9th ANNUAL REPORT (2014) ON ENVIRONMENTAL COLLABORATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

FOR THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (CIVIL WORKS)

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1. **ECCR Capacity Building Progress:** Describe steps taken by your department or agency to build programmatic and institutional capacity for environmental collaboration and conflict resolution in FY 2014, including progress made since FY 2013. Include any efforts to establish routine procedures for considering ECCR in specific situations or categories of cases. To the extent your organization wishes to report on any efforts to provide institutional support for non-assisted collaboration efforts include it here. If no steps were taken, please indicate why not.

   [Please refer to the mechanisms and strategies presented in Section 5 and attachment C of the OMB-CEQ ECCR Policy Memo, including but not restricted to any efforts to a) integrate ECCR objectives into agency mission statements, Government Performance and Results Act goals, and strategic planning; b) assure that your agency's infrastructure supports ECCR; c) invest in support, programs, or trainings; and d) focus on accountable performance and achievement. You are encouraged to attach policy statements, plans and other relevant documents.]

General Comments

In FY 2014, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) took various steps to build programmatic/institutional capacity for both ECCR and non-third-party assisted collaborative environmental problem-solving processes, both at the headquarters level, and across the 38 Districts and 8 Divisions in the US where USACE executes its Civil Works program. While USACE has an ECCR center and other programs that specifically focus on collaborative processes, the bulk of USACE's collaborative activities relate to specific, ongoing Civil Works projects across all mission areas (e.g. flood risk management, navigation, ecosystem restoration) and functional areas (e.g. planning, construction, operations, and regulatory).

Across USACE Divisions and Districts there is strong support for collaborative problem solving processes with staff being encouraged with resources and training to implement these processes. From the highest levels of USACE, the leadership commitment to collaboration is unwavering and constantly reiterated.

Rather than rely on third-party ECCR, Districts and Divisions report a preference for a proactive engagement approach with sponsors, partners, and the public. They develop local, state, regional, and national teams promoting collaborative planning to anticipate problems and identify alternative solutions early so as to reduce the risk and magnitude of future environmental conflicts. We highlight these experiences in the answers to question 7 in the report. Additionally, programmatic capacity building and conflict prevention activities reported by individual districts include:

- Involving junior staff members in active work to advance collaborative engagement with stakeholders.
- Proactively addressing potentially controversial program or project-related environmental issues as early as possible.
- Improving internal collaboration to address project execution challenges thus improving the District's external collaboration.
- Elevating challenges encountered at the local, project-level that might benefit from collaboration at the higher, regional level.
- Sending regular reports to District leadership on outreach and partnership activities.

a. Integrate ECCR objectives into USACE mission statements and strategic planning, including a focus on accountable performance and achievement.

The USACE Campaign Plan has embraced collaborative approaches in several goals: www.usace.army.mil/about/campaignplan/Pages/Home.aspx. Many of the collaborative activities in this report fall within Goal 2, *TRANSFORM CIVIL WORKS*: "Deliver enduring and essential water resource solutions, utilizing effective transformational strategies." This goal stresses collaboration in planning and budget development and calls for implementing stakeholder engagement strategies. Goal 3 is *REDUCE DISASTER RISKS*: *"*Deliver support that responds to, recovers from, and mitigates disaster impacts to the nation." Goal 3 includes an objective to "Enhance interagency disaster preparation and mitigation capabilities" with an associated action to "Improve state-level collaboration with the Silver Jackets program (discussed below and in question 7). Finally, Goal 4 is *PREPARE FOR TOMORROW*: *"*Build resilient people, teams, systems, and processes to sustain a diverse culture of collaboration, innovation and participation to shape and delivery strategic solutions." A key objective of this goal is to "enhance trust and understanding with customers, stakeholders, teammates, and the public through strategic engagement and communication." During FY14, strategies and activities were developed and executed at the Headquarters, Division and District levels to implement the collaborative objectives of the Campaign Plan. Divisions provided the following examples:

- Stakeholder engagement and collaboration to achieve Integrated Water Resource Management solutions are specific action areas of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division's Campaign Plan Implementation Plan FY14-18.
- Draft Operating procedures for Lakes and Rivers Divisions' Continuing Authorities Program incorporate key elements of early stakeholder engagement in a collaborative process for completion of integrated water resources management feasibility reports.
- The *Civil Works Research & Development Plan* that guides USACE's Engineer Research and Development Center includes a cross-cutting strategy for collaboration: ***Multidisciplinary and Integrated Inter-Agency Teams:*** *Advance a watershed-based, systems approach to water resources planning and management utilizing multidisciplinary research and engineering talent from across the Corps R&D community; integrate product development teams to incorporate the diverse talent of Corps researchers and practitioners and strategic partners.*
  A FY14 Regional Priority of USACE's Southwestern Division was to "implement collaborative approaches to effectively solve water resource problems."

The 2011-2015 USACE Civil Works Strategic Plan (http://www.usace.army.mil/Portals/2/docs/civilworks/news/2011-15_cw%20stratplan.pdf) The USACE Civil Works Strategic Plan is based on the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management, a holistic focus on water resource challenges and opportunities that reflects coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources. This strategy builds institutional abilities and capacity for collaborative problem solving which is the core of ECCR processes. One of the cross-cutting strategies that underpins the strategic plan is **Collaboration and Partnering.** USACE must "Build and sustain collaboration and partnerships at all levels to leverage authorities, funding, talent, data, and research from multiple agencies and organizations."

USACE Civil Works Transformation continued to gain momentum in FY14, with the objective to *"…promote enhanced capabilities and greater involvement, ownership, concurrence and commitment among internal USACE team members, local sponsors and partners."* A major pillar of Civil Works Transformation is implementation of "SMART planning," a new USACE business process that provides opportunities for earlier collaboration with partners and the public for feasibility studies, and is being implemented using both in-house and contracted 3rd party facilitators to lead planning charettes across the nation. Specific examples of charettes are mentioned in the response to Question 5.

A second pillar of Civil Works Transformation with a strong collaborative element is USACE's move towards watershed-informed budgeting. By building USACE's budget on a watershed basis, USACE considers how its projects affect stakeholder projects in the watershed and hence more fully captures the benefits to the nation of USACE projects. Stakeholder interaction is an integral part of that process; some examples are included in the response to Question 7.

Environmental Operating Principles

In 2014 USACE held a webinar series highlighting case studies that showcased the seven Environmental Operating Principles, two of which highlight collaboration: #6 – "Leverage scientific, economic, and social knowledge to understand the environmental context and effects of Corps actions in a collaborative manner"; and #7 – "Employ an open, transparent process that respects views of individuals and groups interested in Corps activities."

b. Invest in support, programs, or trainings

Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX)

Created in FY09, USACE's Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX) has the mission to help Corps staff anticipate, prevent, and manage water conflicts, ensuring that the interests of the public are addressed in Corps decision making (www.iwr.usace.army.mil/cpc/). CPCX is comprised of staff at the Institute for Water Resources and Liaisons at each Division. FY14 marked the 5-year anniversary of the Center, and thus was an occasion to reflect back on the first 5 years, assess the impact of the center, and chart the path forward for the next 5 years. Activities to support this effort included:

- The second quinquennial Collaborative Capacity Assessment, consisting of workshops in various USACE Divisions along with a survey to assess USACE staff's collaborative capacity (more survey details included in Q2). The Division Liaisons coordinated six virtual or in-person regional workshops to celebrate collaboration successes and identify areas for improvement. Workshops catered to regional needs, including both trainings and discussion at the staff and management level on ways to reduce obstacles to collaboration and strengthen their ability to collaborate.
- To synthesize the results of the six regional workshops, the first National Collaboration Summit was held in July 2014 to discuss the regional results with USACE headquarters, share best practices, and hear advice from internal collaboration experts and external USACE partners. Over 200 people from across the agency participated and helped identify future initiatives to advance ECCR principles and practices.

- CPCX conducted their second strategic planning exercise to develop their next strategic plan 2015-2020. The 2015-2020 goals of the Center will focus on capacity building, information exchange, consultation services, and policy support.

In FY14, CPCX continued the Public Involvement in Flood Risk Management Pilot Program in coordination with USACE's National Flood Risk Management Program. This program is designed to implement the recommendations from the 2010 report "Flood Risk Management Public Involvement Framework & Implementation Plan." Twelve flood risk management projects piloted more collaborative approaches to public involvement in the Corps' flood risk management mission. Focus areas included hurricane evacuation studies, dam safety modification studies, and planning feasibility studies.

In addition, CPCX continued to expand its Public Involvement Specialists Program, another recommendation from the 2010 report with Division Liaisons identifying additional specialists for the program. Public Involvement Specialists serve as internal consultants within the Districts/Division for Civil Works, Military Programs, Regulatory and Readiness missions to enhance two-way communication and collaborative problem solving with stakeholders. Responsibilities include assessing the need, timing and approach to public engagement, developing public involvement plans, designing effective public involvement forums, completing public involvement activities, and supporting public involvement in current Flood Risk Management Pilots. The cadre of Public Involvement Specialists fosters information exchange across USACE relating to public involvement.

- Mississippi Valley Division now has four Public Involvement Specialists that assist the region.
- Three Public Involvement Specialists were selected in Great Lakes and Ohio River Division in FY14, up from one in FY13 to support District ECCR initiatives. This Division has established a goal of identifying a minimum of one Public Involvement Specialist per District by the end of FY15.
- In Southwestern Division, the Public Involvement Specialist is involved in national level initiatives and several pilot studies being conducted by the Oklahoma Silver Jackets Team.
- South Pacific Division currently has two planners serving as Public Involvement Specialists
- Pacific Ocean Division currently has 3 Public Involvement Specialists. Honolulu District has one Public Involvement Specialist within Civil Works Planning and Alaska District has two – one within Regulatory and one who is the Tribal Liaison and American Indian/Alaska Native specialist. Having these experts accessible to staff is providing additional support and understanding to staff in techniques to improve collaboration and enhance conflict resolution.

In addition to these activities, CPCX continued to provide technical assistance to Districts, Divisions, USACE-HQ and other stakeholders on collaborative processes, including Shared Vision Planning, facilitation services, training, and courses on public involvement, risk communication and conflict resolution. These activities are reported on in appropriate places in this report. CPCX also produced various references to serve USACE in the areas of Environmental Conflict Resolution, Risk Communication and collaborative processes.

Silver Jackets Program

Across the nation, USACE supports state-led "Silver Jackets" teams that advance collaborative problem solving for flood risk management. USACE Silver Jackets inter-agency program continued to build team capacity in FY14. Forty-three states have active Silver Jackets teams with DC formally establishing a team in FY14. In addition, through Silver Jackets, multiple USACE Districts are involved in project activities that advance collaboration through increased data collection, GIS mapping, and risk communication.

In 2014, the National Flood Risk Management and Silver Jackets programs hosted an interagency workshop with participants from all USACE Districts, the National Park Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, Housing and Urban Development, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the US Geological Survey and over 30 state representatives (website). The workshop contributed to building ECCR capacity by bringing together 116 partners from various agencies to share experience with interagency projects and address opportunities for improving future use of interagency projects and developing shared solutions to flood risk challenges.

In FY14, the USACE Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice (CPP CoP) expanded its membership to more than 450 members Corps-wide, published two editions of its CPP CoP newsletter *Collaboration Corner*, and sponsored multiple webinars on Collaboration, Conflict Resolution, Risk Communication, and public involvement challenges, tips and successes. The CPP CoP, directed by a steering committee with representatives from across USACE mission areas, also provides information through an interactive web portal and fosters a network of USACE facilitators from across USACE divisions and business lines.

Training and Other Investments in ECCR Support (many investments are now captured in Question 2 this year)

- The Corps Civil Works Directorate, the Engineer Research & Development Center (ERDC) and the Institute for Water Resources (IWR) continued building the core competencies of facilitation and collaborative problem solving by launching the Fundamentals of Facilitation and Conflict Resolution training curriculum in May 2014. This online, on-demand training includes 7 modules on Incisive Meetings, Group Dynamics, Conflict, Collaborative Problem Solving, Inciting Innovation, Human Dimensions, and Facilitation for Executives.
- ERDC's Facilitator Exchange Forum continues to provide quarterly webinars and newsletters and webpages to a 200-member facilitator community across the Corps. Webinar topics included: Facilitating Large Virtual Conferences, Facilitating Multiple Agencies, Graphic Facilitation and South Pacific Division's Virtual Collaboration Plan. 172 individuals representing 30 entities attended the live webinars and the archived webinars and associated facilitation pages received 108,043 page hits.
- Risk Communication and Public Involvement 3-day training was delivered through USACE's formal PROSPECT training program to 17 students. Specialized Risk Communication trainings were also developed and implemented for the Project Management and Flood Risk Management communities. Other relevant courses offered as part of the PROSPECT training included Customer Relationship Management, and Public Involvement – Communication.
- CPCX taught two courses on Public Involvement and Teaming in Planning

reaching more than 50 USACE staff.

- Partners in Africa and Asia in cooperation with the UNESCO's International Center for Integrated Water Resources Management and the US Agency for International Development.
- USACE's Collaboration and Public Participation CoP is partnering with USIECR to promote USACE involvement in the Udall Certificate in Environmental Conflict Resolution. 25 USACE students took classes in FY14, up from 6 in 2013.
- Individuals working on the Missouri River Recovery Program in Northwestern Division participated in collaboration training provided by the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution as a part of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee. Divisions and Districts are expanding their roster of facilitators via the national USACE-wide "Find a Facilitator" network housed on the Natural Resource Management Gateway website.

2. ECCR Investments and Benefits

a) Please describe any methods your agency uses to identify the (a) investments made in ECCR, and (b) benefits realized when using ECCR.

Examples of investments may include ECCR programmatic FTEs, dedicated ECCR budgets, funds spent on contracts to support ECCR cases and programs, etc.

Examples of benefits may include cost savings, environmental and natural resource results, furtherance of agency mission, improved working relationship with stakeholders, litigation avoided, timely project progression, etc.

This ECCR report continues to be the primary tool that is used annually across the organization for identifying and documenting ECCR investments and benefits.

This year, USACE also made use of the USIECR Facilitated Process Survey for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study Interagency/Expert Elicitation Team. To increase use of this survey tool, USACE will identify cases using this ECCR report and ask the CPCX Division liaisons on a quarterly basis about potential candidate projects.

The Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee administers their own annual assessment that measures the qualitative benefits of the ongoing effort. There is also a structured evaluation of pilot studies, including the Public Involvement in Flood Risk Management Pilots, which were executed throughout FY14.

USACE's ERDC also noted that they prepare extensive documentation for their facilitated sessions that document any decision outcomes. They also typically conduct written evaluations that provide key feedback to meeting organizers.

Beyond the methods cited above, two USACE-wide initiatives in FY14 relate to measuring the benefits of ECCR – the quinquennial collaborative capacity assessment (mentioned in the response to Q1) and the annual Customer Satisfaction Survey:

- The 2nd Collaborative Capacity Assessment included a survey taken by at

least 25 Civil Works staff in each Division as well as qualitative discussion in workshop format. One topic was the benefits of collaboration; costs were not explicitly considered. A consolidated report on the Assessment is expected in early 2015.

- Annually, USACE Districts survey USACE partners and stakeholders on their satisfaction with USACE. Two districts cited the value of feedback from the Customer Satisfaction Survey as a supplement to informal conversations with partners and anecdotal information in assessing their collaboration effectiveness.

In addition to the efforts above that focus on measuring investments and benefits to date, one Division cited the use of Strategic Planning as a way to identify priority investments in ECCR and their anticipated associated benefits.

b) Please report any (a) quantitative or qualitative investments your agency captured during FY 2014; and (b) quantitative or qualitative results (benefits) you have captured during FY 2014.

PROJECT	LEAD	INVESTMENTS	BENEFITS
National Virtual Collaboration Summit Regional Virtual and In-Person summits	CPCX, Division-level Liaisons	National Virtual Summit – 200 people. Staff labor to prepare and participate. Six Regional Collaboration Summits (most virtual; more than 150 attended labor, limited travel)	Increased skill level and awareness of ECCR issues and techniques across USACE
Formal Training to enhance ECCR skills among USACE staff	CPCX	• Public Involvement and Teaming in Planning 3-4 days). 128 students. Labor , limited travel, course preparation • Effective Communications for Regulatory 2 days, 27 students– labor; limited travel • Conflict Resolution training at the Regulatory Off-site (San Diego), 45 students, limited costs • USIECR trainings (25 students) tuition, travel and labor • Conflict Resolution training at 20th Tribal Consultation Meeting. 50 students– limited labor travel. • Risk Communication and Public Involvement. 40 students- travel and labor • Leadership for Collaborative Governance webinar (28 attended; labor only) •	Increased skills and awareness of ECCR among USACE workforce. Clarified actions to improve Corps culture to support collaboration. The Udall Foundation training will culminate in equipping regional specialists with enhanced ECCR skills.

Public Involvement Specialists Pilot	CPCX and host Districts	Limited labor for 12 Public Involvement Specialists to advance ECCR principles in specific projects, to mentor others in District, and advance ECCR concepts USACE-wide	Improved collaboration at specific USACE projects. Increased effectiveness of heretofore isolated ECCR subject matter experts. Increased awareness of ECCR among workforce
Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice activities	CPCX and Steering Committee members' districts	• Monthly/bi-monthly webinars (only labor for preparation and attendance) and development of Newsletters • Labor - Steering committee calls, including collaboration definition working group	Increased skills and awareness of ECCR among USACE workforce Draft Collaboration Framework for USACE to promote awareness and increased effectiveness of ECCR
Research Collaboration between ERDC & USBR scientists.	ERDC	Facilitated two meetings of US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) & USACE scientists on sustainable infrastructure, invasive species and ecohydraulics	Furtherance of Agency Mission and Cost Savings due to increased meeting effectiveness
5th Annual National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Northern Gulf Institute Gulf Hypoxia Research Coordination Workshop	ERDC	Facilitated 100 attendees from Federal & state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Workshop attendees also provided research prioritization suggestions for fisheries management, ecological modeling, and adaptive management.	Furtherance of Agency Mission, Improved Relationship with Stakeholders, & cost savings due to increased meeting effectiveness. Input is helping direct expenditure of some of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill settlement funding in the Gulf of Mexico.
Facilitated workshops and trainings	ERDC	Facilitated workshops and training reached 424 direct attendees in 2014.	Facilitating and archiving recorded webinars for multiple topic areas cost-effectively reaches personnel across the Corps, as well as key partners. In 2014, this included 33 webinars with 1,457 attendees and 440,049 webpage hits.
The upper Mississippi River Environmental Management Program	Mississippi Valley Division	Variety of interagency committees and communication tools.	The multimillion-dollar annual program remains on track, and projects move forward.

Lower Mississippi River Conservation Plan	Mississippi Valley Division, Memphis District and ERDC	Described in the FY13 report.	This plan resulted in a non-jeopardy biological opinion for channel improvement activities on the Lower Mississippi River in FY14 and established a framework to reduce coordination efforts associated with the Endangered Species Act. The framework allows for a workable regional approach to both compliance and conservation that reduces potential work delays, reduces the potential for litigation, and increases the efficiency of the channel improvement program and associated environmental coordination efforts.
Climate Change planning	Albuquerque District	Labor to support collaboration with the Bureau of Reclamation and other partners, to address stakeholder and collaborator climate change impact concerns on USACE studies and to support climate change outreach.	Improved coordination with Tribes, sponsors, stakeholders and partners at all levels of government and furtherance of USACE mission; more resilient ecosystem restoration projects;
Collaborative interagency planning to proactively address potential environmental and socio-economic consequences associated with high risk aging dam and levee infrastructure	Southwestern Division		• Development of shared vision type tools, such as SimSuite, used by multiple organizations; • Development of public messages and information plans; • Collectively, these outputs also help increase community resilience by contributing to proactive planning to reduce the risk of environmental conflicts and socio-economic consequences.

c) What difficulties have you encountered in generating cost and benefit information and how do you plan to address them?

Several Divisions again noted challenges in separating ECCR investments from general project costs – a process made even more challenging as most Environmental collaboration and conflict resolution efforts focus on conflict avoidance/prevention and generally do not involve 3rd party neutrals. In addition, true benefits (such as future cost avoidance e.g. litigation, construction delays, etc.) are challenging to predict and capture. One Division also advised caution in setting up a formal tracking mechanism for measuring costs and benefits, as such a mechanism could impose additional burdens on staff and discourage collaboration, and instead recommended a more qualitative approach through sharing success stores and lessons learned. To better estimate benefits of ECCR efforts in USACE, CPCX is evaluating existing assessment tools and is working with federal agency partners to create new assessment tools which will evaluate the value of ECCR in agreement and non-agreement seeking cases.

3. **ECCR Use:** Describe the level of ECCR use within your department/agency in FY 2014 by completing the table below. [Please refer to the definition of ECCR from the OMB-CEQ memo as presented on page one of this template. An ECCR "case or project" is an instance of neutral third-party involvement to assist parties in a collaborative or conflict resolution process. In order not to double count processes, please select one category per case for decision making forums and for ECCR applications.

	Total FY 2014 ECCR Cases[1]	**Decision making forum that was addressing the issues when ECCR was initiated:**					ECCR Cases or projects **completed** [2]	ECCR Cases or Projects **sponsored** [3]	**Interagency** ECCR Cases and Projects	
		Federal agency decision	Administrative proceedings /appeals	Judicial proceedings	Other (specify)				Federal only	Including non federal participants
Context for ECCR Applications:										
Policy development	_____	_____	_____	_____	____		_____	_____	_____	_____
Planning	__14__	__10__	_____	_____	_4_	3- state-led 1- interagency	__5___	__10___	_____	__12__
Siting and construction	_____	_____	_____	_____	____		_____	_____	_____	_____
Rulemaking	_____	_____	_____	_____	____		_____	_____	_____	_____
License and permit issuance	__1___	__1___	_____	_____	____		__1___	__1___	__1___	_____
Compliance and enforcement action	_____	_____	_____	_____	____		_____	_____	_____	_____
Implementation/monitoring agreements	_____	_____	_____	_____	____		_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify): _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	____		_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL	**__15__**	**__11__**	_____	_____	**__4_**		**__6__**	**__11__**	**__1___**	**__12__**
		(the sum of the Decision Making Forums should equal **Total FY 2014 ECCR Cases**)								

[1] An "ECCR case" is a case in which a third-party neutral was active in a particular matter during FY 2014.

[2] A "completed case" means that neutral third party involvement in a particular ECCR case ended during FY 2014. The end of neutral third party involvement does not necessarily mean that the parties have concluded their collaboration/negotiation/dispute resolution process, that all issues are resolved, or that agreement has been reached.

[3] Sponsored - to be a sponsor of an ECCR case means that an agency is contributing financial or in-kind resources (e.g., a staff mediator's time) to provide the neutral third party's services for that case. More than one sponsor is possible for a given ECCR case.

Note: If you subtract completed ECCR cases from Total FY 2014 cases it should equal total ongoing cases. If you subtract sponsored ECCR cases from Total FY 2014 ECCR cases it should equal total cases in which your agency or department participated but did not sponsor. If you subtract the combined interagency ECCR cases from Total FY 2014 cases it should equal total cases that involved only your agency or department with no other federal agency involvement.

4. **ECCR Case Example**

Using the template below, provide a description of an ECCR case (preferably completed in FY 2014). Please limit the length to no more than 2 pages.

Collaborative Development of the Missouri River Recovery Management Plan
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
The Missouri River Recovery Management Plan is a large comprehensive study that will provide a management plan that coordinates Biological Opinion requirements for the Missouri River under one decision document. The study is a collaborative effort between two Corps District offices, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC). MRRIC is a multi-party stakeholder committee charged to provide consensus-based advice and recommendations to USACE on the social and economic impacts of endangered species recovery actions on the Missouri River. To facilitate MRRIC's understanding of the study and in particular the structured decision-making tool being used in the study, a third-party neutral structured decision making (SDM) coach (Compass Resource Management Ltd) was hired to assist the MRRIC members with the SDM process known as PrOACT (Problems, Objectives, Alternatives, Consequences, Tradeoffs). In FY14, the PrOACT coach, with the assistance of the standing MRRIC facilitation team from the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR), helped the MRRIC members identify and then shape the Human Considerations (HC) objectives and metrics that will be used to evaluate the various proposed plan alternatives when they are fully developed. The Committee made a consensus recommendation to USACE on a set of Human Considerations Objectives and Metrics in the summer of 2014. The PrOACT coach continues to guide the MRRIC, USFWS, and USACE Districts through the PrOACT process utilizing quarterly MRRIC meetings and ongoing webinars facilitated through USIECR and contracted neutrals from RESOLVE. RESOLVE is an independent non-profit organization that helps facilitate MRRIC. The PrOACT process is being funded through the Missouri River Recover Program, funded by the USACE Construction General account. The study is expected to be completed in 2016.
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
A key component of the study is understanding the social, economic and cultural objectives that are important to river stakeholders. In the structured decision making framework, these objectives must be developed as evaluation metrics in order to compare and contrast impacts of various alternatives identified in the study. USACE recognized MRRIC as a key resource for developing these objectives referred to as "Human Considerations."

The HC objective and metrics development was highly iterative. To begin, USACE resource experts identified key social and economic categories from which MRRIC members working in small groups identified more specific critical objectives and metrics. The small groups were facilitated by USIECR/RESOLVE with Compass. Utilizing this information, USACE, with MRRIC's support, developed a draft set of HC objectives and metrics. The draft HC objectives and metrics were further refined and clarified by MRRIC members in small groups. This iterative approach helped to ensure USACE was consistent with its policies and guidelines. The facilitated discussions resulted in a greater understanding of both the different concerns and interests represented in MRRIC but also a greater appreciation of the technical expertise of USACE.

The MRRIC also made use of an independent social economic technical review panel convened through USIECR and its contractor Oak Ridge Associated Universities to review the draft HC objectives and metrics for gaps and/or technical issues. The independent panel provided feedback to both MRRIC and USACE that helped improve the HC objectives and metrics, clarify next steps in the development of HC objectives and metrics and, like the PrOACT Coach, helped build trust in the SDM process used for the study.

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

The beneficial key outcome is that the MRRIC provided USACE with a consensus recommendation in August of 2014 of Human Considerations objectives and metrics. Had the agency tried to facilitate this process on its own, there could have been biases introduced into the process whether real or perceived by the MRRIC.

Reflections on the lessons learned from the use of ECCR

Neutral facilitation for large groups with varied stakeholder concerns provides a number of benefits: 1) Ensures public or entity (MRRIC) has an open forum for discussing concerns; 2) Enables technical agency personnel to focus on their skill set (economics, engineering, etc.) without the worry of becoming polished at meeting facilitation; and 3) Provides resources that can assist if a meeting deteriorates or gets off course, utilizing people trained in facilitation, conflict resolution and structured decision making.

5. **Other ECCR Notable Cases:** Briefly describe any other notable ECCR cases in the past fiscal year. (Optional)

The majority of this year's notable achievements in ECCR involve organizations and individuals within USACE serving as a third party neutral. Some USACE Divisions reported no use of ECCR this year, either because they were not the lead federal agency (and therefore not responsible for pursuing or leading the federal conflict resolution activities), or because their projects simply did not warrant the involvement of a neutral third party. These Divisions cite as their notable achievements more consistent and early coordination across projects on identification and consideration of environmental issues; and improved capacity, awareness, and collaboration with the District staff, federal resource agencies, and key stakeholders to avoid or minimize environmental conflict. In certain instances, third party assistance would have been beneficial, but due to factors such as project funding and schedule constraints a third-party was not engaged. Since USACE projects are funded at a project level, and often cost-shared with a local sponsor, there can be institutional inertia against budgeting for third party assistance when budgets are limited.

In addition to the case highlighted in Question 4, below is a list of this year's notable ECCR achievements as reported from across USACE:

City of Tulsa Stormwater Drainage Advisory and Hazard Mitigation Advisory Board

The City of Tulsa established its Stormwater Drainage Advisory and Hazard Mitigation Advisory Board to develop the floodplain management strategy for the Arkansas River corridor at Tulsa, OK and to consider economic development opportunities, environmental resources, the flood risks and other competing interests. The Board consisted of multiple stakeholder groups, each with differing levels of awareness and diverse values associated with the opportunities, resources and risks. Third party assistance provided by Tulsa District helped identify factual information and helped each group communicate their values and views on the management strategy.

Tulsa District helped identify what technical parties should be at the table- levee district, flood plain managers, engineering disciplines, and others- adding to the accountability to the overall process. Tulsa District's key role was to seek agreement on the scientific and technical information for the flood plain management strategy, Tulsa District also helped define the nature of risks to all stakeholders. Without USACE involvement, the Board could have spent considerable time attempting to develop consensus on technical issues, or perhaps never reaching a consensus. The outcome of the effort is reflected in the Board's recommendations to the Mayor of Tulsa, OK: "The City should…develop and carry out extensive citizen education and engagement programs to help the public understand the river risk and how to mitigate those risks and should work in partnership with other entities such as the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers"

Horseshoe Bend Regional Solutions Team

The purpose of Horseshoe Bend pilot project was to develop a Regional Solutions Team (RST) representing all stakeholder interests to collaboratively develop solutions for restoring the Horseshoe Bend Levee System. Using funds provided by USACE Headquarters, Seattle District accessed a third party facilitator at the USACE's ERDC Environmental Laboratory to guide the stakeholder group. This collaborative project was completed in a series of three workshops. During Workshop I, the RST discussed project-specific challenges then collectively developed criteria for solutions. RST members then independently voted on which criteria were most valuable to them in selecting an alternative. During Workshop II, the RST collectively developed a range of alternatives. A decision-making support tool – Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis or MCDA – was then used to rank each alternative using criteria and preferences provided by the team. Results were presented to the team during Workshop III. Although "The Big Dream" alternative (which included levee removal to permit flooding) scored best overall, it scored worst on implementation ability and was ultimately deemed infeasible. The "Clearwater 2" alternative, which was a very close second, scored better on implementability and could be considered the "winner."

The RST pilot project produced a range of conceptual solution alternatives for Horseshoe Bend Levee System, but perhaps more importantly demonstrated a process that permitted all team members to share individual goals and values and educate each other on the status of various resources in the study area. The similarity between most of the goals reinforced a common vision for the project and the process fostered trust and a positive work environment amongst diverse groups, some with competing interests. This case study demonstrated that with time, committed stakeholder involvement, and by looking through a system's lens, comprehensive solutions can be developed that satisfy all stakeholders' interests.

The biggest benefit of the facilitated effort was having the stakeholders realize that they held some common ideas and understand where they differed. A number of the stakeholders expressed that they now had a better understanding of where the other stakeholders were coming form and why. This understanding allowed the group to work towards developing conceptual solutions. ECCR can be quite expensive in terms of time, effort, and resources required to successfully execute an ECCR effort. Formal decision modeling approaches can help to reduce some of these up-front costs by providing an initial framework for interaction between stakeholders that can be later expounded upon depending on the environmental collaboration and/or conflict resolution context. The results are also potentially more useful than those produced by other conflict resolution efforts in that the decision modeling exercise produces a tool that can be used to later evaluate solution alternatives that are being considered.

SMART Planning Charettes

USACE Civil Works Transformation includes the implementation of "SMART Planning" - a new USACE business process that provides opportunities for earlier collaboration with partners and the public for feasibility studies. At the

initiation of a feasibility study, a collaborative planning workshop, or “charette” is held to identify the path for completion of the study with the project delivery team and stakeholders. These workshops are facilitated by in-house or contracted facilitators. For example, the CPCX facilitated three charettes for Honolulu District, Louisville District, and Chicago District.

The Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable

The Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable (MRBIR) was established as a forum for federal agencies advocating a collaborative approach to solving issues within the Missouri River watershed. Members of MRBIR, including the USACE Northwestern Division, seek opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and communication among the federal agencies to facilitate more comprehensive interagency efforts that would normally be beyond the scope of just one of the agencies. MRBIR is facilitated by a third party neutral (the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution), rotates the Chairperson among the federal agency members, holds monthly conference calls, and meets in person twice yearly. In addition, it has formed working groups to address various topics including climate collaboration, tribal relations, sediment transport, ecosystem function, and the Missouri River Recover Implementation Committee.

Upper Sandy River, Clackamas County National Flood Risk Management Program Public Involvement Pilot

In January 2011, the villages of Mt. Hood received a federal disaster declaration for flood losses along the upper Sandy River affecting public infrastructure and residential properties. The primary flood hazard of the upper Sandy River is channel migration in which elevated flows erode banks before spilling out. Clackamas County requested technical assistance from USACE's Public Participation and Conflict Resolution Center of Expertise (CPCX) to design public involvement and communication processes and facilitate community-level discussions about risk communication, floodplain management, and other interdependent flood issues along the Upper Sandy River. Approximately 5 facilitated meetings of the Upper Sandy River Flood Risk management working group occurred in 2014. The working group of community stakeholders and county representatives exists to exchange information about living with high probability of flooding and river channel migration. Two-way communication and sharing of information was critical to mitigating risks and the collaborative development of initial goals and objectives for a planned floodplain management plan for the region. Community stakeholders lauded the County's efforts in both sharing information and learning from residents about critical issues. They emphasized the importance of facilitation in resolving questions and conflicts regarding permitting challenges and varying requirements between the county, the state, and USACE regulatory agencies. Two open-house "Flood of Information" meetings were also held for the public, with attendance by local, state and federal agencies.

Big Blue and Kansas Rivers' Confluence Actions for Flood Risk Management

The Big Blue River interagency flood risk management public involvement project brought technical experts from USACE, the City of Manhattan, Kansas and Riley and Potawattamie Counties together to develop a Floodplain Management Plan with strong community involvement throughout the process in the form of a public action working group and public meetings. USACE provided technical and facilitative leadership in this interagency effort. USACE's CPCX facilitated Technical Working Group meetings, public action work group meetings, and two-open houses with the public to develop the Floodplain Management Plan and communicate risks. Facilitation was instrumental in ensuring successful collaboration and conflict prevention during this process.

6. **Priority Uses of ECCR:**

Please describe your agency's efforts to address priority or emerging areas of conflict and cross-cutting challenges either individually or in coordination with other agencies. For example, consider the following areas: NEPA, ESA, CERCLA, energy development, energy transmission, CWA 404 permitting, tribal consultation, environmental justice, management of ocean resources, infrastructure development, National Historic Preservation Act, other priority areas.

USACE divisions are reporting early collaboration in their project planning and implementation processes thus often negating the need for a third party and increasing the flow of communication between collaborating entities. Some priority areas are more challenging than others and in these collaborative efforts a third party is sometimes employed. Priority uses of ECCR often entail multi-party groups focused on multiple cross-cutting issues rather than one individual issue. The following topics are the areas in which USACE divisions identified as priority or emerging areas of conflict where collaboration and/or ECCR were employed:

Climate Change

Climate change is an area where USACE has taken a lead role because of the sensitivity of water resources to the meteorological and hydrologic changes experienced now and in the future. USACE has established a Climate Preparedness and Resilience Community of Practice to share information, build capacity, and improve networking between district, division, lab, center, and Headquarters staff on issues related to climate change. External collaboration with other water resources agencies allows USACE to leverage expertise and also to develop consistent approaches, thus reducing the chance that stakeholders in a watershed will receive different answers from different federal agencies about a climate-related issue.

For example, our teams that develop technical guidance involve national and international experts from other federal agencies and academic, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations. Since 2007, USACE and other water agencies have been collaborating in the Climate Change and Water Working Group (http://ccawwg.us/index.php/home). This collaboration has resulted in a number of joint publications and the development of an archive of downscaled

climate and hydrology information and joint training (http://www.corpsclimate.us/20141104news.cfm). Working together with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USACE supported the development of the Sea Level Rise Tool for Sandy Recovery (http://www.globalchange.gov/browse/sea-level-rise-tool-sandy-recovery). Our climate change adaptation pilot studies (http://www.corpsclimate.us/rccpad.cfm) often include other agencies as well and our climate change community of practice participates in regional teams such as such as the Northeast Federal Partners Climate Change Sub-Team.

Flood Risk Management & Recovery

Through proactive agency coordination on topics ranging from Air Quality and Endangered Species Act consultations and full Vertical Team alignment, the USACE North Atlantic Division Sandy Program Team is repairing and restoring coastal projects damaged by the Sandy Event, and completing projects and investigations underway when Sandy occurred. As part of Sandy Recovery, the Coastal Storm Risk Management National Planning Center of Expertise has directed the North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS) as a collaborative effort across the region. NACCS has been conducted in coordination with other Federal agencies, and State, Local, and Tribal officials to ensure consistency with other recovery plans being implemented.

Projects such as the Tillamook Flood Risk Reduction Strategy, and the Tulsa District Floodplain Management Study Program pilot culminated in plans and strategies that address emerging challenges associated with aging high risk levees and dikes, restoring flows, and vulnerable populations living in these flood risk areas. The collaborative mechanisms involved in creating and implementing these plans have advanced relationships with partner organizations such as FEMA, in the case of the Tillamook Flood Risk Reduction Strategy, and with the public.

Assessments

ECCR and non third-party collaboration has occurred during projects related to the creation of appropriate assessment tools. For example, the Rock Island District has an active team member on a multi-agency team supporting the America's Watershed Initiative working on the development of the Mississippi River Watershed Health Report Card. The indicators used to produce the Report Card are being collected through sub-basin workshops. In May 2014 representatives from Little Rock District and Tulsa District participated in the Arkansas River and Red River Basins workshop held in Tulsa, Oklahoma. These indicators will help the team understand how healthy the ecosystems within the Mississippi River Watershed are and allow agencies to better develop strategies on how they can collectively make these ecosystems better for future generations.

Water Security

USACE's Engineer Research Development Center Geospatial Research Lab has been leading efforts such as the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency's "Innovision Water Security Team" in order to create tools like GEONarrative that provide decision making support for predicting where conflicts might arise due to environmental stressors such as flood or drought. USACE's Engineer Research

Development Center has also worked with the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Strategic Multi-layer Assessment Office's AFRICOM Table Top Exercise and Water Security research collaboration with the Defense Intelligence Agency/Director of National Intelligence Africa Regional Expertise and Culture Team to discuss moving forward in the field of researching and assessing water security issues.

Statutory Requirements & Federal Law

Many of the priority uses of ECCR occur because of statuary requirements such as NEPA, ESA, etc. Often times, USACE divisions consult with the state and Federal entities with relevant expertise regarding Threatened and Endangered species, sediment and water quality issues, timing of projects and a host of other scientific and available technical tools and models to address issues of concern. For example, divisions such as the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division recognize that tribal coordination and informal coordination with resource agencies such as the USFWS for Section 7 Consultation allows them to address and comply with federal laws.

In the case of the development of biological assessments and biological opinions required under the ESA in the South Pacific Division, formal negotiations with other resource agencies have been established for projects. Coordination on particularly challenging projects or resource issues is often raised to the regional level where leadership at the Corps Division office, such as South Pacific Division, coordinates with regional counterparts at other agencies to assist with issue resolution. It is through this highly collaborative process that formal ECCR is often avoided.

The ESA has been the impetus for ECCR in the case of the Columbia River Basin Federal Caucus (a group of ten federal agencies operating in the Columbia River Basin that have natural resource responsibilities and promote recovery of native fish and wildlife listed under the Endangered Species Act). Now, the Federal Caucus agencies are working together to 1) better integrate, organize, and coordinate federal fish recovery and water quality efforts in support of protecting and restoring the Columbia River Basin aquatic ecosystem, and 2) assist in coordination for the execution of federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Native American tribes within the basin. The Caucus is facilitated by a third party neutral, holds conference calls, and meets in person once yearly or as needed. In addition, it has formed working groups to address various topics policy, communication, and tribal issues.

In USACE's Northwestern Division, the Corps has accepted Cooperating agency status to reduce duplication during NEPA process and to ensure compliance with other Federal laws while working on the Tillamook Flood Risk Reduction Strategy (also mentioned above). In doing so, the Corps commits to regularly scheduled meetings and review of draft documents to ensure FEMA compliance with applicable federal laws that will also meet Corps' needs and standards. Cooperating status streamlines the NEPA process for when Regulatory receives an application.

The ongoing conflict between Corps Levee Vegetation Policies and other statutory requirement such as the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water

Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act, as well as Treaty Trust responsibilities also required the use of ECCR. In the Horseshoe Bend Pilot study, the use of ECCR was an attempt by USACE's Seattle District and Corps HQ to find common ground and develop solutions

Multi-agency/multi-scope issues

ECCR is being used to bring multiple stakeholders together to address systematic issues rather than project-based issues. For example, the Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable (MRBIR) was established as a forum for federal agencies advocating a collaborative approach to solving issues within the Missouri river watershed. Members of the MRBIR seek opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and comprehensive interagency efforts that would normally be beyond the scope of just one of the agencies. MRBIR is facilitated by a third party neutral, holds monthly conference calls, forms topical working groups and meets in person twice yearly.

Regional engagements have become a staple for addressing wide-spread issues in USACE's North Atlantic Division: the Regional Planning Bodies and Ocean Councils for the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic address energy development and management of ocean resources; three River Basin Commissions (Susquehanna, Delaware, and Potomac) address energy development and transmission; the Chesapeake Bay Program/Executive Order addresses the restoration and protection of our Nation's largest watershed; and the Northeast Federal Partners Climate Change Sub-Team and the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative address issues relating to climate change.

7. **Non-Third-Party-assisted Collaboration Processes:** Briefly describe other significant uses of environmental collaboration that your agency has undertaken in FY 2014 to anticipate, prevent, better manage, or resolve environmental issues and conflicts that do not include a third-party neutral. *Examples may include interagency MOUs, enhanced public engagement, and structural committees with the capacity to resolve disputes, etc.*

USACE proactively addresses potentially controversial program or project environmental issues as early as possible to resolve these issues before they become significant conflicts. Across all Civil Works programs and missions, including Deep Draft Navigation, Flood Risk Management, and Ecosystem Restoration, USACE promotes a positive and collaborative working relationship with its agency and stakeholder partners and benefits from the resulting positive relationships. Below we report on some of the significant uses of environmental by dividing the responses into four areas:

- Formal/institutionalized Working Groups or Agreements
- Business Processes and Culture;
- Communication Tools; and
- Scientific/Technical Consensus Building Tools**.**

Formal/institutionalized Working Groups or Agreements

- Across the country, USACE Districts reported on the successes of state-led interagency Silver Jackets teams to advance collaborative problem solving related to flood risk management (see answer to Question 1). For example, in FY 2014, the Oklahoma team worked with communities and FEMA using ECCR methods to resolve flood plain mapping issues. In New Mexico, the Silver Jackets team is implementing a Post-Wildfire Watershed Project that brings together local stakeholders and collaborators to assess strategies to enhance post-wildfire watershed recovery to mitigate down-stream life-safety risks from flash flooding.
- The Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) was established in 2008 to support the Western States Water Council and the Western Governors' Association in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water resources. The Albuquerque District Deputy District Engineers serves as the USACE representative on the WestFAST. Current priorities of WestFAST include: Better enabling the exchange of federal and state water data; Developing "Principles of Collaboration" that can be shared among the WestFAST agencies on how to better engage the states; Facilitating coordination between various federal programs being implemented within the Colorado River Basin; and various drought and climate change initiatives.
- USACE is an active participant in interagency efforts to manage environmental conflict and to collaborate on sustainable solutions in California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta. Led by the Flood Risk Management Program Manager and a dedicated Bay-Delta watershed specialist, USACE is one of six federal agencies participating in the Federal Leadership Committee under the California Bay-Delta Memorandum of Understanding.
- USACE is an active member of the California Coastal Sediment Management Workgroup (CSMW) whose mission is to facilitate regional approaches to protecting, enhancing, and restoring California's coastal beaches and watersheds through federal, state, and local cooperative efforts. The California Coastal Sediment Management Master Plan is a central part of CSMW's mission and is an

ongoing, collaborative effort by CSMW to evaluate California's coastal sediment management needs and promote regional, system-wide solutions.

- Since its establishment through a 1998 MOU, USACE's San Francisco District has hosted the Dredged Material Management Office - an interagency group comprised of federal, state and local partners that is responsible for determining the suitability of dredged material to be disposed of (or placed in) the San Francisco Bay area.
- Since the signing of a 2002 MOU, USACE's Albuquerque District has been an active participant in interagency efforts to manage environmental conflict and to collaborate on sustainable solutions in the Middle Rio Grande (NM). The Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program is a multi-stakeholder partnership to protect and improve the status of two endangered species while simultaneously protecting existing and future regional water uses. Specific recent actions under this program include:
  - USACE-led development of a program-wide adaptive management plan
  - USACE's active engagement with the Tribes and water agencies to develop a mobile-bed numeric model to understand the effects of floods & infrastructure projects on channel morphology in the Middle Rio Grande.
  - USACE funds a comprehensive database of reports, data, and other information relating to endangered species in the Middle Rio Grande.
- USACE regional and District staff in the Northwestern Division are using the National MOU between USACE and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to address an emerging interagency conflict surrounding land management along the Missouri River. To create shallow water habitat along the Missouri River for the endangered pallid sturgeon, USACE purchased property that had previously been enrolled in NRCS easements. USACE plans for "top width widening" to create more habitat are incompatible with NRCS easement policy, and USACE regulations do not allow USACE to accommodate easement modification requirements for land replacement. Staff are working to identify options that allow both agencies to meet their goals.
- Sacramento District's Planning, Regulatory, Emergency Management and Operations office participate in the Interagency Flood Management Collaborative Program. The focus of the group is to facilitate communication between USACE, California Department of Water Resources, local reclamation districts, and various Federal and state natural resource and/or permitting agencies to facilitate Flood Risk Management planning and operations and maintenance activities along the Sacramento River and associated tributaries. One FY14 initiative was an interagency effort to facilitate timely repairs of small erosion sites on Sacramento River Flood Control Project levees and develop a Small Erosion Repair Program Manual that brings a streamlined programmatic approach to what has been a time-consuming regulatory review and authorization process over 300 miles of levees.
- Seattle District's Levee Vegetation Framework is a partnership of federal, State, Tribe and local agencies formed to address vegetation issues on local non-federal levees. The goal is to find a solution that provides for both public safety and the riparian function that is necessary to address the habitat requirements of listed species. A working group includes technical staff and a principal group includes senior leaders from participating agencies.
- In May 2014, USACE regulatory staff from seven districts met with USEPA Region VII and NRCS officials from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri to discuss the new Interpretive Rule for Agricultural Exemptions and Enforcement MOA. The

meeting focused on the contentious issues of the Interpretative Rule and ways to improve communication and coordination between the agencies. The meeting identified ways for all entities to be as consistent as possible in the interpretation and implementation of these programs.

- USACE's Buffalo District is a member of the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership - a tri-state partnership dedicated to enhancing multi-purpose projects that improve land and water resource management in the basin and promote a healthy, productive watershed. USACE used this forum to communicate program and study-specific information related to Partnership interests including harmful algal blooms, prioritizing projects using Phosphorous reduction modeling, water quality improvements in agricultural areas and the Federal Urban Waters Partnership.
- The Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force was established by the Environmental Protection Agency in the fall of 1997 to understand the causes and effects of eutrophication in the Gulf of Mexico; coordinate activities to reduce the size, severity, and duration; and ameliorate the effects of hypoxia. The Task Force includes federal and state agencies and the tribes. Federal agencies include those with responsibilities over activities in the Mississippi River and its basin, and in the Gulf of Mexico. The role of the Task Force is to provide executive level direction and support for coordinating the actions of participating organizations working on nutrient management within the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed. The Task Force has designated members of a Coordinating Committee, and solicits information from interested stakeholders. The Mississippi Valley Division Commander represents the Corps on the Hypoxia Task Force and the Mississippi Valley Division Senior Environmentalist represents the Corps on the Coordinating Committee. The Corps provides technical support and input, limited resources, and helps facilitate communication and data sharing.
- Louisville District hosted the annual meeting of the Ohio River Basin Alliance (ORBA). USACE Districts helped form the ORBA in 2009 with USEPA, the Ohio Water Resources Association and the Ohio River Sanitation Commission. Since then the alliance has grown to over 200 representatives from over 100 state, local and federal agencies, industry, academia and not-for-profit organizations dedicated to integrated management of the Ohio River Basin's resources. The ORBA's vision is to achieve sustainable economic growth, ecological integrity and public safety. USACE's Huntington District assumed a lead role in planning the meeting, and numerous USACE staff contributed technical expertise to the sessions. As the membership in the ORBA has grown, the USACE role has transitioned from leadership to facilitation and technical support of the diverse group of stakeholders collaboratively promoting a sustainable water resources future for the Ohio River Basin. USACE involvement has improved relationships with key stakeholders and has been integral to accomplishment of USACE's Civil Works Missions in navigation, reservoir operations, flood risk management and aquatic ecosystem restoration.
- The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center (NGRREC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USACE-led Mississippi River Commission (MRC) in 2013. The MOU designates NGRREC as a lead research partner to the MRC in helping shape policies for the Mississippi River Valley. The purpose of this MOU is to establish a general framework of cooperation to plan and implement mutually beneficial programs, projects, and activities that maintain and enhance environmental and natural resource stewardship, further the study of

river ecology, develop sound watershed and river management strategies, and to promote educational programs that foster a greater awareness and appreciation of water resources and the importance of healthy rivers and the ecological services provided by aquatic ecosystems. Upcoming projects on which the two organizations will collaborate include the assessment of existing data, identification of field data collection needs, technology transfer and sediment studies.

Other MOU/As: South Pacific Division reports a Regional MOU with The Nature Conservancy and the Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program, and Pittsburgh District reports a Draft MOU with American Rivers. USACE's Nashville District is an active participant in the 2011 MOU and Tennessee Strategic Mollusk Plan. Fort Worth District participates in several nationwide MOAs with various agencies (US Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Union Pacific Railway). South Atlantic Division reports significant efforts to prevent, avoid or resolve environmental issues and conflicts using formal coordination mechanisms like the Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Group, the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, & the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

Business Processes and Culture

Because of the breadth of USACE responsibilities - from regulatory to planning to construction to operations and maintenance of water resources infrastructure across the country - districts across the country expend a significant amount of time and resources to build collaborative relationships with other federal and state agencies and stakeholders to prevent, avoid or resolve environmental issues and conflicts. Below we highlight some "business processes" that USACE employs to promote collaboration and conflict resolution.

Regional Sediment Management programs in the northeast enjoyed collaborative successes in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy as typical funding and regulatory constraints were reduced. For example, extensive partnering with agencies, stakeholders and the public resulted in the relatively quick design and construction of Black Skimmer habitat and a demonstration project of thin layer placement on land owned by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife using material dredged from a critical shoal in the NJ Intracoastal Waterway.

New England District regularly hosts a "Mid-Level Managers Meeting" of federal mid-level managers in the region to discuss impending or resolved conflicts, resolve policy and timeliness issues and to maintain open communication with the agencies outside a conflicted setting of a particular project. The District has a program where staff environmental compliance scientists can elevate any disagreement with a state, tribal or federal agency to their immediate supervisor for conflict resolution. If this fails to resolve the interagency dispute, the Branch Chief/Division Chief and ultimately the District Engineer would accept elevations to resolve conflict.

As part of the agency-wide Civil Works Transformation effort, Albuquerque and Los Angeles Districts' Watershed Program Managers developed watershed-informed budget pilots for the Rio Grande and Santa Ana River Watersheds that incorporate

stakeholders' watershed priorities into USACE's budgetary ranking process. Lessons learned from the pilots will inform budget development guidance. Watershed-informed budgeting will help USACE engage in broader multi-user issues and promote participation in collaborative efforts before circumstances require intervention by a third-party neutral. Other Districts, such as Pittsburgh, also reported collaborative successes as part of developing a watershed-informed budget.

USACE's Alaska District held "In Progress Review Information Meetings" with communities, non-federal sponsors, and other key stakeholders for both the Yakutat Watershed Plan and the Craig Harbor Navigation Improvement Study. These meetings allow USACE to provide a status of the plan development and to continue to collaborate with the community in identifying and vetting alternative strategies**.**

At the three Federal Columbia River Power System Cultural Resource Program projects in Seattle District, cooperating groups met at least quarterly in 2014 to identify, discuss and resolve issues concerning cultural resources at the projects. The cooperating groups include representation from state agencies, USACE, Bonneville Power Authority, other Federal land managers and tribal representatives.

To enhance public engagement, USACE conducted two barge/boating outings reviewing specific segments of the Missouri River and highlighting USACE actions and projects. These trips provided an opportunity for one-on-one discussions with State leaders, stakeholders and Congressional staff on engineering and construction practices of the Missouri River Recovery program and operations of the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project**.**
USACE's Wilmington (NC) District used the Clean Water Act Section 404/NEPA Merger Process to simultaneously address NEPA and Section 404 for North Carolina Department of Transportation projects, using a team approach to reach consensus on each step of the NEPA/Section 404 Permit process. The team is comprised of state and Federal resource and permitting agencies - all stakeholders in the Section 404 permit process. Differences of opinion and agency missions are recognized and addressed and the team has agreed to reach consensus on each step in the process before moving to the next. Once the project moves to the next step, the agencies cannot return to a previous step for reconsideration unless new/different information is made available, providing a measure of certainty for the applicant. The 404/NEPA Merger Process has been in place since the early '90s in North Carolina, with modification as needed.

In FY14, USACE, Southwestern Power Administration, and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation leveraged technical and financial resources in the Lower Illinois River (OK) to implement a collaborative solution to the problems of poor water quality and fish kills. The two-part mechanical solution includes a low-flow pipe to control the timing and amount of water released downstream of the dam and an isolated pool with high dissolved oxygen below the powerhouse.

USACE's Los Angeles District engages in regular interagency discussions with both U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to resolve large-scale, programmatic issues that impede successful coordination on multiple projects. Agenda items have included differing interpretations of implementing regulations, permitting timeframes, coordination processes, and various technical issues. Similarly, USACE's Mobile District's Regulatory staff

regularly meets with state and federal agencies to discuss coal mining issues in Alabama and to address permitting issues, streamlining efforts and consistency issues. The regulatory program also initiated coordination with Georgia Power Company to establish Programmatic General Permits for Georgia Power reservoirs located on the Chattahoochee River and has become an active member of the interagency Strategic Habitat Unit working group in Alabama.

USACE fulfills various roles with the National Disaster Recovery Framework. For instance, USACE staff in Albuquerque was assigned as the Recovery Support Function - Infrastructure Systems Team Lead after a flood in Santa Clara Pueblo. USACE's role was to collaborate with other Federal, State and Local agencies to develop a comprehensive strategy to rebuild and add resiliency to Santa Clara Pueblo's flood-damaged infrastructure. This strategy identified and worked towards commitments from all agencies and their authorities that could and should be applied.

USACE often must work closely with Native American tribes to fulfill its responsibilities. Each USACE District has a tribal liaison that participates in USACE's Tribal Community of Practice. Individual consultations represent communication designed to foster input, productive discussion, and issue resolution before it arises to a level needing 'conflict resolution.'

- In FY14 the Albuquerque District's Tribal Liaison/Outreach Coordinator conducted 313 individual consultations with Native American tribes including 22 'Partnering Meetings' with the executive leadership of specific Tribes.
- USACE has collaborated with several federally-recognized Tribes to assist in formulating ideas for the long term management of the Rolling Fork Mounds site and currently partners with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw to manage the site. A 2014 collaborative management success resolved the issue that looters and grave robbers had been stealing from the property for nearly a century and returned sacred items to their original home at the site.
- To promote better relationships and increase understanding, USACE's Jacksonville District and the Seminole Tribe of Florida co-host a multi-day training course on USACE missions and Native American Perspectives.
- The Seattle District Tribal Liaison attends regular meetings with Tribes to understand issues/concerns and work through controversial projects. The tribal liaison is responsible for facilitating meetings with the 42 tribes in the District, assuring good lines of communication are maintained as well making sure the interests of both tribes and the Corps are vetted.

Communication Tools

Honolulu District's Regulatory Branch has an outreach program to inform State and County agencies of permit requirements. They also have an open door policy for any applicants to ensure that the applicants are fully versed in the application requirements.

Buffalo District's Formerly Utilized Sites, Remedial Action Program has a well-developed outreach program that actively engages the local communities on a regular basis. For sites in urban settings with high public interest, the District sends updates to the community through electronic mailings called "News from the Corps." In

addition, the team hosts information sessions with some of the communities on a regular basis. Each site has a webpage that is updated when major documents are released and the reports are distributed to federal, state, and local elected and agency representatives. "Beyond the Headlines" is a forum used on the web to correct misinformation in the media.

USACE's Buffalo District implemented in a multi-faceted communication strategy to support dredging for the Port of Cleveland. Activities included monthly Dredging Task Force meetings, interagency meetings with State environmental agencies to find mutually agreeable solutions for dredge sediment placement; technical meetings with State environmental agencies regarding the suitability of sediment dredged from the Cuyahoga River for open lake placement; a webinar regarding two proposed open lake placement locations in Lake Erie; a public information meeting in downtown Cleveland to provide information on the proposed open lake placement of dredged sediment; participation in the two-day Sustainable Cleveland Summit; and an updated webpage.

For the Blanchard River (OH) Watershed Study, USACE's Buffalo District implemented a Communication Subcommittee that included USACE staff, non-Federal sponsor, stakeholders, and communication experts in the study area. The team hosted biweekly teleconferences to provide project specific updates, shared information across interest groups, and improved overall communication between the government, non-Federal sponsor and stakeholders. USACE staff continually meet with State and Federal environmental agencies to provide project progress and request feedback on the identified alternative measures to address their concerns and resolve any issues prior to the review process. The team used the project Facebook page to post information about the environmental, history, study, and other watershed-specific content. The information was posted on Wednesdays as an interesting fact or question labeled 'Watershed Wednesday'. This generated a social media relationship with many in the community and created a forum to interact with the Federal government.

Wilmington District Regulatory staff participated in 12 public meetings involving discussion of Regulatory activities and environmental laws. These meetings included scoping meetings for NEPA Environmental Impact Statements and Regulatory Program presentations for the public at colleges and universities in North Carolina. Similarly**,** Mobile District Regulatory staff participated in 15 public meetings/outreach events to discuss compliance with the Clean Water Act, Rivers and Harbors Act, NEPA, National Historic Preservation Act, ESA, and other relevant environmental laws. To assist with public outreach, the Regulatory Program employed several tools, including a regulatory website, videos, and an avatar.

Scientific/Technical Consensus Building Tools

Since 1995, USACE's Galveston District has chartered Interagency Coordination Teams (ICT) with state and Federal resource agencies for all major planning studies to collaboratively analyze project alternatives and to identify sensitive or significant resources that must be addressed in project implementation, operations and maintenance. A recent use of ICT is for a major reach of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway where resource agencies expressed concern about resource impacts resulting from routine Operations & Maintenance. These groups do not involve

"neutral third parties" and attempt to reach decisions by consensus. USACE considers ICTs to be "cradle-to-grave" groups that are included throughout project life. Since the routine use of ICTs, SWG has not been sued over our NEPA coordination and documents, and we have not faced protracted time delays in obtaining regulatory approval of our projects. For the first time, Charleston District also reports using Interagency Coordination Teams from multiple state and federal agencies to prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Charleston Harbor Deepening Study.

For USACE's North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS) other federal agencies actively participated in the development of many of the tools and reports generated by the NACCS and helped prepare the Report's centerpiece - the Coastal Risk Management Framework. To promote scientific exchange, USACE conducted a webinar series on topics such as "Natural and Nature-Based Features for Coastal Storm Risk Management", "Ecosystem Goods and Services", "Numerical Modeling and Sea Level Change", and "Adaptive Management" to supplement formal requests for data and technical input and follow-up. The collaboration culture extended internally as well, with the project team drawing technical expertise from across the USACE enterprise.

USACE's San Francisco District participates with other agencies on a Long Term Management Strategy Science Group to conceive, develop, carry out, and interpret technical studies on sensitive species in a multi-agency, multi-stakeholder environment. This multi-year effort has led to informal easing of restrictions on dredging and likely formal easing with an upcoming Biological Opinion.

USACE's Honolulu District is applying a Shared Vision Planning methodology to develop the West Maui Watershed Plan. In FY14, USACE held a workshop with partner agencies, non-Federal sponsors, community representatives, and stakeholders to review objectives and criteria and to begin the formulation of alternatives and the development of a conceptual model of the watershed. Similarly USACE advises California's Department of Water Resources on applying the Shared Vision Planning for California's semi-decadal water plan. Shared Vision Planning is a collaborative planning approach that focuses on involving stakeholders in the technical analysis to solve water resources problems.

USACE participated in the Oklahoma Drought Challenge **-** an innovative approach to encourage collaboration among water users and enthusiasts of various backgrounds as participants from multiple teams navigate fictitious, yet challenging, water shortage scenarios. The Drought Challenge was funded by the Bureau of Reclamation and hosted by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and serves as a platform to engage stakeholders, develop relationships and collect information for future drought planning purposes. Similarly, USACE participated in the Western Governors' Drought Forum - a regional dialogue in which states and industry can share case studies and best practices on drought policy, preparedness, and management.

8. **Comments and Suggestions Regarding Reporting:** Please comment on any difficulties you encountered in collecting these data and if and how you overcame them. Please provide suggestions for improving these questions in the future.

USACE continues to have difficulties collecting accurate information for this report. First, it is difficult for all levels involved to collect information with such short lead times. The USACE ECCR Forum Point of Contact will request the template earlier in future years to give those responding more time to collect the requested information. USACE believes data collection will be more effective if it occurs throughout the year and CPCX will be working with Division liaisons to establish a more formal, ongoing process for collecting information. Second, the rationale behind this data call is sometimes unclear and the consequences for not reporting are minimal. CPCX took additional steps in FY14 to explain the value of reporting this type of information and how it will be used. CPCX also recognized one innovative example from each Division this year and featured their story in a winter newsletter. Third, it is difficult to collect information from certain parts of the agency such as the Project Management, Regulatory and Operations communities of practice. In the future CPCX may request that the leadership of these communities engage in the data collection process.

Attached A. Basic Principles for Agency Engagement in Environmental Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Problem Solving

Basic Principles for Agency Engagement in Environmental Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Problem Solving

Informed Commitment	Confirm willingness and availability of appropriate agency leadership and staff at all levels to commit to principles of engagement; ensure commitment to participate in good faith with open mindset to new perspectives
Balanced, Voluntary Representation	Ensure balanced inclusion of affected/concerned interests; all parties should be willing and able to participate and select their own representatives
Group Autonomy	Engage with all participants in developing and governing process; including choice of consensus-based decision rules; seek assistance as needed from impartial facilitator/mediator selected by and accountable to all parties
Informed Process	Seek agreement on how to share, test and apply relevant information (scientific, cultural, technical, etc.) among participants; ensure relevant information is accessible and understandable by all participants
Accountability	Participate in the process directly, fully, and in good faith; be accountable to all participants, as well as agency representatives and the public
Openness	Ensure all participants and public are fully informed in a timely manner of the purpose and objectives of process; communicate agency authorities, requirements and constraints; uphold confidentiality rules and agreements as required for particular proceedings
Timeliness	Ensure timely decisions and outcomes
Implementation	Ensure decisions are implementable consistent with federal law and policy; parties should commit to identify roles and responsibilities necessary to implement agreement; parties should agree in advance on the consequences of a party being unable to provide necessary resources or implement agreement; ensure parties will take steps to implement and obtain resources necessary to agreement