

**Natural Resources Management Career  
Development Steering Committee**

**Annual Meeting Minutes  
19-21 August 2008**

**Pere Marquette Lodge, Grafton, IL**

I. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting Opened at 0800 Hours on 19 August 2008 with greetings and salutations to all members present.

Members present: Steve Austin, Marilyn Jones, Lacy Evans, Heather Burke, Pat Kline, Sue Clevenstein, James Murphy, Elaine Brubaker, and Mike LaFrentz.

Members excused: Albert Branch and Keith Hyde.

II. Old Business

A. NRM On-line Training Source (NRMOTS) Product Update

Lacy Evans provided an updated, noting that Course 5 is ready to go to TMI and is with Marilyn for a final review. Courses 1-4 are with TMI to produce and ready for final review as the first portion of the product.

**TASK: Lacy check with ERDC to see if they have software which would automatically check web links to see if the link is still viable or not. If so, how can we incorporate it into the NRMOTS. If not, will ERDC have someone that will check on the links throughout the year to ensure viability?**

Once we get closer to a finished product, the Committee will need to develop a marketing strategy and tools.

B. HQ's Perspective and Update

Steve Austin provided an update of what was going on in HQ and in the NRM Community. He noted HQ and the Interpretive Services proponents are working together to develop a new advanced interpretive services prospect course. The course would be aimed at management level employees. Still developing how the course would fit for Managers and how corporate interpretation would fit.

He also noted that Debra Stokes was taking the fulltime position of Programs Integration Division, in HQ, where Gary Loew is chief. Debra's job will be advertised as probably a 14. **Opportunity: Temp assignment in HQ for the Partnerships Program, great opportunity for a GS-9 and up.**

Another announcement memo is coming for the CAP program, advertising the two 5-month positions for 2009. Would like to see more Rangers put in for this.

The Chief of Engineers will be signing a Pledge of Cooperation with other Federal agencies for the "Working with Children and Nature Initiative", which will recognize the great environmental education work our NRM staff and other agency staffs routinely conduct throughout the year.

Alfred Chavez is back at work and on light duty for a while. The reward for finding, apprehending and prosecuting the suspects is up to \$15,000 (\$10k from Corps Watch and \$5k from FBI).

VA Regulation is currently on staff review and approval and anticipated to be distributed around the end of August, early September 1008.

SAD is conducting a staffing level review, utilizing LRD and SWD process and reports. **Pat Kline has information he will share with the other committee members as to their staffing level report.**

Life Jacket Mandate Policy is still on go. Vicksburg District is going to do a 3 year test and using the US Coast Guard's wear ratio data as baseline, 2 additional months of data collection will be conducted by Vicksburg on wear rate and develop a final ratio.

#### C. NRM Gateway Links and Updates

Marilyn gave a short report that most links were still good. Need to update some and need a volunteer to run through the links and if they are not working, is there an alternative link or a new link or need to be removed.

**TASK: Mike LaFrentz and James Murphy volunteered to cooperatively review and update and send changes or needs to Ginny (Virginia) Dickerson at ERDC by Mid-September 2008.**

**TASK: Marilyn draft a email to forward to all NRM community to utilize the job postings site for updates on where opportunities are open.**

**TASK: Marilyn will revisit the use of Resumes and jobs "behind the castle" for managers and employees to locate potential applicants. (Was originally removed because of Privacy Act issues.)**

#### D. Recruitment DVD

The committee reviewed the latest version and noted items that should be corrected, including spelling and some video issues. Those corrections were sent to TMI for correction.

Brainstorming for a title and several ideas were noted. The committee settled on “Exciting Careers in Natural Resources Management, [Castle], U.S. Army Corps of Engineers”.

Packaging options were reviewed and the committee determined the small folded case and small DVD was acceptable for all 5,500 copies. Front flap will have one of the better still photos from the filming work and also used on the DVD. Inside top flap will get the USAJobs.gov web address and the CPOL web address with a short “How To” on use for both websites, including how to search for jobs on the USAJobs and how to apply on RESUMIX. Bottom of inside cover will house the DVD and the website for visitors to the Gateway. Back of the cover will get the measles map of the Corps with all the lakes and offices on it.

**TASK: Heather will do a mock up of the sleeve to get a good price from TMI.**

**TASK: Heather will request TMI to mail 100 copies direct to Marilyn and the other 5,400 copies will be distributed to Districts for distribution to their field offices per the address list and information used for distribution of the Safe Self CD. Courtesy copies of the DVD will go to the lakes that participated in the filming effort.**

**TASK: Heather ensure the pre-final version from TMI, copy go to Steve Austin to be used at the RLAT and SAT meeting during 25-29 Aug 08.**

**TASK: Marilyn will forward a copy of the Safe Self distribution memo to Heather, before end of Aug.**

#### E. Wrap Up

James Murphy provided information on the “Wounded Warriors Program” that SWF has incorporated in their District to assist returning soldiers to integrate back into society and heal from battle wounds and losses and give them the opportunity to build their confidence as a contributing individual. There is a DoD MOU with various agencies.

**TASK: James will send committee members a copy of their MOU for the “Wounded Warriors Program”.**

**TASK: Marilyn will utilize the info that comes from Kevin Ewbank and other sources on job openings and make sure they are posted on Gateway.**

**TASK: Send a draft email to Steve to send out to the Community to utilize the Gateway to post job openings.**

Adjourned at 1630.

Day 2 – Meeting opened at 0800, 20 August 2008.

### III. New Business:

The committee reviewed the Recruitment DVD with the changes made from the previous day and found a couple more items that required changing or correction. This version had the rolling credits and it rounded out the DVD very well. However, the last page of the information Heather had provided TMI was left off. This change and others will be completed by time the pre-final version goes to Steve and the PDT.

#### A. Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium (NRDLC) Fall Meeting

Pat Kline provided information as to what the Consortium is about. The USFS contracted the Consortium to develop 401 on-line courses to get their personnel qualified for the 401 series, because employees were given 5-Years to qualify or find another job. Further, he, Steve and Marilyn will be meeting with the Consortium in October 2008 to discuss the efforts of the Corps to convert employees and discuss hurdles.

**TASK: ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS provide to Pat and Steve by no later than 29 August 2008, how the conversion to the 401 series is going in each District and Division. Further provide him who has not converted and why.**

**TASK: Pat will develop a page that will link off the Career Advancement page on the options for obtaining the 24 hours of positive credit required for 401 and the Consortium information that can be of assistance to those seeking that training, and the How To's to convert.**

**TASK: Pat will discuss with the Consortium in October about them working with the Corps to develop a Park Ranger Certification and what it would cost and work with the Committee to develop funding stream for this.**

#### B. NSPS and Recruitment and Retention

Mike LaFrentz discussed the many issues that are arising from NSPS and how the conversion from a GS to a NSPS Pay Band is affecting recruitment and retention. Mike discussed a conversion chart that Jill Swett developed to help managers determine their best avenue for their employees or new employees to improve the ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest. Reference Chart provided by Mike. He discussed the Pay Setting Worksheet they use and stated that you must check the box for ACDP to and write in the remarks and in the remarks on the RPA “This is a ACDP Position” to help with getting a 20% increase for a reassignment than the 5%. Operations really worked this issue hard with their CPOC and HR folks, referring them back to the NSPS Regulations concerning “Affording upmost leeway for the employee.” This has helped greatly with recruiting and retention. Mike also noted that Western CPOC at Ft. Huachuca used experience and 2 years of college credits to convert many to the 401 series.

**TASK: Marilyn is to provide this chart electronically to committee by end of August 2008.**

**TASK: Mike will put a “Good Enough To Share” white paper together for the spreadsheet and forward to Marilyn for inclusion on the Gateway.**

**TASK: Heather will send Sue her PD and information on conversion to the 401 series.**

Steve asked all of us to keep the information and concerns flowing to him about NSPS.

**TASK: Sue will send Ranger Safety Surveys conducted in Rock Island District to Dr. Bonnie Bryson for use in the Survey work the Park Ranger CoP is conducting.**

**TASK: Lacy will send Dr. Bonnie Bryson the Ranger Training Manual for Baltimore District for use by the Park Ranger CoP.**

The Committee made note to Steve that the OPM Course should have a minimum qualification level of a GS-9 (NSPS equivalent) in order for the course begin training and grooming future OPMs. Also, the course should be offered at least twice per year in order to train as large an audience as possible.

**TASK: Steve will check with Janie Hughes as to why the class shows full before the Purple Book come out. Also, Steve will work to change the minimum qualifications for the course.**

**Next Meeting: Sausalito, CA at the Bay Model, 3-7 Aug 09. TASK: Mike LaFrentz will set up block of rooms at a hotel, reserve conference room and equipment at Bay Model and field trip.**

Day 3 – 21 August 2008  
0800-1700 hrs.

Tour of Rivers Project, including National Great Rivers Museum and Visitor Center, tour of #26 Lock and Dam, presentations on the Museum and it’s partnership with the Great Rivers Foundation, presentation by National Great Rivers Research and Education Center and presentation and tour of the Riverlands Project resources management areas.