESRI story maps, interactive videos, and professionally designed Situational Pamphlets to assist with the Tabletop Exercises. These projects also created a streamlined framework for developing a community EAP and facilitating an impactful tabletop exercise that will assist other communities looking for similar support.

Tribal Flood After Fire Workshops

Tribes across California, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado have suffered from fires that significantly increased their risk to post-wildfire flooding. This \$125,000 Floodplain Management Program workshop used neutral third-party facilitation from five USACE districts (Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, and Wilmington and Water Resource and Emergency Planners in the California Silver Jackets Team), to strengthen tribal preparedness, coordination, communication, and provided information on available resources to assist with planning and recovery efforts. The workshop showcased the recently developed California Flood after Fire Toolkit that can be utilized by staff

supporting GIS, hydrology, and hydraulics when responding to post-fire flooding efforts. There were representatives from five USACE districts, seven federal and state agencies, and 11 tribes. This was the first time the Ability to Pay provision has been used, influencing Tribal Partnership Program policy, and setting standard for how the policy will be used going forward.

Duncan, AZ Emergency Preparedness Joint Tabletop Exercise

In August 2022, the city of Duncan in Arizona experienced severe damage to homes and the city's critical infrastructure after flooding occurred on the Gila River. The city of Duncan, home to approximately 800 people, is identified as a vulnerable population with limited access to resources. Following the damaging flood in 2022, the Los Angeles District Operations Division and Emergency Management teams facilitated a multi-agency Emergency Preparedness Joint Tabletop Exercise in April at the Papago Park Military Reservation with in-person and remote participants. The exercise focused on coordinating rapid rescue and response operations to the city of Duncan and other less populated towns. The Los Angeles District used scenarios from Phoenix, Arizona and Duncan to demonstrate when and how flood response efforts occurred, established a timeline for communications during events, and prompted collaboration between the federal and state response agencies to support smaller communities.

4. ECCR Case Number & Context Data

Context for ECCR Applications:	Case Numbers
Policy development	—
Planning	12
Siting and construction	3
Rulemaking	—
License and permit issuance	
Compliance and enforcement action	2
Implementation/monitoring agreements	
Other (specify): _	
Disaster preparedness and emergency management table top exercises	4
Tribal consultation	1
TOTAL # of CASES	<u>25</u>

Appendix A: Non-facilitated Collaboration Cases

Mississippi Valley Division

St. Paul District County State-Aid Highway (CSAH) 6/5 Reconstruction, Sibley County, MN, Department of the Army Permit

Sibley County Highway Department requested a Department of the Army (DA) permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to discharge fill material into waters of the U.S., and a Section 408 request under Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 to alter the Small Flood Risk Management Project, Henderson North Levee, in connection with the CSAH 6/5 Flood Improvement Project. Early internal coordination within St. Paul District led to Regulatory acting as lead for all consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). During early pre-application stage, Regulatory met with the applicant and consultants to discuss the archaeological and architectural investigations being conducted along the proposed section of the highways. Archival research showed this portion of highway may coincide with the location of a significant, traumatic event in recent Native American and early Minnesota history. Tribal consultation was conducted with those tribes that were a part of the recent history and trauma that occurred along this location. Open and honest consultation discussions occurred between USACE and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO). Together, USACE Tribal Liaison and Cultural Resource Managers and THPOs jointly decided the appropriate designation of this cultural corridor location. The DA permit included Special Conditions to address the concerns and requests of the THPOs, and no formal agreement was needed to mitigate for adverse effects.

St. Paul District Exploring Co-management at the Sandy Lake Dam and Recreation Area

St. Paul District – Operations, Recreation and Natural Resources (RNR) Management team explored what “co-management” could look like at Sandy Lake Dam and Recreation Area. A meeting was facilitated by RNR staff and attendees included USACE, Fond du Lac, and GLIFWC (Great Lake Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission). Later, representatives from USACE were invited to attend the Fond du Lac Veteran’s Powwow to gain understanding of these types of events and a virtual follow-up meeting was held shortly after to discuss what went well/areas for improvement and steps forward. On July 26th, the Mikwendaagoziwag Ceremony was held at Sandy Lake with participation by the ASACW and St. Paul District Commander. Overall RNR increased opportunities for interpretive and educational components at USACE project sites, raised awareness and incorporation of tribal knowledge and expertise, and increased outreach to Native American communities.

St. Paul District Fargo-Moorhead Metro Construction Partnering

The St. Paul District has had ongoing collaboration with several contractors regarding the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Flood Risk Reduction Program. These collaboration activities have included issue resolution meetings for construction and environmental issues such as avoiding effects on endangered species, joint classroom presentations at local colleges and universities, and joint tours for local students. The contractors also presented at the USACE Executive Governance Meeting held in Fargo-Moorhead.

St. Paul District Mississippi River Commission Low Water Tour

The St. Paul District hosted the Mississippi River Commission in August 2023. A wide variety of stakeholders were invited including mayors, port authorities, state agency staff, the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge manager, and the Executive Director of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Alliance. The meeting was hosted aboard a boat operated by Winona State University. Several speakers provided a guided tour of the area talking about the Winona port, the surrounding wildlife and fish refuge, the navigation channel, and river history. The commission members had planned to attend in person but were unable due to logistical problems. The St. Paul team was able to bring them onto the boat virtually through Webex. A St. Paul facilitator supported the stakeholders in providing comments to the commission and ensuring that the virtual communication ran as smoothly as possible. Overall, the event was a great opportunity for public involvement, collaboration, and communication across many organizations and interests.

St. Paul District, Rock Island District, and St. Louis District Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) Engagements

The Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) had multiple environmental collaborative activities during FY23. The primary goals of the program are to increase the capacity and improve the reliability of the inland navigation system while restoring, protecting, and enhancing the environment. This program is funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. One of the most significant tools that the NESP team implemented to increase collaboration was to institute the NESP Consultation Committee comprised of USACE; Natural Resource Agencies of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin; USGS; and USFWS. Open, honest, and transparent communication between agencies, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), the public and the NESP CC is the goal of the NESP CC quarterly meetings. The inaugural meeting of the NESP CC was held on 05 APR 2023 in Moline, IL. The meeting focused on formal consultation with the NESP partners and allowed an opportunity for input from NGOs and the public. Topics of discussion included the consultation committee charter, vision statement, regional management and partnership collaboration, project showcase presentations, program reports, and identifying FY23 priorities. There were multiple other significant engagements related to the NESP in FY23 which served to increase collaboration and reduce conflict between USACE and its stakeholders such as:

- **01-02 NOV 2022** – The NESP Ecosystem Program team met with formal consultation partners from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin, USFWS, and USGS and UMRBA to discuss communication pathways for a successful partnership. The parties successfully identified areas of agreement and areas of opportunity for greater collaboration.
- **29-30 NOV 2022** – The NESP team met with partners on 29 NOV for a multi-day workshop focused on developing a standardized process for implementing NESP Ecosystem Restoration Project Implementation Reports. The team discussed expectations of the study process and identified roles and responsibilities during the study phase. Having these discussions early allowed for increased collaboration and decreased the potential for serious conflict.
- **28 JUN 2023** - The second NESP Consultation Committee meeting occurred on 28 JUN in Moline, IL and helped continue to build strong partnerships with the states of Iowa, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, and Minnesota, as well as UMRBA, USGS and the many NGOs and stakeholders of the program. The focus of this meeting was the NESP project selection process, specifically how NGOs and stakeholders recommend projects to be included for consideration by the coordinating committee.
- **25 JUL 2023** - The St. Paul District celebrated the NESP Pool 2 Wing Dam Notching Project with a ribbon cutting and dedication of the project on 25 July 2023. This was the first ecosystem restoration project (and first project in program history) to complete construction. The Pool 2 wing dam

modification project is an ecosystem restoration project that will encourage depth and flow diversity of river habitat for fish. From conception to completion the project took a total of 15 months, demonstrating how efficiently select NESP ecosystem restoration projects can be completed and subsequently start providing benefits.

Rock Island District Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program (UMMR)

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program, authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, was the first environmental restoration and monitoring program undertaken on a large river system in the United States. The UMRR Program was authorized by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986 and continuously authorized by WRDA 1999. The program consists of two primary elements: habitat rehabilitation projects and long-term monitoring and scientific research. There were multiple significant engagements related to the UMRR in FY23 which served to increase collaboration and reduce conflict between USACE and its stakeholders including:

- **02 NOV 2022** – USACE held an Alternatives Workshop at the District Office in Quincy, IL. MVR and RPEDN staff along with the Project Sponsor, Quincy Bay Area Restoration and Enhancement Association (QBAREA), and Project Partners, Illinois DNR and USFWS. This workshop provided an opportunity to discuss the UMRR Quincy Bay HREP Initial Array of Alternatives and select a Final Array of Alternatives. The workshop was a great success and resulted in concurrence from all parties on the Final Array of Alternatives for further consideration and development.
- **17 NOV 2022** – RPEDN and MVR staff held an online public question and answer session for the UMRR Lower Pool 13 HREP (project) on the draft Feasibility Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment. This project is in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Iowa DNR, Illinois DNR and USGS.
- **05 MAY 2023** – On 05 May 2023, the UMRR project team presented college-level Environmental Science students from Bettendorf High School with a tour of the UMRR Keithsburg Division Habitat Rehabilitation Enhancement Project. Outreach events such as this help educate the community about the UMRR project and decrease conflict within the community.
- **01 JUN 2023** – On 01 June 2023, MVR staff, along with the Iowa and Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff, conducted a planning workshop for the Lower Pool 13 Phase II Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project (HREP).

The UMRR team also holds quarterly meetings to update project partners and stakeholders.

New Orleans District Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana Development Master Plan Phase III

The Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana Development Master Plan Phase II is a Planning Assistance to States (PAS) project that was completed in 2023. The Chitimacha Tribe, like many federally recognized tribes, has a history of being underserved by federal, state, and local governments. The effort began in 2019 when members of the New Orleans District met with the Chitimacha Tribe to discuss possible flood plain management efforts that would benefit the tribe both now and in the future. Once the Phase II report was written, all parties involved gathered to approve the final product and discuss ways to continue the collaborative partnership. The partnership between the New Orleans District and the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana continues through a Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) study that was initiated in FY24 and will provide technical assistance to the Chitimacha Tribe to conduct data collection and create data layers of existing sanitary sewer system, along with other flood risk mitigation GIS layers.

North Atlantic Division

Norfolk District Tribal Partnership Workshops

Between December and August Norfolk District held several Tribal Workshops which were attended by representatives of the seven Virginia Federally Recognized Tribes, the State Historic Preservation Office, and other federal agencies. Discussion themes included the Federal Project Dredging Program, Solar Farm projects, Mitigation Banking, the USACE Curation Regionalization Effort, and Coastal Storm Risk Management Programming and Authorities. The forum explored the Tribal Area of Interest and Consultation Practices, and initiated development of an MOU with the tribes.

Norfolk District City of Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management Project – Pre-Engineering and Design & Construction Phase – North Atlantic Division’s Most Notable Case

Norfolk District’s City of Norfolk CSRM PDT is working on Pre-Engineering and Design and Construction Phases of the project and addressing public concerns regarding environmental justice and environmental impact and mitigation plans. These include ongoing discussions of the 1) nonstructural project features proposed for the Southside neighborhood of City of Norfolk, which is home to low income, minority residents that are particularly vulnerable to, and disproportionately affected by, severe coastal storms; and 2) surge barriers proposed in other neighborhoods and their associated environmental effects.

South Atlantic Division

Jacksonville District Puerto Rico Coastal Study Public Outreach

From Fall 2023 to present, the Puerto Rico Coastal Study team has conducted a significant amount of engagement with the local government in Puerto Rico as well as the communities in both Rincón and Ocean Park (in San Juan), where subsets of the communities have historically experienced economic disadvantages. Public meetings were held in Ocean Park and Rincón on 27 and 28 June 2023 to present the tentatively selected plans for each reach and gather feedback, with an additional real estate-focused public open house in Rincón held on 29 August 2023 to discuss the proposed acquisition in Rincón and answer questions. For each meeting, the team delivered a presentation in English and Spanish, and displayed posters and placemats, which were in English and Spanish. The team learned many lessons from these outreach efforts that could be used to continue to improve future outreach efforts.

Mobile District U.S. Food and Drug Administration – Gulf Coast Seafood Laboratory Sea Wall Construction, Dauphin Island, Mobile County, Alabama – Interagency Support Services

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requested Mobile District to install a new bulkhead and concrete cap sea wall at its Gulf Coast Sealab (GCSL) facility on Dauphin Island located adjacent to a large prehistoric shell midden and mound complex that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Mobile District prepared an Environmental Assessment and conducted Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) compliance work on FDA’s behalf. Section 106 NHPA coordination included conditions agreed upon by the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and interested tribes that were not followed during the

March 2021 construction efforts in the field. When Mobile District became aware of the problem, Mobile District's representatives notified the Alabama SHPO and interested tribes and conducted a field site visit. Mobile District conducted weekly meetings with the interested tribes for over two years. These meetings provided up to date information to the participants. Mobile District's Chief of Staff provided oversight for this effort to its completion. Mobile District staff oversaw an Archaeological Resources Protection Act investigation and report, developed an historic management treatment plan for FDA, assisted with the relocation of certain FDA facilities, and identified mitigation efforts that were all reviewed by the tribes and Alabama SHPO.

Savannah District Environmental Justice Coordination with the Gullah Geechee Nation

Savannah District has made strides in forming relationships with the Gullah Geechee Nation (GGN), both in and outside of the district's area of responsibility. The Tribal Liaison, Lead Archaeologist, Environmental Justice Coordinator, and Public Involvement Specialist have attended several meetings with members of the GGN and continue to work with them to identify environmental and water resource concerns. Savannah District has formed a relationship with representatives of the Harambe House, a non-profit organization focused on Environmental Justice.

Wilmington District Wilmington Harbor Section 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement, Public Meeting and Ecological Workshops – South Atlantic Division's Most Notable Case

Wilmington District organized a public scoping meeting for the Wilmington Harbor Section 403 Letter Report and Environmental Impact Statement. Charleston District's public involvement specialist participated in Project Delivery Team meetings for the planning of the public meeting. The public involvement specialist also hosted a station at the public meeting that allowed for interactive discussions with members of the public during the open house. Members of the public were asked reflective questions about what they learned, what they hoped to learn, and any suggestions or concerns they wanted to express.

For the ecological models for the study, Engineering Research and Development Center staff assisted Wilmington District in facilitating a community based, two-and-a-half-day ecological model workshop. The workshop was attended by state and federal resource agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the Audubon Society, Cape Fear River Watch, and the Village of Bald Head Island. The NGOs have been vocal about their concerns and opposition to the project. Some of the state resource agencies also have voiced concerns related to the proposed deepening and how the Corps intends to conduct its impact analysis. The workshop was a mixture of breakout sessions and model presentations intended to make modeling more accessible and understandable. At the end of the workshop, consensus was reached on conceptual models, parameters, and data as well as some clearly identified next steps for engagement with stakeholders regarding the impacts analysis methodology. Overall, the workshop increased trust in the process and helped build relationships between USACE and stakeholders. Workshop attendees were sufficiently comfortable to candidly share concerns but were also oriented towards finding solutions to problems.

South Pacific Division

California Silver Jackets

The California Silver Jackets team is a high performing, interagency group, led by the California Dept of Water Resources and supported by the USACE Sacramento District. The team had a very successful year of execution

and engagements, working to find the “new normal” and figure out the appropriate balance of in-person, hybrid, and virtual engagements. USACE Sacramento District teammates closed out 10 projects, initiated 9 new projects, lead 6 projects with Tribes or Navajo Nation Chapters, and developed 10 FY24 Silver Jackets Proposals leveraging the USACE Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) program. All 10 FPMS proposals were selected for funding for FY24. The team executed \$2.7 million dollars of interagency support in FY23. USACE FPMS funding for these proposals supports USACE staff labor, while team partners contribute their expertise and resources for more collaborative flood risk management efforts.

At the in-person Silver Jackets meeting, which was held again for the first time in 2022 since COVID, the 35 participants representing the state-wide team brainstormed new project proposals for FY 24. The team later worked together to prioritize projects and eliminate ones where another agency was implementing a similar project, thus reducing the duplication of efforts. The California Silver Jackets team is also working closely together to identify strategies and resources to provide services to environmental justice communities across the state. This is accomplished through holding coordination meetings between state and federal agencies, learning what collective resources the team can leverage, and inviting the right people to the table.

L.A. District Imperial Streams and Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study

The Salton Sea, located in southern Riverside and northern Imperial counties, is California’s largest lake. USACE Los Angeles District is conducting a single-purpose ecosystem restoration feasibility study. A restoration plan would improve health and safety for surrounding communities, many of which are considered environmental justice communities based on several factors, including exposure to toxic particulate matter from the exposed playa. There are over 45,000 documented people living in areas around the Salton Sea that are classified as the “Highest Social Vulnerability” according to the American Community Survey (data from 2020 census).

In March-April 2023, the project delivery team spent \$100,000 on facilitation and public outreach efforts. These included organizing and facilitating a three-day hybrid planning charrette. The charrette was facilitated by the USACE Sacramento District and St. Paul District, and brought together representatives from federal, state and local agencies as well as NGOs, the private sector, and academia. In April, the USACE team hosted two virtual public meetings (one in the afternoon and one in the evening) and held additional meetings with NGO groups and with local communities experiencing EJ concerns. The public meetings were held over Zoom and provided live Spanish translation.

Southwestern Division

Little Rock District CAP Section 208 Stump Creek, Arkansas

The Stump Creek in Little Rock, AR has filled in over the years. Its meanders have become ineffective at carrying the flow of water, and its overbanks are choked full of thick, woody debris. Numerous homes in the Stump Creek area flood because of the stream's inability to convey water effectively. The City of Little Rock approached the Little Rock District for help in addressing the concern of flooding in this area. The Feasibility Cost Share Agreement (FCSA) was executed with the City of Little Rock on July 7, 2021, and the Federal Interest Determination (FID) was approved on May 27, 2022. The study was suspended for several months due to BCR being less than 1; however, it has been reactivated after an environmental justice approach was explored and approved for the impacted area. The district pursued a waiver to USACE policy to continue the study with a BCR less than 1 based on environmental justice concerns, which is in alignment with the current administration’s

guidance. The waiver was approved by the ASA(CW) in October 2023 and the study is currently going through Feasibility phase on a division-approved accelerated schedule.

Pacific Ocean Division

Alaska District Utqiagvik (Barrow, AK) Coastal Erosion Project

In FY 23 the PDT hosted multiple partnering sessions with the residents and tribal entities in the community of Utqiagvik. Due to changes in extent of winter ice and other factors, extreme erosion is occurring in Utqiagvik. The project is a USACE Civil Works Project designed to reduce erosion risk to the Community of Utqiagvik. Construction is anticipated to begin in FY24. On 23 June 2023 a public meeting was held to discuss the project with the public at large. In conjunction with the public meeting, members of the PDT met with the Inupiaq Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS) and invited Native Village Barrow (NVB) who's members were unable to attend. The PDT also met with the City of Utqiagvik. The various stakeholder partnering meetings were held separately so that individuals with these entities could voice concerns outside of a public form. Additionally, multiple informal engagements occurred as well as discussions with the project sponsor (North Slope Borough).

Throughout the project the PDT has worked to maintain relationships with the project sponsor and project stakeholders (Native Village Barrow, Inupiaq Community of the Arctic Slope, City of Utqiagvik, local landowners) with the goal of being able to resolve issues when they arise rapidly at the working level. The culmination of this successful effort was the signing of the Project Partnership Agreement. In late September, a ceremony and partnering session was conducted with the members of the project sponsor, USACE, Borough press, and a state senator.

Honolulu District Kaunakakai Harbor Maintenance Dredging

The Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of Kaunakakai Harbor involves maintenance dredging that has not occurred in the federal channel and basin in almost 50 years. The Honolulu District O&M program manager and environmental lead flew to the island of Molokai to engage with the rural community on three occasions prior to award of the construction contract. The Corps hosted public meetings and engaged at the consult level: the Corps educated the public on what maintenance dredging is, the need for it at Kaunakakai, the authority for the maintenance dredging, and the Corps' anticipated project benefits to the community and sought information from the community on the uses (recreational, cultural, commercial, subsistence, etc.) of the harbor and surrounding areas to inform the project avoidance and minimization measures and adequately evaluate potential impacts. At the end of the three meetings, there were still unresolved general community concerns (i.e., impacts to fishing, mistrust of the federal government, perception of a hidden agenda from the government, suspicion that dredging the harbor would pave the way for more development).

Upon awarding the contract and scheduling the maintenance dredging, the Corps conducted another site visit on to meet with the community elders and inform them of the proposed dredging dates. The community elders strongly objected to the scheduled dates, expressing concerns about dredging timing relative to peak usage. The community elders provided the peak usage times and took the Corps out to the harbor to show the Corps resources of concern firsthand and describe uses within and around the harbor. The contractor was amenable to adjusting the project schedule to minimize impacts to the community. A lesson learned from the community meetings was that virtual meetings were neither practical nor effective at exchanging project information with the remote and rural community of Molokai. Face-to-face meetings were preferred by the community to show respect and gain trust, particularly with the community elders who are the informal community leaders.

The majority of Molokai, including the area around Kaunakakai, is designated as a disadvantaged community by CEQ's EJ tool, CEJST. Honolulu District demonstrated its commitment to building a relationship with the community on Molokai by voluntarily engaging the community outside of required public engagement milestones and engaging with the community in the manner prioritized by the community. Engaging with the community at the consult level (i.e., exceeding the inform level of engagement) is an important new and ongoing step that aligns with the ASA(CW)'s priority to modernize civil works programs to better serve the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Northwestern Division

Omaha District Low Water Boat Ramp Support for Standing Rock Sioux Tribe along Lake Oahe – Northwestern Division's Most Notable Case

Consecutive years of drought led to lowered reservoir levels along Lake Oahe, resulting in limited boat access for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. During Fiscal Years 2022 –2023, the tribe reached out to USACE staff from the Oahe Project Office to identify potential solutions for both recreational and emergency access. Throughout FY22 and FY23, USACE and the tribe engaged in staff-to-staff dialogue, coordination, and action to mitigate the reservoir access concerns. USACE staff met with Standing Rock Sioux Tribe representatives on 11 October to discuss recreation area leases. USACE installed a 43-foot boat ramp extension at Fort Yates Recreation Area using concrete panels on 19 October and conducted an on-site visit to the previous Fort Yates Intake Road. Continuing a year-long effort, USACE performed silt removal operations at Walker Bottoms Recreation Area and Indian Memorial Recreation Area in November. These operations enabled the Tribe to continue to use the boat ramps, allowing ice-fishing and contributing to the local economy. The direct coordination between USACE and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe representatives allowed USACE to demonstrate its commitment to improving relationships with Tribal partner and serve as a blueprint across USACE for future interaction during low water periods. Emergency drought response funding supplemented regular operations funding to support the boat ramp access work during FY23.

Kansas City District Kansas City Levees – Railroad Coordination and Transportation Systems Center of Expertise

When the Kansas City Levees Project received funding in 2018, USACE's Kansas City District recognized the enormity of the task to engage the hundreds of stakeholders, including railroads, landowners, business owners, utility owners, and residences within the 17-mile project area. Early in the project, USACE identified railroads as a significant risk to project scope, schedule, and budget. The Kansas City Terminal is one of the largest railroad hubs in the nation with ~ 100,000 trains and 600 million gross tons of freight moved each year. The Kansas City Levees project requires construction of 12 stoplog closure structures and modifications to two railroad-owned bridges located on railroad rights-of-way owned by four railroads. These locations see upwards of 120 trains per day.

To address these challenges, USACE established a formal partnering effort with all four railroads within the project footprint. Partnering efforts included early and frequent engagements at all levels (project team, mid-management, and senior executives) to ensure that the railroads were (1) aware of the project and understood its potential impacts, (2) included in the development of design solutions that minimized operational impacts, and (3) develop relationships which allowed the team to build trust, communicate honestly and transparently, and truly collaborate. USACE also leveraged the Federal Railroad Administration to build relationships with senior-level railroad executives who NWK had not engaged previously.

In addition to the annual senior leader meetings, working groups meet quarterly to identify opportunities and find solutions to improve communications and provide better continuity across the enterprise. As a result of these partnering engagements, one of the railroads developed a new database used to monitor and report all projects being performed on their right-of-way, not just in Kansas City. This partnering model is now being introduced to multiple Class I railroads. Because of these partnerships efforts the Kansas City Levees team reduced average time from 7-6 years to 2.5 years for execution for all 12 closure structures and greatly minimized scope, schedule, and budget risk, and minimized railroad operational impacts during construction.

Lessons learned on Kansas City Levees are being implemented throughout the USACE enterprise. The project staff is being transitioned to the USACE Transportation Systems Center of Expertise and is adopting these processes and partnerships to reduce risk on dozens of USACE projects nationwide.

Seattle District Regulatory Branch – Shellfish Aquaculture

In 2020, a federal court ruled that Nationwide Permit 48 for aquaculture was invalid in Washington State. This ruling required all aquaculture permittees to file new individual applications within six months of the ruling. Since the ruling, Seattle District regulatory branch organized a virtual Aquaculture Workshop to discuss the impacts of the ruling and provide guidance on submitting new applications. Workshop participants included members of industry and the environmental community, including plaintiffs of the lawsuit. The application process was streamlined for applicants, such as not requiring applicants to resubmit the same documentation previously submitted to USACE. On 10 October 2023, USACE hosted a virtual public outreach event on Shellfish Mariculture permitting in Washington State. The event informed attendees on shellfish mariculture permitting authorities, permitting status, and the shellfish mariculture permitting plan for the future.

Seattle District McGlinn Island Jetty Repair

During an April site visit of McGlinn Island Jetty involving USACE, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, and Skagit River System Cooperative, fish injury and mortality to juvenile salmonids was observed in jetty segments between McGlinn and Goat Island. Based on close coordination with the Tribe, the Cooperative, and federal and state resource agencies, a repair was quickly developed to stem the inflow of sediment into the navigation channel and provide a short-term solution to help prevent entrainment of juvenile salmon at the northernmost end of the jetty. This solution involved advice provided by the broader team including a hydraulic design team working for the tribes. The construction began in May 2023, and was completed in June. Seattle District leadership has made two site visits since the jetty repair to meet with Tribal leadership and is committed to identifying long term solutions with its partners.

Seattle District Tribal Treaty Rights Determinations

Seattle District continues coordination with individual tribes and regional tribal organizations, such as Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, to address the issues raised in the 2011 Treaty Rights at Risk White Paper. In 2023 District leadership attended a site visit with tribal leadership in the Hood Canal to observe the extent of bank stabilization and potentially unauthorized structures. District leadership also attends meetings for the Puget Sound Federal Task Force to address these issues.

On the staff-level, the district continues to meet frequently with the Fisheries Commission and individual tribes to address the issue raised by the tribes of cumulative impacts of shoreline armoring. USACE has met with several tribes to discuss the sharing of regulatory permitting information that the tribes can use to address unauthorized structures. USACE continues to meet with the Fisheries Commission to address their request that Regional General Condition 3 be expanded to all waters of the Puget Sound and Salish Sea.

On the issue of making Tribal Treaty Rights determinations when a tribe raises an objection, the district meets with Fisheries Commission and member tribes on a monthly to quarterly basis to discuss the district's approach and discuss ways of reducing the administrative burden on tribes.

Walla Walla District Owyhee Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study with Shoshone Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley

For USACE's Walla Walla District's wetland ecosystem restoration study of the Owyhee River (WRDA 1996 Section 206) the Shoshone Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley, Nevada identified a need to scope restoration of riparian zones that are currently impacted by channel straightening from the early 1960s and by extensive grazing of large livestock. The Tribe and USACE have mutually identified opportunities for floodplain reconnection to create a more natural hydrologic regime, and channel restoration and in-stream habitat improvements by creating more natural channel morphology such as pool/riffle complexes. This study is intended to contribute to a larger project for restoration actions that will improve habitat for fish and the associated ecosystem (e.g., plants and insects). At this time, water quality monitoring and a cultural resources survey have been conducted at the field location. Because the Duck Valley reservation is in a remote setting 2.5 hours away from Boise, ID, federal personnel do not often make the journey to the reservation, so the field visits have been highly valued and collaborative in nature.

Portland District - Silver Jackets and Benton County: Exploring New Map Products for Flood Preparation and Response

USACE led a meeting with multiple federal agencies as part of a Silver Jackets collaboration with Benton County, Oregon on potential map products to support flood preparation and response. The meeting raised awareness of existing and newly available flood map products, allowed participants to practice applying the maps to common flood and hazard scenarios and discuss potential uses and improvements. The meeting also served to create connections with agency and regional professionals and inspire future collaboration.

Great Lakes and Ohio River Division

Pittsburgh District Montgomery Slough Habitat Enhancement Project Interagency collaboration

The Montgomery Slough Habitat Enhancement Project addresses the 3-acre fish habitat mitigation requirement of the Upper Ohio Navigation Project, a Pittsburgh District mega project. The EIS for this project requires USACE to coordinate with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) and the USFWS Pennsylvania Field Office on the design of the 3-acre habitat mitigation project. Pittsburgh District initiated these efforts through a kick-off meeting with the agencies to discuss the circumstances surrounding the Montgomery Slough (shallow embayment with little inflow/outflow, inability to obtain long-term access to riparian area due to private property) and potential habitat improvement options. Pittsburgh District also conducted a working site visit with PFBC and USFWS at the Montgomery Slough to further develop potential habitat improvement options. Pittsburgh District then generated preliminary design and placement schematics for brush reefs at the Slough and provided PFBC and USFWS the opportunity to comment on those designs. Pittsburgh District obtained concurrence from PFBC and USFWS on the preliminary designs of the habitat enhancement project after incorporating the agencies' feedback. This project reached concurrence very quickly, likely due to the ability to obtain feedback from the agencies at a very early stage during mitigation design. These efforts were funded using the Upper Ohio Navigation Project funds.

Buffalo District Great Lakes Fisheries and Ecosystem Restoration Program's Conneaut Creek Sea Lamprey Barrier

In designing a permanent sea lamprey control alternative for Conneaut Creek, Pennsylvania, USACE made multiple outreach efforts to communicate with landowners who would need to sign off on real estate documents such as the flowage easement to compensate private landowners for the areas of their properties that will be inundated upstream because of barrier construction. The project location is very much dependent on real estate impacts and support from local landowners,

To ensure there are no surprises when public review of the feasibility report and appendices occurs in Spring 2024, USACE sent a fact sheet to the landowners and, in Sept 2023, met with landowners both on-site and at their workplace, the Albion Fair. As the Albion Fair provided a great opportunity to speak with the community, the project sponsor, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, had a booth at the fair for the public to become more informed on the sea lamprey control efforts and our study. USACE and our partners committed to a site walk with landowners the day before the public meeting in Spring 2024.

The original scope/budget included some outreach, but as there is significant private property to review, rights of entry to obtain, and ultimately private property to acquire, the scope should include time and funding for multiple outreach efforts throughout the study and increasing the budget by \$10-15k.

Buffalo District Lower Maumee River Feasibility Study

A Partnership Agreement between USEPA and the state of Ohio and an Interagency Agreement between USACE and USEPA formed the basis for the interagency partnership for the Lower Maumee River Feasibility Study. Although USACE assumed the lead role for Project Management and development of technical products, Ohio and USEPA were the primary decision-makers. The study team identified and evaluated alternatives for remediation of two sites in the Lower Maumee River, following program requirements and using a data-driven and collaborative approach.

Due to the highly technical nature of the study, the aggressive schedule (Nov 22 – Oct 23), constant need to assure consensus, and co-development of products, the interagency team resolved to meet virtually at least weekly and typically more often. To moderate schedule risk associated with disagreement or indecision, decision points were clearly identified as schedule milestones. Interagency challenges that were effectively addressed in this manner include consensus on clean-up objectives, assumptions regarding placement of sediment in USACE Confined Disposal Facilities, and geotechnical considerations such as dredging cut-lines and set-backs. Topical interagency meetings were also effectively delegated to subsets of the whole team to concentrate attention on specific lines of effort.

This collaborative effort resulted in strong partner consensus on a preferred remedy to remove contaminated sediment from the Maumee River in Toledo, Ohio. Not only did this collaboration result in a consensus decision, it was completed on time and within budget. The benefits of this effort will continue to be realized moving forward, through continued collaborative design phase efforts and through likely establishment of a unique cooperative agreement with the local Port Authority.

Chicago District Calumet Park Beach Site Visit

Through a partnership with Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, Chicago District led a community information session at Calumet Park Beach with economically disadvantaged communities. Because the Chicago Park District (potential non-federal sponsor) asked USACE not to discuss a potential ecosystem restoration project at the site, USACE and Reclamation District instead discussed USACE's Environmental Justice strategy, USACE's planning processes for ecosystem restoration projects and public engagement strategies. Chicago District brought maps, photos of completed ecosystem restoration projects, potential ideas for current ecosystem restoration projects and presented a brief USACE 101 to the attendees.

Detroit District Bay Mills Indian Community Shoreline Protection Project

Detroit District met with the Bay Mills Indian Community at their community to discuss required changes to the tentatively selected plan for a shoreline erosion project west of Sault Ste. Marie, MI. Because the changes would reduce the expected benefits to the tribe, the meeting served as a combined partnering/conflict resolution meeting. Detroit District chose to include senior and project leadership to resolve the conflict and discuss pathways forward on the project together. The original plan was no longer feasible because USACE would not be able to implement a project without the tribe obtaining an agreement from the State of Michigan on real estate issues, and that approval would be difficult to obtain. USACE and the Tribe identified an alternate plan, and jointly acknowledged the impacts of the new plan for both parties. The inclusion of both levels of staff allowed for more transparency of the USACE constraints and increased collaborative decision making with the Tribe. By Detroit District traveling to the community to address conflict head on, the relationship between the two parties was strengthened through direct and transparent communication.

Louisville District Green River Lock and Dam 5 Removal and Edmonson County Water District

USACE, USFWS, and TNC continue to coordinate with Edmonson County Water District (KY) and state and federal congressional representatives to ensure progress with the development of engineering solutions for the Water District as USACE and USFWS work with TNC to remove the Green River Lock and Dam 5 that impounds the pool used for the Water District's water supply. Federal legislation, under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act directed the dam's removal, which started in 2021. The benefits of this transparent and collaborative approach include improved coordination, enhanced adaptability, and efficient utilization of each group's strengths. By openly sharing capabilities and limitations, this team has effectively worked together to identify a path forward to minimize negative impacts to municipal water supply of dam removal while meeting each organization's objectives and complying with the federal legislation that directed the dam's removal. This effort is being accomplished through a combination of USACE O&M, USFWS Fish Passage and TNC funding.

Louisville District Silver Jackets Program

The Louisville District continued collaborating through hybrid virtual and in-person meetings with other federal and state agencies, non-profits and universities through the Silver Jackets Program. Data sharing and successful collaboration on sharing resources continued to occur for various flood risk management related topics including floodplain issues, community assistance, fluvial erosion, low head dam removal, and other topics. This year teams from the three states successfully competed for five Interagency Non-Structural Floodplain Management Services projects. Projects will help determine stream and lake gage locations in KY and IN, develop a series of flood risk workshops for local governments and their citizens in KY and IN, and develop flood inundation maps for two Ohio Communities with the Miami Conservancy District (OH) and other Silver Jackets partners.

Nashville District Center Hill Dam Water Control Manual Update

In August 2023, USACE hosted events with stakeholders and with the general public to solicit comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment and unsigned FONSI for proposed updates to the Center Hill Dam's Water Control Manual (WCM). The meeting served to describe and solicit feedback on the proposed action and fulfilled public involvement and agency coordination requirements under NEPA. The meetings presented the results of USACE's analyses, the status of the NEPA process, and the proposed decision. Additionally, information booths provided attendees with information on the NEPA process, Recreation, Water Management, and Hydropower. During the meetings USACE received over 200 written comments from the public and stakeholders plus an additional 684 form comments via a website set up by the Tennessee Wildlife Federation. The volume and quality of comments provided the agency with valuable feedback on the draft decision.

Nashville District Trace Creek Watershed Plan – Collaboration with NRCS

Following a devastating flood in 2021 in the Trace Creek Watershed (TN) USACE held an August 2023 meeting to solicit input from the public on potential flood risk management measures. The meeting format included a “design charette” where attendees could present ideas and ask questions at tables staffed by USACE and NRCS personnel. Each of four tables had roll plot maps of the entire watershed with the extent of the 2021 flood shaded grey. Participants were given the opportunity to write comments or suggestions on post-it notes and tag them on areas of interest throughout the watershed. The meeting format was selected as an alternative to the traditional panel and open question format. Due to the sensitivity of the proposed action, it was important to facilitate more focused discussions with attendees than traditional meeting formats allow. This input helped USACE understand the competing needs and interests throughout the watershed and effectively describe the process and associated timelines to stakeholders.

Nashville District Nashville District Silver Jackets Program

The Nashville District continued collaborating with other federal and state agencies, as well as non-profits and universities through the Silver Jackets Program. Nashville District serves as the primary support district for the Tennessee and Alabama teams and serves as an active participant in the Kentucky and Virginia teams. Together the Nashville District and Willington District are working to start up a Silver Jackets team in North Carolina.

Data sharing and successful collaboration on sharing resources continued to occur for various flood risk management related topics including floodplain issues, community assistance, fluvial erosion, low head dam removal, and other topics. The continued efforts on Interagency Non-Structural Floodplain Management Services Projects are leading to growth of team objectives and team members. For example, the Mesonet study created the plan and supporting documents for a statewide implementation of a weather station system to better inform communities and agencies of current weather conditions. USACE’s Interagency partners were pleased with the effort and the document has been submitted to state legislators to discuss the future of the program.

Nashville District Interagency Expert Group for Invasive Carp Prevention and Pilot Program

USACE led an interagency team of federal, state and non-governmental experts to identify the most beneficial location and sequence for the initial four pilot projects to manage and prevent the spread of invasive carp in the inter-connected Cumberland, Tennessee and Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. In selecting sites, the interagency team considered existing carp populations, known carp movement patterns, potential for reproduction and lock volume at potential project sites. Key lessons learned during the interagency expert process were: 1) ensure USACE clearly communicates to the group the opportunities and constraints of the pilot program and 2) ensure that USACE communicates project process and timelines of deliverables associated with the modeling efforts.

Appendix B: Summary of PI Specialist Contributions to USACE

The Public Involvement Specialists Cadre (Cadre) continues to thrive as a community of specialists in the fields of communication, facilitation, conflict transformation, internal and external teambuilding, virtual collaboration, and other critical components of ECCR.

In FY 2023, the Cadre grew to 34 Specialists, with several districts choosing to support more than one Specialist due to the magnitude of work and the need for support. Also, changes in the roster of eight Major Subordinate Command (MSC) Liaisons reinforced the need for a codified, formal recruitment process; this process for recruiting, nominating, and selecting Cadre members increased visibility of the CPCX to the district leadership and has had a positive effect on the Cadre as a whole. Future plans for peer-to-peer mentoring of Cadre members are expected to occur in the next year.

CPCX staff connected Cadre members to requests for facilitation support for Shared Vision Planning workshops, Strategic Communication Plan development, charrettes, and several smaller meetings. One particular noteworthy effort is the Shared Vision Planning Workshops for the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study, which is being led by Chicago District and supported by PI Specialists from Chicago and Buffalo Districts in addition to the CPCX. After several agency meetings and Tribal engagement, the team is pursuing a strategy to involve each state in the process of co-creating this Shared Vision, to accomplish the study's upcoming milestone in early 2024.

International work across both the northern (Canada) and southern (Mexico) borders continues to drive the need for collaborative capacity building in multiple languages. Through applied learning opportunities such as the Tijuana Tabletop Exercise (SPL, SPK, CPCX) and through meeting facilitation of issue resolution in international waters (e.g., Columbia River, Great Lakes Adaptive Management), USACE is finding ways to improve outcomes and save tax dollars by internally supporting efforts with expert facilitation and communication.

The collaborative efforts of the Cadre are leading to a successful implementation strategy for Environmental Justice at the district level; in 2023, CPCX developed a comprehensive guide to support the development of district environmental justice strategic plans that localize efforts, while supporting a cogent national strategy for consideration of environmental justice (EJ) communities.

Coordination with other agency specialists in similar fields (DOI CADR, EPA ECCR Specialists) is a focus for further maturity of the USACE PI Specialists Cadre and the CPCX, and connections are leading to a knowledge transfer and sharing of resources across the federal government.