US Army Corps of Engineers®

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021-2031

June 2021

US Army Corps of Engineers®

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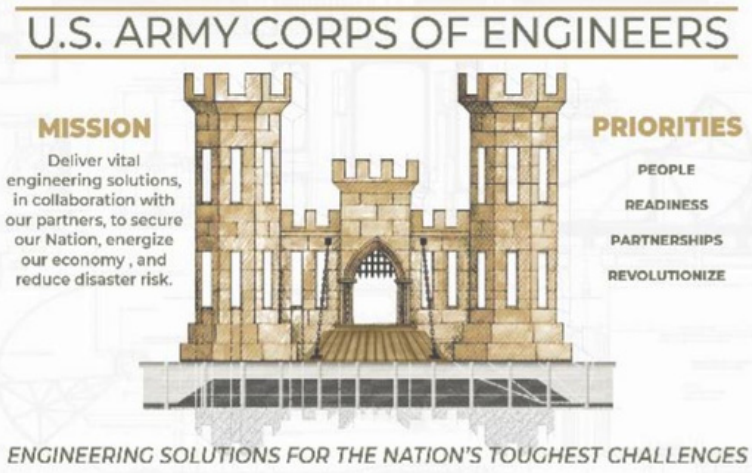
Photo by Wilderness Inquiry

Photo Tammy Wick



FY21 USACE Campaign Plan

Photo Jeff Grow

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF NRM

Natural Resources Management Community,

America is blessed with abundant natural resources and diverse outdoor recreational opportunities. The philosopher Aristotle once said, "The end of labor is to gain leisure". The time we have for leisure activities provides an essential element of human biology and psychology. Our lakes and rivers provide spaces for millions of Americans to recreate, engage in fellowship, or simply find a quiet place to reflect. They also provide significant economic benefits to the surrounding communities and the nation.

The Natural Resources Management (NRM) Program has perhaps the most diverse set of responsibilities of all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) missions. As trustees of our nation's lands and waters we share a duty to ensure responsible land use management and outdoor recreation while protecting all project purposes and missions. Over the past year, we embarked upon the challenge of charting a course for the next ten years of natural resources management and as such, defined our program to ensure the full breadth of our responsibilities are captured.

I am pleased to present the 2021-2031 Natural Resources Management Strategic Plan. We entered this new decade with unprecedented challenges caused by a worldwide pandemic and rose to overcome that challenge through an adaptive, innovative workforce and increased collaboration with partners and stakeholders. This NRM Strategic Plan embodies the priorities of the Chief of Engineers Campaign Plan. It continues an already strong program, and emphasizes our need for a focused vision to make smart, well-informed, and consistent decisions. In an effort to guide our service and actions over the next ten years, this plan has been thoughtful in outlining and describing our goals and strategies related to ***people***, ***partnerships***, ***readiness***, and the capability to ***revolutionize*** our program.

I look forward to working with you as we continue to deliver the program to the American public for generations to come.

Jeff Krause
Chief of Natural Resources Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USACE civil works projects were established to protect the safety and ensure the prosperity of our nation by mitigating the risk of flood events, providing safe and efficient navigation for the transportation of goods, delivering a clean renewable source of energy through hydropower, and maintaining storage capacity for water supply. With the creation of these projects came the responsibility to ensure sustainable management of public lands and waters while affording opportunities for all Americans to enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation.

Today we continue to embrace the responsibilities entrusted to our program by the Flood Control Act of 1944 and by the Forest Conservation Act of 1960, Public Law 86-717. These important pieces of legislation provided the agency with direction to provide recreational access to projects and implement conservation measures on USACE lands and waters.

Through development of this strategic plan for the Natural Resources Management Program we recognize the evolving and cross cutting duties of USACE Natural Resources Management staff along with the changing conditions of our environment and the expectations of our customers. A refined mission statement reaffirms our commitment to ensuring the protection of all project missions while carefully balancing environmental and recreation needs.

MISSION

The Natural Resources Management Program delivers safe public access to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' lands and waters in a manner that protects all project purposes and mission areas through responsible outdoor recreation, environmental conservation and land use management while partnering with communities to serve the American people.

VISION

Conserve natural resources and provide public recreation opportunities that contribute to the quality of American life.

Photo USACE

INTRODUCTION TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Natural Resources Management Program is comprised of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' recreation and environmental stewardship business lines. With more than 400 lakes and river projects in 43 states, the NRM Program has the responsibility of managing 12 million acres of public lands and waters.

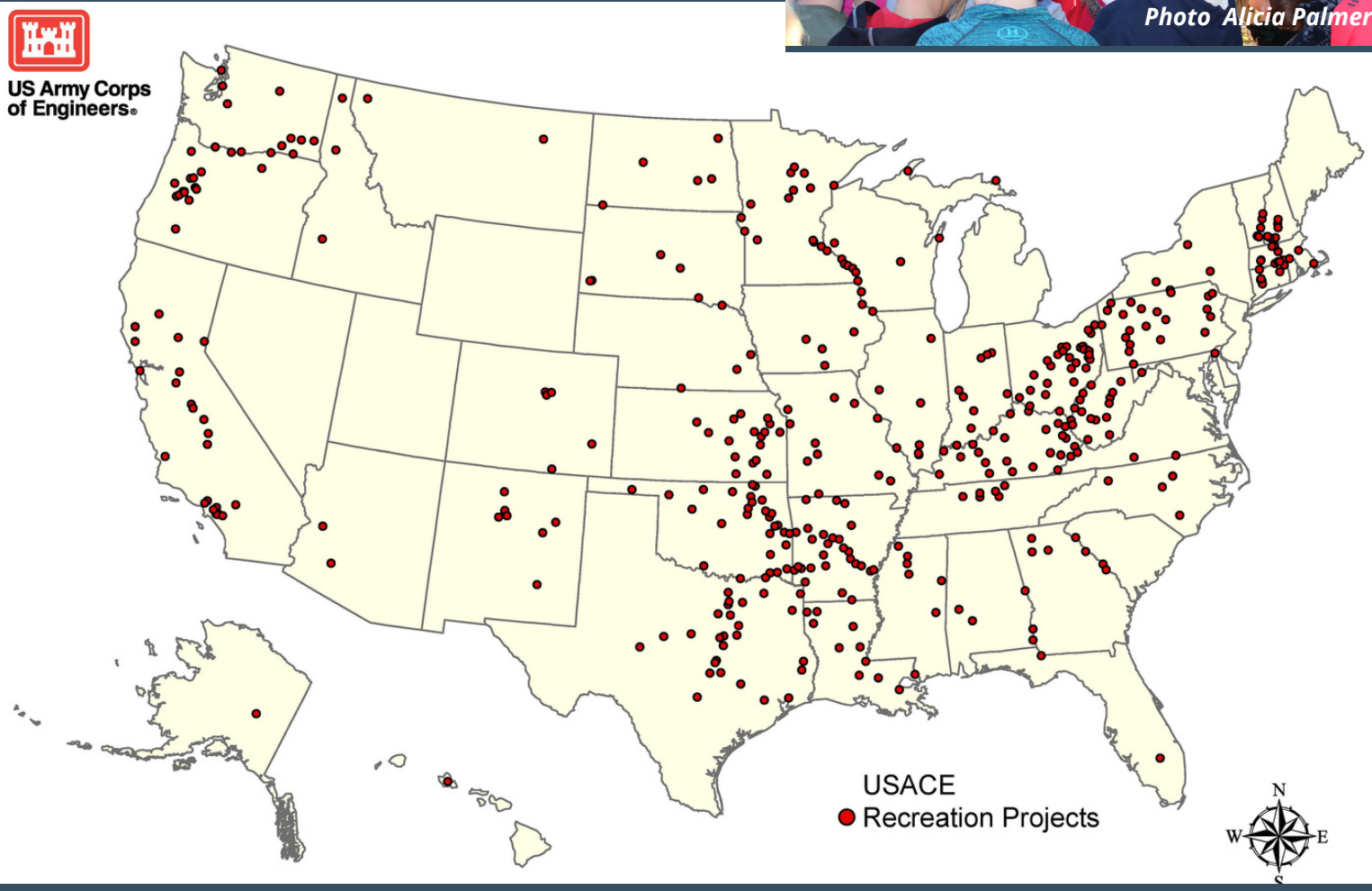
Annually we host 15% of visits to Federal recreation areas on just 2% of Federal land holdings. Data shows that 90% of USACE managed lakes and river projects with recreation sites are within 50 miles of a metropolitan area.

Our workforce is composed of park rangers, natural resources specialists, foresters, biologists, interpretive specialists, maintenance and administrative personnel along with dedicated volunteers. During peak recreation season, our staff of permanent and temporary seasonal employees is more than 2,000 strong.

Natural resources program managers play a role in the successful execution of all project missions, including flood risk management, hydropower, navigation and water supply by providing controlled access and purposeful management of USACE lands and water.

DEDICATED WORKFORCE

Photo Alicia Palmer



PARTNERS & VOLUNTEERS

The challenges facing the Natural Resources Management Program require new ways of doing business. Increasing community engagement and collaboration helps to ensure we meet the needs of the public and our lands and waters. Our workforce and capability are dramatically strengthened by our partners and volunteers. Over 2,000 partners are engaged, investing nearly $90 million annually.

Volunteers play a valuable role in helping care for the environment and providing high quality recreation opportunities. Our volunteers are individuals and organizations who want to give back to their communities and are interested in being involved in USACE's Natural Resources Management Program. Over the past five years, our volunteer workforce has averaged approximately 33,000 individuals, providing 1.5 million hours of service annually.

$24.8 Million
USACE INVESTMENT

+

$88.2 Million
PARTNER INVESTMENT

=

$113,077,957
TOTAL VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS

**Data extracted from FY20 NRM Assessment*

Photo Sylvia Guerrero

OUR RECREATION PROGRAM

While USACE is one of the nation's leading federal providers of water based outdoor recreation, our program offers a diverse range of recreational opportunities for people of all ages. Visits to USACE lakes and river projects are greater than the total number of visits to the top 25 tourist attractions in the U.S., which includes destinations such as the Grand Canyon, National Mall, and popular theme parks. With this significant use of our facilities, the recreation program has the responsibility to proactively manage visitors to ensure all authorized project purposes are met.

Photo Barrett Frobose

USACE recreation projects are a significant economic driver for many communities and the nation. In 2019, it is estimated that visitors across USACE spent approximately $12.7 billion and supported 210,000 jobs.

Additionally, we recognize that our recreation program and activities help strengthen family ties and friendships; providing opportunities for children to develop personal skills, social values, and self-esteem. With the popularity of our waterways, our park rangers and other USACE employees implement a robust campaign to teach the public safe and responsible ways to enjoy recreating in and around water. Our visitor centers initiate a connection to all USACE missions while park ranger led interpretive programs foster a deeper level of involvement, engagement, and understanding of the outdoors and our natural resources.

256 MILLION
VISITS IN FY 20

91,583
CAMPSITES

7,684
MILES OF TRAIL

5,000,000 +
SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACTS

3,713
BOAT LAUNCHES

2,000
FISHING TOURNAMENTS

533
MARINAS

496
BEACHES

$12.7 BILLION
SPENT BY VISITORS

Photo Alicia Palmer

**Data extracted from FY19 NRM Fact Sheets & FY20 NRM Assessment Data*

Photo Tara Whitsel

12 MILLION
ACRES OF PUBLIC LAND AND WATERS MANAGED

5.3 Million
ACRES WITH SIGNIFICANT WATERFOWL USE

45,700
CULTURAL RESOURCE SITES

1 Million
ACRES OF GRASSLAND

3.4 Million
ACRES OF FOREST

14%
US FRESHWATER FISHING

7 of the Top 10
MIGRATORY BIRD FLYWAYS IN THE US CROSSOVER USACE WATERS

**Data extracted from FY19 NRM Fact Sheets*

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The Environmental Stewardship Program protects, preserves, and restores significant ecological and cultural resources at USACE projects covering 12 million acres of public lands and waters nationwide while balancing land use activities.

The wide breadth of the stewardship program includes the management of over 300 federally listed special status species such as the whooping crane. Many USACE lakes are located within the heart of the migration pathway for this endangered species and provide critical stopover habitat. Our work also includes the management of nearly 26,000 acres of pollinator habitat. The number of acres actively managed continues to grow as we work with partners to aid in efforts to provide the habitat necessary for a variety of pollinator species.

Additionally, the Environmental Stewardship Program has the responsibility of protecting over 45,700 cultural sites which include a number of National Historic Landmarks. We work with the Veterans Curation Program to process at-risk archaeological collections belonging to USACE to ensure that federal curation standards are achieved.

Our workforce inspects and maintains over 38,000 miles of USACE boundary line, which is six times the length of the Mexico and Canada borders combined. On the 55,000 miles of shoreline managed by USACE, the Environmental Stewardship Program has oversight for more than 74,500 shoreline permits. More than 65,000 properties outgranted or under easement with non-USACE entities require annual inspections.

Our work with other business lines in the endless battle against invasive species ensures the successful execution of all USACE missions. Efforts to mitigate the risks associated with species such as zebra mussels which threaten water supply and hydropower intake pipes, and giant salvinia that crowds shipping channels are a priority for USACE and the NRM program.

CHAMPIONING WATER SAFETY

Water safety is a top priority for the Natural Resources Management Program. Through our workforce and partnerships, the NRM Program works very hard to keep our visitors safe while in, on, or near the water.

From FY 2010 to FY 2019 there were 1,482 public recreation fatalities that occurred at USACE lake and river projects. Of those fatalities 1,434 of them were water related. The 10-year data shows that 87% were male, 86% were 18 and older, 87% were not wearing a life jacket, 46% occurred when swimming in an undesignated swim area, and 19% were the result of falls from boats, docks, and shorelines.

Photo USACE

Education, enforcement, and engineering are used to decrease the number of public recreation accidents and fatalities. The NRM program includes the National Operations Center (NOC) for Water Safety, also known as the National Water Safety Program. The NOC provides valuable resources that are utilized agency-wide to promote water safety to all ages. National water safety campaigns are in place for kids and adults. The USACE water safety campaign for kids is the Bobber the Water Safety Dog campaign and USACE campaign for adults is the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign.

Photo USACE

OF DIRECT WATER SAFETY INTERPRETIVE CONTACTS

1,229,313 ON-SITE

1,485,205 OFF-SITE

Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns PleaseWearIt.com

BOBBER The Water Safety Dog

Bobber.info

*Data extracted from FY19 NRM Assessment

SAVING LIVES - EVERYDAY

Photo USACE

OF LIFE JACKET LOANER STATIONS

636 IN USACE MANAGED AREAS

162 IN OUTGRANTED MANAGED AREAS

The success of promoting water safety and saving lives comes from the dedication and hard work of USACE employees and volunteers and through partnerships such as the National partnership with The Corps Foundation that helps promote and enhance the Life Jackets Worn…Nobody Mourns campaign.

Photo USACE

The NOC provides guidance on implementation of policies used to save lives on our nation's waterways. Mandatory life jacket wear policies have been successful in increasing life jacket wear in adults and saving lives at USACE lake projects that have implemented them.

Photo USACE

ENSURING ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Environmental Compliance is a significant focus of the Natural Resources Management Program, helping to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff, contractors, and visitors. Engineer Regulation (ER) 200-2-3 provides guidance for managing, maintaining, and ensuring our recreation, navigation, and hydropower facilities adhere with all environmental laws.

Environmental Compliance Coordinators (ECC) at the project, district, and division level work together to manage all environmental aspects through completion of assessments for environmental protocols that protect USACE natural and cultural resources. Our ECC's efforts prevent and reduce the risk associated with chemical storage and potentially damaging spills, reduce solid and hazardous waste accumulation, monitor for improper waste disposal, work to remediate legacy contamination and underground storage tank concerns, reduce wastewater, air and water quality violations, and coordinate with Real Estate personnel to ensure compliance with lease requirements.

Photo USACE

Within the program, our coordinators provide sustainable, bio-based equipment and supply recommendations. By incentivizing cost-effective, sustainable measures, we are increasing recycling efforts by both USACE staff and project visitors and are lowering our energy and water consumption. Through active engagement with our partners in federal, state, and local agencies, staff are trained on current best management practices and changes in both federal and state law to ensure that USACE facilities excel in compliance with environmental regulations.

Photo USACE

80%
USACE TOTAL CORRECTED FINDINGS

400
ECC STAFF ACROSS USACE

125 & 450
AVERAGE # OF EXTERNAL & INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED PER YEAR

Photo USACE

*Data extracted from CPTrack

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

1 **FEDERAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY:** Target of 30% reduction in British Thermal Units per Gross Square Foot (BTU/GSF)

2 **Renewable Energy:** Target of 7.5% of total annual energy use

3 **Water efficiency:** Reduction in potable water use intensity by 20% from 2007 baseline

4 **High-performance sustainable buildings:** 15% of USACE total GSF meet sustainable building criteria

5 **Fleet Management:** 20% reduction of petroleum use from the 2005 baseline

6 **Greenhouse gas emissions:** Reduce as compared to FY 2008 baseline

7 **Solid waste diversion:** Divert 50% of non-hazardous solid waste and 60% of construction and demolition waste from landfills

Photo USACE

PURSUING SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability program seeks to make USACE facilities more energy, water, and fuel efficient, while reducing our footprint on the land by expanding recycling, composting, and renewable energy programs. Initiatives that reduce water and energy intensity, divert waste from landfills and complete cost saving measures to buildings further our ability to meet sustainability goals. The promotion of innovative practices has reduced greenhouse gas emissions and continues to make USACE a more resilient organization.

USACE consists of:

- approximately 100 staff in the sustainability field
- owns or leases approximately 1,000 buildings comprising over 15 million gross square feet (GSF) in over 600 locations throughout the U.S
- owns or leases nearly 7,000 fleet vehicles
- annually awards contracts valued over $18.3 billion

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) is the Chief Sustainability Officer for USACE. The ASA(CW) works with USACE's Deputy Commanding General, Civil Works leadership and the Environmental Community of Practice to lead the Strategic Sustainability Committee in driving improved sustainability performance through internal metrics, strategic meetings and close coordination with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Integration of sustainability into the USACE mission and organizational culture is essential in achieving federal sustainability goals as set forth by OMB/CEQ. USACE employs a systems-based, continual improvement approach integrating sustainability into its mission and organizational culture, with the goal of a sustainable future organization. USACE uses, at all levels of command, a recurring cycle of planning, execution, measurement, performance review, and annual course-correction that will integrate sustainability more deeply into its mission and the organizational culture annually.

A CALL FOR ACTION

The 2021- 2031 National Strategic Plan was developed to establish a foundational framework that will shape and chart the course for the Natural Resources Management Program over the next decade. The framework starts with you. The NRM Program will continue to adapt to a changing society, ensure the safety of our workforce and the public, build a diverse team that is capable of facing the challenges of today, and forge solutions that will last through tomorrow and beyond.

With the ever-increasing demands on our resources and facilities, we need your creativity and innovation to ensure the NRM program remains agile and relevant to the American public. We charge you to explore new ways to tell our story that will gain momentum and long-lasting support well into the future. This is your invitation to bring your passion and pride for our organization and help us foster a program we can all be proud of.

Photo Alicia Palmer

Photo South Atlantic Division

*USACE **promotes** awareness of environmental values and adheres to sound environmental stewardship, protection, compliance and restoration practices in all aspects of cultural and natural resources management.*

*USACE **manages** for safe, long-term public access to, and use of, the natural resources in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local agencies as well as the private sector.*

*USACE **integrates** the management of diverse cultural and natural resource components such as fish, wildlife, forest, wetlands, grasslands, soil, air, and water with the provision of public recreation opportunities.*

This plan encompasses all NRM programs and activities. Its goals and strategic priorities consider economic, social, environmental, financial, and utilization trends as well as examine existing program capabilities and limitations to ensure the plan is adaptable, responsive, and able to be implemented across the NRM program both geographically and functionally.

This national "Call to Action" centers around four strategic goals. Each goal has several objectives and targeted strategies. With your help we can reach our goals over the next 10 years. We need your commitment to advance the Natural Resources Management Program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers into the future.

Are you ready to join us?

Relationship to USACE's Campaign and Strategic Plans

The development of the NRM Strategic Plan considers the goals and objectives of the relevant authorities and ensures alignment between organizational strategic objectives and those of this plan. This plan aligns with the intent of the 2021 USACE Campaign Plan and adopts the framework of strengthening the foundation, achieving the vision, and delivering the program by focusing on ***people***, ***readiness***, ***partnerships***, and ***revolutionizing*** processes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PEOPLE

WORKFORCE

Build and cultivate a world-class team equipped to deliver high quality solutions.

ENHANCE

COMMUNICATION

Effectively communicate the NRM mission to enhance understanding, support, and appreciation of the program by internal and external audiences.

READINESS

RESOURCING

Apply consistently informed decision making practices, adaptive approaches, and efficient use of available resources to deliver a quality Natural Resources Management Program.

PARTNERSHIPS

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Support and deliver innovations that sustain the NRM Program to meet current demands and future challenges.

REVOLUTIONIZE

GOAL A: WORKFORCE

Build and cultivate a world-class team equipped to deliver high quality solutions.

Goal Introduction. The Natural Resources Management Program will strive to recruit and retain outstanding individuals from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds. The program will aim to attract individuals with great ideas and diverse skillsets, along with a passion to deliver high quality solutions for protecting the public and the environment. We are fostering a new, diverse generation of park rangers and natural resources specialists to help position the program for success in the future. These efforts align with the FY21 USACE Campaign Plan which directs a focus on increasing diversity, transforming talent acquisition, optimizing direct hiring authorities, and transforming the USACE workplace.

Objective 1. Recruitment. Hiring individuals from a variety of backgrounds will strengthen our workforce and the agency's ability to meet the expectations of an increasingly diverse population. Enhancing the recruitment process with a focus towards achieving a diverse, motivated workforce including those with previous professional experience, research accomplishments, authored publications, advanced degrees, or professional credentials will improve the program's ability to deliver innovative, high quality solutions to complex challenges. In order to meet this objective, the program will work with Human Resources to develop national guidance to Districts regarding hiring strategies, available authorities with a focus on direct hire opportunities, and job series options for hiring managers so they can effectively and efficiently meet workforce demands.

By partnering with stakeholders, universities, and trade schools we can develop effective recruitment strategies and provide outreach materials that inform high school and post-secondary students about NRM career opportunities. National guidance will consistently articulate the priorities and missions of the agency allowing prospective

Objective & Strategies

1 ***Recruitment.*** Enhance the recruitment of diverse professionals.

- **I** Develop enterprise guidance to Districts regarding the different hiring strategies and various job series available to effectively and efficiently fulfill workforce demands.
- **II** Attract a new generation of natural resources management leaders by recruiting employees with a wide variety of expertise, skills, ideas, and backgrounds. Increase diversity by expanding career-oriented outreach to underrepresented communities and universities.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Complete USACE-wide job aid to clarify educational and professional requirements for 0025 and 0400 series.
- Prioritize and support expanded outreach through job fairs, STEM interaction, and social media opportunities.

Photo USACE

NRM employees to have clear expectations of the scope and nature of the positions available at Civil Works water resources development projects. This in turn will help increase job satisfaction and sustain motivation.

Objective 2. Development. Developing the NRM workforce is key to meeting long term staffing and leadership needs of the organization. This begins by building a well-rounded baseline knowledge of the program and continues by identifying and encouraging developmental opportunities that help to guide employees on a path to achieving both agency and individual goals. Opportunities include re-establishing a career development project delivery team (PDT) that will create a formalized entry level training program and an enhanced career planning guide. This will provide emerging leaders in the NRM community with information to encourage and facilitate mentorship, cross training, rotational assignments, participation on national teams, and professional development.

Photo Patti Williams

In addition to these tools, it will be important to evaluate training needs and professional certification options available to NRM staff in order to provide opportunities for relevant, meaningful training and leadership development across an individual's entire career. This helps to ensure the workforce has the opportunity for continual advancement of technical expertise while also preparing them to be our future leaders.

Photo USACE

Photo USACE

Objective & Strategies

2 ***Development.*** Endorse employee development, advancement, and enrichment.

I Provide employees in the NRM community with tools to facilitate and encourage mentorship, cross training, rotational assignments, participation on national teams, and professional development.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Re-establish the Career Steering Committee to guide the development of NRM employees in achieving career goals.
- Formalize entry level training and enhance career planning.
- Continue national teams and developmental assignments that support national programs and provide opportunities for participation and leadership at the national level.

Photo USACE

Objective 3. Knowledge Management. Effective knowledge management helps to facilitate better informed decisions by sharing best practices and lessons learned from past experiences. Enhancing and modernizing media platforms, such as the NRM Gateway and Knowledge Management Portal, will ensure that the right information gets to the right people in a timely manner to foster internal, intra-agency, and partner collaboration.

Enabling informed decisions improves efficiency and increases the quality of service delivered to the public. This collaboration will bring the power of a large number of people with diverse opinions, and varied experiences together when decisions need to be made. Properly designed and implemented knowledge management platforms will help enable problem-solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning, and allow the program to leverage the value of its intellectual capital through reuse.

Photo Heather Monti

Photo Amber Tilton

Objective & Strategies

3 ***Knowledge Management.*** Connect via knowledge management and foster intra-agency and partner collaboration.

- **I** Increase emphasis on knowledge management by ensuring media platforms are easily updated and relevant.
- **II** Encourage participation in training opportunities offered by state and local governments, universities, partners, and other organizations.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Modernize the NRM Gateway and link it with the USACE Knowledge Management Portal.
- Share good new stories through newsletters and updates across the enterprise.
- Utilize the National NRM Workshop on a 3-year cycle to ensure knowledge transfer and sharing.

Photo USACE

Objective 4. Professional Satisfaction. High employee job satisfaction benefits the agency as it leads to improved productivity, decreased turnover, and reduced job stress. Attracting top talent is essential for long term program success, but we must also nurture the passion employees have for this profession. To encourage professional satisfaction, the NRM program needs to better inform and educate NRM staff on the expectations of other mission responsibilities, such as support to flood risk management, navigation, and hydropower. Having a sound understanding of the full breadth and importance of the multi-disciplinary roles of NRM staff across all business lines is critical and will ensure new and prospective employees are pursuing a career in line with their goals and interests.

Photo USACE

A workforce who is recognized for their accomplishments and maintain a healthy work-life balance will have increased job satisfaction. Exploration of additional or improved incentive programs and opportunities for scheduling flexibilities will be necessary to remain competitive with other agencies and industries. The Ranger Safety survey will continue to be a tool used to identify the priorities and concerns of our workforce. Fostering an environment that cultivates and retains talent will improve employee engagement as well as the public's satisfaction and perception of the agency.

Photo Lucas Burns

Photo USACE

Objective & Strategies

4 ***Professional Satisfaction.*** Encourage excellence.

- **I** Accurately communicate the roles and cross cutting responsibilities of today's USACE Park Ranger and Natural Resources Management Specialist.
- **II** Maintain a motivated, productive workforce by recognizing stellar performers and offering incentives for significant accomplishments.
- **III** Promote a healthy professional and personal balance.
- **IV** Be responsive to key priorities and concerns within the NRM workforce to maintain morale.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Re-evaluate the national NRM awards program to include a formal program at MSC and National level.
- Explore additional or improved incentive programs and opportunities for scheduling flexibilities.
- Issue an annual report based on the park ranger survey with recommendations and actions to address recognized challenges.

GOAL B: COMMUNICATION

Effectively communicate the NRM mission to enhance understanding, support, and appreciation of the program by internal and external audiences.

Goal Introduction. An important component of a successful NRM Program is the ability to communicate the program and its many benefits to a wide range of audiences in a way that is easily understood, captivating, and inspires action. Within the NRM Program, we must enhance our existing communication efforts to be inclusive of all audiences by building a platform containing key messaging, methods, and resources. The three objectives associated with this goal serve as communication strategies that effectively aid our NRM workforce, reach beyond the NRM community of practice within the USACE organization, and involve our diverse cultural and generational audiences.

Objective 1. Communication Messages. Communication messages are a collection of key pieces of information that will effectively help an audience understand our NRM program values and connect with who we are as natural resources land managers. These messages serve to communicate the diverse role of the NRM program and what we do for our agency, public lands, and communities. Through education and involvement, the NRM community can build broad-based support for the efforts that we, and our partners are undertaking.

Objective & Strategies

1 ***Communication Messages.*** Develop communication messages that resonate with target audiences.

I Develop and implement an effective communication plan for the NRM Program that reaches internal and external audiences at multiple levels with a consistent message.

II Encourage Divisions and Districts to incorporate national-level messaging into project-specific communications with local audiences.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Develop national-level NRM program specific messages that highlight the importance of outdoor recreation, public safety, land use management, and the NRM role in protection of project purposes.
- In addition to the recreation status tool, expand the use of UCOP visual online operating tools to communicate performance, visitation, and challenges.
- Revise Title 36 and communicate changes to the public.

Photo Natalie McCormack

One way to achieve this is to develop a communication plan that is easily understood by those who will execute it. Establishing achievable goals, developing adaptable messages and materials, and identifying new techniques and technologies are part of this strategy. Continually evaluating successes, addressing shortfalls, and incorporating necessary changes are also key components in crafting an effective NRM communication plan. There is no one plan that will work for every communication situation; however, understanding the values and needs of different target audiences, we can help to develop an effective communication strategy that will resonate with each audience and result in positive understanding and action.

Objective 2. Communication Products and Methods. Those supporting the NRM program will be able to design and deliver scalable communication products and methods that can be used to reach a wide variety of audiences with consistent messages. Encouraging innovation and utilization of the latest technologies and platforms in social and web-based media, we can enhance communication efforts and allow for a more targeted approach to engaging audiences. Communication efforts must also recognize the need to maintain the use of traditional strategies for those who seek our public lands and recreation areas as a place to take a break from technology and enjoy quiet reflection in nature.

The NRM program has endless opportunities for outreach to involve current and future USACE leaders, stakeholders, communities, elected officials, and partners. We need to capitalize on the events and activities at our field projects and explore new avenues for engagement to deepen the level of understanding and support for the natural resources management mission.

Photo Dawn Kovarik

Objective & Strategies

2 ***Communication Products and Methods.*** Research and develop communication strategies and products that promote the NRM program.

I Explore new avenues and opportunities for outreach and engagement that involve current and future USACE leaders at NRM events or activities.

II Engage stakeholders, elected officials, partners, and local communities, at all levels, to build awareness of the NRM program and achieve win-win opportunities.

Current/Future Action Examples

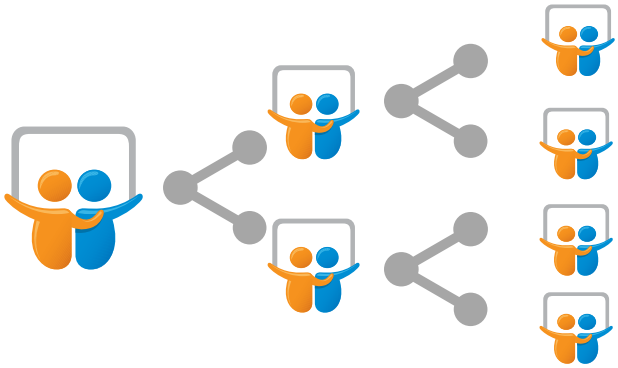
- Design template fact sheets and graphics that include key messaging and objectives.
- Increase use of internet and social media platforms to deliver messaging to target audiences.
- Develop regular national communication with recreation industry stakeholders.

Orange You Glad You Float!

Photo USACE

Objective 3. Communication Tools. Many excellent resources already exist within the NRM community that can be used to effectively communicate our role as managers of our nation's natural resources. Developing new tools and leveraging existing resources will be important to meeting communication goals and reaching diverse audiences.

Sharing resources is equally significant. Utilizing the NRM Gateway portal as a single communication repository ensures accessibility to products, resources, and ideas. These resources must be quickly adaptable and available to a rapidly changing natural and social environment. Across USACE, all projects, districts, divisions, and communities will benefit from sharing strategies and will further the ability to have a successful communication program.



The NRM workforce needs to be equipped and trained with the skills necessary to effectively communicate with all audiences. The development of training materials, standard operating procedures, and standardized templates will aid in consistent communications across the enterprise. Collaborating with all USACE elements serves to streamline processes while ensuring alignment with regulations and policies. Within our NRM community, we need to explore opportunities to communicate with each other more efficiently. Expanding the use of social media and implementing new technologies will facilitate the sharing of ideas and promote availability and accessibility to tools, methods, products, and other resources.

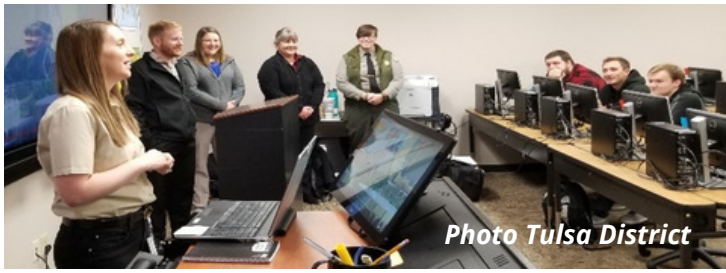


Photo Tulsa District

Objective & Strategies

3 ***Communication Tools.*** Leverage new and available tools to promote the NRM program.

- I Equip employees with the skills and resources to effectively communicate the NRM program.
- II Enhance relationships with local elected officials and congressional members to develop a better understanding of the NRM program.
- III Encourage engagement across districts to share communication strategies, methods, resources, and products.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Create training materials that identify appropriate methods to leverage project site visits and events.
- Develop a single repository for sharing communication products, resources, and ideas.

Photo Becca Nappi

GOAL C: RESOURCING

Apply consistently informed decision-making practices, adaptive approaches, and efficient use of available resources to deliver a quality Natural Resources Management Program.

Goal Introduction. Effective resource planning enables organizations to successfully meet project demands. To improve NRM program resource planning efforts, we need to evolve the information used in decision making and expand available funding procurement methods to ensure that the needs of our projects, public, and stakeholders can be met. It is critical that the implementation of this goal involves agency-wide buy-in and support as the NRM program advances to meet current and future challenges associated with limited funding amidst growing demand for access to federal lands and waters. Successful performance of NRM activities and services protects other missions at the project. The FY21 Campaign Plan emphasizes a focus on the institution of risk-informed decision making, the implementation of alternative financing, and delivering quality projects and programs on time and within budget.

Objective 1. Informed Decision Making. The NRM program is diverse in terms of operational needs as compared to the engineering foundation shared by most of USACE's operational business lines. As a result, we maintain a substantial collection of data that is used at all levels of program and project management. Additionally, there are numerous information systems created by the NRM program, other elements within USACE, and other agencies and organizations that collect valuable data. While communication between the various systems is improving, evaluating the information needs within USACE and the NRM program based on new and available technology can target opportunities to streamline, improve functionality, and create a more holistic information approach that will better align with all USACE.

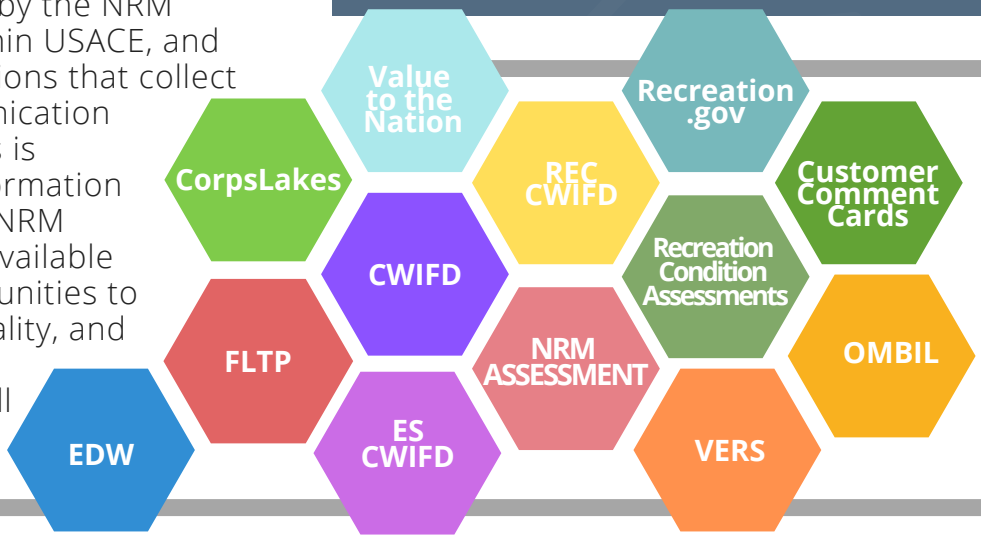
Objective & Strategies

1 ***Informed Decision Making.*** Revolutionize data systems to create a streamlined holistic approach for informed risk-based decisions.

- **I** Improve functionality and interface of data systems to facilitate agile, accurate, and consistent risk informed, data driven decision making practices.
- **II** Refine NRM metrics to articulate the program's alignment with USACE missions.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Incorporate risk inputs into the budget framework for decision making of NRM investments.
- Replace current CW Strategic Plan metrics for Recreation and Environmental Stewardship with metrics that reflect gains in efficiencies and risk reduction.



Objective 2. Adaptive Approaches.
Consistent and successful performance of the NRM mission can help mitigate negative impacts on other business lines operating at a project. Budget processes do not tend to fully capture and consider the role of NRM in the overall health and success of a project. It is critical for our NRM leaders to continue their involvement in USACE funding and incorporate decision-making processes to ensure land use management priorities are considered and met.

USACE's asset management program implements maintenance management, operational condition assessments, operational risk assessments, and portfolio analytics. Integrating asset management approaches within the NRM program will create opportunities for understanding of our mission in a manner more recognizable to other elements within the organization. There are inherent challenges applying traditional risk approaches, life cycle costs, and decision points to NRM program areas such as those involving service. However, our program can seek methods to assess risk and consequences for mission critical activities. This will involve leaning on traditional asset management approaches and exploring industry best practices to integrate proven techniques for service-oriented activities such as water safety, interpretation, and land management.

Photo USACE

Due to the diverse nature of NRM functions, there is a tendency to track work expenditures and outputs at a granular level. Often, these functions can fall across multiple business lines, resulting in inconsistency in charging practices for labor and completed work. Within the NRM program, we can advance the utilization of appropriate charging practices for work that directly supports the successful operation of other business lines. Developing enterprise wide guidance and training, in coordination with other USACE elements, will promote consistent and accurate use of charging practices along with budget development and execution.

2 Objective & Strategies

Adaptive Approaches. Utilize multiple methods to ensure funding decisions are consistently and appropriately applied in a manner that meets the program's identified priorities for land use management.

I. Seek opportunities to actively engage and contribute to budget framework and development processes.

II. Promote the incorporation of asset management principals in the budget process.

III. Advance the utilization of appropriate charging practices for work completed that supports other business lines.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Complete development of S3 (Similar Costs for Similar Activities at Similar Projects) and implement initial results into practice.
- Prioritize NRM Operation Condition Assessments across the enterprise.
- Work across Operations on establishing improved work category policies that improve expenditure tracking in accordance with EIG findings on recreation costs.
- Strive to develop a self-sufficient shoreline management program with a fee structure in which the user covers the cost associated with the private exclusive use.
- Explore sharing costs across business lines that support visitor centers and interpretation of all USACE missions.

Objective 3. Leveraging Opportunities. A diverse program that is responsive to changing demands requires a dynamic set of tools to meet its operational mission. The NRM program has partnering authorities that are unique among USACE, but do not have uniformity with other federal land managing agencies. Our partners are often not aware of the differences among the various land management agencies and expect similar authority for similar activities. Seeking common and expanded authorities across agencies will increase opportunities within the NRM program to partner with other governmental entities and private sector stakeholders in successful operation of our mission.

Internal USACE business practices and principles influence and impact the path taken to achieve a particular mission. Project based and business line budgeting creates restrictions to efficiently execute a successful program. Often, there is potential for cost savings and reduced effort, in certain operational and maintenance activities, where projects are close enough to one another to share equipment, staffing, and contracts. Investigating opportunities to promote regional oversight and sharing of resources may lead to increased efficiencies. To further improve efficiencies with our program, we need to work with other USACE elements for delegated authorities to facilitate faster procurement and approvals. Exploring innovative contracting methods will help to move the program beyond the perspective of "this is how we have always done it" and create new opportunities to revolutionize the NRM program.

Photo Lucas Burns

Objective & Strategies

3 ***Leveraging Opportunities.*** Improve partnering authorities, contracting mechanisms, and regional approaches to gain efficiencies with NRM program resources.

- I Explore opportunities to broaden partnering authorities and prioritize budget packages that utilize partnership contributions for gained efficiencies.
- II Engage with contracting officers to explore and implement alternative contracting processes to ensure timely delivery of services at a fair and reasonable cost.
- III Promote regional oversight and sharing of staff and resources for common activities.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Explore opportunities for changes to legislation that align USACE authorities with those used by other federal land management agencies.
- Develop options for regional contracts and resource sharing across projects.
- Investigate options to expand use and delegation related to warrants and efficient contract practices.

GOAL D: PROGRAM DELIVERY

Support and deliver innovations that sustain the NRM program to meet current demands and future challenges.

Goal Introduction. In today's environment of continually evolving technology and constant inundation of information through social media and news outlets, it is vital that the USACE NRM program embrace and seek out innovations to meet current demands and future challenges. This involves fully utilizing the knowledge of internal and external entities, empowering NRM staff through training and incentives to 'think outside the box' and streamlining processes to efficiently execute the NRM program. The FY21 USACE Campaign Plan supports and encourages aggressive partnering to build and maintain strong, meaningful, and lasting relationships in addition to implementing meaningful innovations for all programs, projects, and processes.

Objective 1. Foster Partnerships & Interdisciplinary Collaboration. Partnerships and collaboration are essential tools that allow USACE to effectively manage recreation and environmental resources. Partnering helps to pool scarce resources, promote coordinated, focused, and consistent mutual efforts to resolve common problems and missions, and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. The challenges to the NRM mission have become increasingly complex: climate change, population growth, shrinking habitats, increasing demand for access, and development pressures require a new way of working with a diverse group of organizations, stakeholders, and individuals.

THE CORPS FOUNDATION
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AMERICA'S LAKES AND WATERWAYS

In order to successfully meet our NRM mission, it is imperative that we collaborate internally with other business lines. Additionally, we need to continue and expand collaboration efforts externally with state and federal governments, Native American tribes, private/public

Objective & Strategies

1 *Foster Partnerships & Interdisciplinary Collaboration.*

Capitalize on opportunities to work with external entities to achieve common goals and advance the NRM USACE mission.

I. Implement practices associated with sharing resources and expertise across business lines and among adjacent agencies.

II. Expand and build on partnerships with agencies, tribes, underrepresented groups, universities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and technology groups.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Open lines of communication by seeking knowledge and expertise from and providing updates to other business lines to identify areas where resources can be shared.
- Collaborate with adjacent federal and state land management agencies for shared invasive species and fire management.
- Seek new authorities to partner with adjacent public lands that allow expenditures of appropriated funds for joint management activities.
- Develop new and update existing partnership agreement templates and share best management practices for increased efficiencies.
- Sustain capability and continue progress on curation consolidation efforts using the Veterans Curation Program (VCP).

organizations, local communities, and other partners to maintain or advance programs from wildlife protection and habitat improvement to recreational facility enhancements.

Partnerships can be formal, with a written agreement, or more often informal with no written agreement in place. All partnerships take time and effort to cultivate and require a foundation of trust to be successful. Being proactive and involved in the local community has led to many partnerships with USACE. A key to successfully and efficiently creating formal partnership agreements is to build relationships and share information internally with District support elements such as Office of Counsel, Resource Management, Contracting, Real Estate, Planning, Public Affairs, Safety, and Operations to develop streamlined processes.

Sharing BMPs, technical knowledge, equipment and resources, and participating in developmental assignments with other USACE projects, as well as federal and state land management agencies, is encouraged when possible. As the use of new technologies increases, it is important for USACE to also explore alternative program delivery methods for outreach to communities with limited access to internet or technological services.

Objective 2. Accelerate Modernization. Employees at all levels must be encouraged to innovate and be empowered to suggest efficiencies and changes. These ideas and suggestions need to be fostered and evolved into practices and tools that can be used throughout the NRM community to enhance the delivery and serviceability of the program.

Our program will need to embrace change despite the unknown and avoid inaction for fear of the unknown. Flexibility and adaptability in program delivery will allow the NRM community to better serve the public in a rapidly changing society.

Leadership support for innovations and modernization is imperative for change to be successful and implemented in a timely manner. This support needs to be present at all levels of leadership, from HQUSACE to field projects, and must include financial support to turn ideas into reality. Investing in the implementation of new technology and training opportunities will lead the NRM program to a contemporary and relevant future.

USACE
VR/AR TEAM

Objective & Strategies

2 ***Accelerate Modernization.*** Empower staff to adopt new and innovative practices and tools that enhance service delivery.

I Facilitate and fund new and inventive approaches in O&M activity delivery.

II Integrate new technology and automation upgrades into NRM business practices.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Complete a transition to cashless fee collections and reinstate and expand fees collection where efficiencies in technology make collection feasible.
- Formalize the Innovations Team under a national program with HQ direction, oversight and prioritization.

Photo Allen Earhart

Coordination across interconnected business lines to provide insight and feedback into the impacts of new technologies will assist in facilitating the 'buy-in' necessary to execute modernization efforts. CIO-G6 and Office of Counsel review will be crucial in guiding any new technologies or automation upgrades to ensure they are within the security, safety, and legal authorities.

The Innovations Team has been leading the way in accelerating modernization, but this team must be formalized to ensure future support and success. In addition to the Innovations Team, individuals are encouraged to suggest, build, and adopt new practices that can be shared across USACE. Curated opportunities for collaboration such as conferences and summits would allow for the rapid development of new tools. Employees who go above and beyond their regular duties to initiate and accelerate modernization should be recognized and rewarded.

Objective 3. Increase Efficiency. In order to increase efficiency, informational tools and operational procedures must be continually reshaped, and employees must be trained to better serve the NRM program and activities. Moving into the future, our program must stay up-to-speed with state-of-the-art technologies, policy, and environmental conditions. For example, geographic information systems (GIS) has become an increasingly important and effective tool for land and resource management. With GIS software changing on a seemingly constant basis USACE must respond accordingly by continually updating and expanding GIS capabilities.

USACE must continue to emphasize modernization of facilities by pursuing technologies that reduce energy consumption. Managing our lakes and rivers in ways that decrease waste disposal costs, manage energy and water usage, and reduce fuel consumption provides cost savings in operating budgets which allows resources to be utilized more efficiently.

Working efficiently means having the ability to accomplish a job with a minimum expenditure of time, effort, and resources, while remaining competent in job performance. Some ways in which USACE can increase efficiency are delegation, training and development, and effective communication. As such, the NRM program must streamline processes and provide the training necessary to delegate authority to the lowest appropriate levels to enable staff to perform their jobs as efficiently as possible. In order to achieve this, NRM position roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and consistent throughout USACE.

Photo Innovations Team

Objective & Strategies

3 ***Increase Efficiency.*** Reshape internal procedures and information tools to better serve the NRM program and activities.

- **I** Expand availability of information tools for use internally and externally.
- **II** Explore ability to streamline processes and provide the training necessary to delegate authority to the lowest appropriate level to enable staff to have the latitude to perform their job as efficiently as possible.
- **III** Pursue opportunities to implement sustainable business practices and costsavings measures.
- **IV** Prepare employees for ever-changing technology to facilitate new and original approaches to NRM.

Current/Future Action Examples

- Expand access to tools such as UCOP for improved access to data and information.
- Receive delegation authority for Civilian Inmate Labor Program from MSC Commanders to District Commanders.
- Receive delegation authority for WRDA 2014 Cooperative Agreements with Indian Tribes from the DCW to MSC and District Commanders.

NEXT STEPS

The Natural Resources Management Strategic Plan offers a roadmap for the next decade of natural resources management within the recreation and environmental stewardship programs. The Recreation and Stewardship Leadership Advisory Teams (Advisory Teams) will lead the way in implementing and monitoring this plan. The involvement of these teams in the development of this plan along with multiple rounds of input from the NRM Community of Practice and stakeholders created a resource that was drawn from to identify some of the example actions included in the plan. These resources and the work of the teams, along with input from HQ leadership, Resource Management, Office of Counsel, Real Estate, and others will generate more ideas that can be developed further to help achieve the long-term goals presented in the NRM Strategic Plan.

The Advisory Teams will develop an initial action plan with updates every two years. This biannual process will include an annual status check and larger accomplishment reports in cycle with action plan updates. This approach will allow the needed flexibility to adapt the strategy and related actions to adjustments in business practices, federal policy, and national initiatives.

Developing metrics will be an important part of the implementation process. Once developed by the Leadership team, these metrics will be used to track progress towards achieving the strategic goals. They will also serve as a dashboard on the status checks and accomplishment reports provided to leadership.

Photo Lucas Burns

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ASACW - Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
BTU/GSF - British Thermal Units per Gross Square Foot
CEQ - Council on Environmental Quality
CIO-G6 - Corporate Information Office G6
CW - Civil Works
CWIFD - Civil Works Integrated Funding Database
DCW - Director of Civil Works
ECC - Environmental Compliance Coordinator
EDW - Enterprise Data Warehouse
EIG - Engineer Inspector General
ER - Engineer Regulation
ES - Environmental Stewardship
ES CWFID - Environmental Stewardship Civil Works Integrated Funding Database
FLMA - Federal Land Management Agencies
FLTP - Federal Lands Transportation Program
GIS - Geographic Information System
HQ - Headquarters
MSC - Major Subordinate Command
NRAP - National Recreation Adjustment Plan
NRM - Natural Resources Management
O&M - Operations and Maintenance
OMB - Office of Management and Budget
PDT - Project Delivery Team
REC CWIFD - Recreation Civil Works Integrated Funding Database
STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
UCOP - USACE Common Operating Picture
USACE - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
VERS - Visitation Estimating and Reporting System
WRDA - Water Resources Development Act

Photo South Atlantic Division