



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**

**Recreation  
Management  
Support Program**

**Draft Study Plan**

**Demographic Trends and Facilities Modernization in  
the Corps of Engineers Recreation Program**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **study plan**

### **statement of need**

The purpose of this document is to present an approach and associated supporting materials to conduct a study under the Recreation Management Support Program (RMSP). The plan was prepared in response to a "Statement of Need" (Appendix A). An evaluation of the statement of need indicated that a study could be feasibly conducted that met the requirements of the statement of need. The proponents for this work are Dr. Mike Loesch (GLORD) and Mr. Phil Turner (SPD) who provided substantial input into the statement of need.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Changing demographic trends affecting COE recreation**

#### **Hispanics surpass Blacks as largest minority group**

#### **Asian economic impact in Pacific coastal states**

#### **White population decreasing from 73% to 64%**

By 2020 one in three Americans will belong to an ethnic or racial minority. America's black population is projected to grow from about 35 million in 1998 to 45 million in 2020, when blacks will comprise 14 percent of the total U.S. population. By 2020 Hispanics (now 11%) will surpass African Americans (now 12%) as America's largest minority group (Frey 1998). The Hispanic American population is projected to grow from nearly 30 million in 1998 to more than 52 million by 2020, when they will account for 16 percent of the total U.S. population. The Asian American population is also growing rapidly and is projected to reach 19.7 million or 6 percent of the total U.S. population by 2020.

Because the Asian population is strongly regionalized it will have a significant impact in California and the other Pacific coastal states. Native Americans are the smallest racial minority, accounting for just 0.9 percent of the total U.S. population. Their population is projected to increase to 3.1 million by 2020, about 1 percent of the total population. Yet their presence will be felt in selected states with relatively high percentages of Native Americans such as Arizona (10.9%), Oklahoma (11.8%), California (13.4 %), and Alaska (15%) (Russell 1998).

At the present time non-Hispanic whites comprise 73% of America's population. However, they are a shrinking share of that population. White Americans, the Corps' traditional recreational customer base, are projected to decrease to 64% of the total U.S. population by 2020 A.D (Russell 1998). While the percentage of whites in the total U.S. population is decreasing it is also important to recognize that by 2020, millions of white middle-class baby-boomers will be at the height of their considerable economic influence. Whites already have the greatest amount of disposable income to spend on recreation. A white "baby-boomer" born in 1950 will be 70, retired, and even more interested in devoting an increased amount of time to

**Convergence of traditional and non-traditional customers**

recreation.

The projected convergence of traditional and non-traditional visitors at lakes operated by the Corps of Engineers will take place in less than twenty years. The most noticeable effects of the projected convergence will be in those regions of the United States which already have large minority populations, e.g., Hispanics in the Southwest and California; African-Americans in the Southeast and in metropolitan areas in the North; Asian-American groups in California and the other Pacific Coast states; and Native Americans in the Northern and Southern Plains and the Pacific Northwest

**Need to interface ethnic research with needed changes in facilities**

Corps of Engineers' lakes throughout the United States are getting old. Many of the Corps dams and associated buildings built before and just after World War II are now old enough to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Recreational facilities constructed thirty, forty, even fifty years ago, are still in use in many parts of the country. The Corps' leadership, including the RMSP's leadership team, has recognized the need to upgrade, modernize, even demolish and rebuild many of these outmoded and obsolete facilities (e.g. Recreation Areas Modernization Program (RAMP)). Now is the time to incorporate the recreational needs and desires of America's more ethnically diverse population into these projected upgrades and new construction projects. At the same time there is clearly a need to improve our customer services to a more ethnically diverse America. One example is the clear need identified in our focus groups and surveys for the proactive recruitment of minority rangers at Corps projects with high minority visitation.

**Customer services to meet a more ethnically diverse America**

**BACKGROUND**

Three major trends reported from the 1990 U.S. Census caught the attention of the Corps' recreation program administrators in the mid-1990's: 1- the projected increases in ethnic minority populations; 2- the large aging population of post WWII "baby-boomers"; 3-the increasing urbanization of the American population. A number of incidents and disturbing anecdotal information coming in from the field in the mid 1990's led the Corps' recreation leadership to focus first on the ethnic minority "problem". The creation of the work unit in 1995 on Ethnic Cultures and Corps Recreation Participation was also a clear response to the 1993 Executive Order 12862: Setting Customer Service Standards, and the 1994 Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations.

**Creation of Ethnic Culture work unit in 1995**

**Factors inhibiting recreation participation by minority groups**

**4 Tech Notes**

**Research corroborates literature review**

**Distinctive recreational styles**

**Hispanics**

**African Americans**

The overall objective of the Ethnic Culture work unit completed in 1999 was to develop baseline information on ethnic minority use and recreation needs associated with Corps projects that could be used by decision makers for project planning and operations. The work unit identified several factors in the Corps' current management and policy that now act to inhibit recreation participation by minority groups e.g. perceived discrimination, lack of preferred facilities, facilities unsuitable for the average ethnic group size, communication problems, etc. For each of the four minority groups which were studied a Tech Note was prepared in which specific recommendations for changes in Corps facilities, services, and policies were made that should help the Corps in the future better serve the needs of its minority customers (see Dunn and Feather 1998; Dunn 1998; Dunn 1999a and 1999b).

In the work unit's final technical report (Dunn and Quebedeaux 1999), primary emphasis was placed on the development of a methodology (focus groups and survey instruments) for future minority recreation data acquisition and evaluation. The report also compared the results of the focus groups and customer surveys performed at five Corps lakes with what was reported in the leisure research literature. Both the 1997/1998 focus groups and the surveys conducted in the spring and summer of 1999 largely corroborated the recreational preferences for these groups identified in the work unit's major literature review (Gramann 1996). Summary descriptions from Dunn and Quebedeaux (1999) of the distinctive recreational styles of the four groups investigated are shown below:

\* *Hispanic Americans* - the large recreational group size, the strong cultural and linguistic traditions, the emphasis on the extended family recreating together, the preference for developed campsites and on-site outdoor cooking, and a moderate interest in water based recreation were strongly confirmed in the focus group and survey results.

\* *African Americans* – the keen interest in active team sports, the strong sense of local community and the concomitant desire to express this in community events, the relative lack of participation in camping and water-based recreation (except for fishing); and the large group sizes of black family reunions where the far-flung family members return to the ancestral South, were all strongly expressed in the focus group and survey results.

**Asian Americans**

\* *Asian Americans* – the heterogeneity of this very diverse group; the differing levels of acculturation of specific ethnic groups; the strong link between subsistence and recreation (fishing and hunting) among the least acculturated Asian groups such as the Hmong; and the relative lack of interest in team sports, outdoor camping, and water based activities such as boating, sailing, and the use of personal water craft were strongly expressed in the focus group and survey results.

**Native Americans**

\* *Native Americans* – the larger recreational group size, the desire for facilities that are more compatible with Indian cultural preferences such as dance arbors, nature trails; better interpretive facilities; a greater emphasis on educational and interpretive programs as part of the overall recreational experience; greater use of facilities during the evening hours; the financial hardship of some groups which prohibits use of Corps fee camping facilities; and a greater amount of perceived discrimination among the least acculturated groups were expressed in all of the six focus groups which were conducted with fifteen Native American tribes in the Tulsa and Omaha Districts in the summer of 1997.

**A first step in intra-ethnic research**

Because of its relatively small scale and sample size, the Ethnic Culture work unit should be regarded as only a first step. Intra-ethnic research among America's ethnic minority groups needs to continue, especially among the two largest groups, African- and Hispanic-Americans, who will have the greatest future economic impact on the Corps recreation program. But research is also needed on the inter-ethnic aspects of recreational behavior.

**Need for inter-ethnic research**

Recreational behaviors should be studied which involve the interaction of different ethnic groups (e.g. between blacks and whites, or between Hispanics and Asians, etc), particularly when those groups are at vastly different socioeconomic levels

**PROBLEM**

How can the Corps of Engineers' best serve the traditional white middle-class customer and the non-traditional ethnic minority user? How do we rehabilitate our aging infrastructure to meet the needs of all our customers? How do we prevent recreation use conflicts between our traditional (white middle-class) customers and the ever-increasing number of minority visitors? This complex problem can be subdivided into four main components as shown below:

**Serving traditional and nontraditional customers**

\*An aging infrastructure and outdated recreational facilities that

**Rehabilitation of aging recreational infrastructure**

do not adequately meet the needs of non-traditional minority customers with distinctive recreation styles or the sophisticated needs of affluent traditional white customers

**Perceived non-responsiveness to Executive Orders**

\* Corps services and programs that are not fully responsive to Executive Orders 12862 (Setting Customer Service Standards) and 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) (based on input from focus groups and survey responses from minority customers)

**Communication and management problems**

\*Communication and management problems with many ethnic minority groups (clear need for Corps improvement identified in the Ethnic Culture work unit);

**Potential use conflicts**

\*Potential use conflicts between traditional and non-traditional customers at many Corps lakes (e.g. high income whites and low income blacks and Hispanics at the same project)

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following are the primary questions to be addressed in this study:

1-Where we are (current visitation) and where we going (projected trends) in providing services to ethnic minorities? To answer these questions requires detailed knowledge of current regional differences and projected trends for these regions;

2-How do we cope as a Federal land-managing agency with the communication problems we now have with Hispanics and the diverse Asian groups visiting our projects? How do we develop specific proactive approaches in training and recruitment of Corps minority personnel?;

3-How do we rehabilitate the Corps aging recreational infrastructure to best meet the needs of an ethnically diverse visitor population? What are the types of “universal” facilities that appeal to traditional and non-traditional visitors alike e.g., children’s playgrounds, sports facilities, water-based recreation, community facilities for community activities etc?.

4-What are the types of “special” facilities that appeal to each of the four major ethnic minority groups (Native-, African-, Asian-, and Hispanic) e.g. Native American dance arbors and facilities for cultural interpretation, larger shelters with cooking facilities for

large extended Hispanic and African-American families, fishing piers and interpretive facilities for Asian-Americans, sports facilities for African-American youth, etc?

5-What are the facilities that will most appeal to the Corps' traditional white visitor population as the baby-boomer generation achieves economic prominence and moves into retirement age, e.g., campgrounds for RV's, marinas, special facilities for personal watercraft?

6-What constitutes the best mix of "special" and "universal" facilities for COE projects in different regions of the U.S? How can we design and build public use areas that work for an ethnically diverse group of visitors?

7-What changes in the COE infrastructure and policy will be needed in the future to operationalize our new knowledge into policies, designs, schedules, and budgets? How do we develop clear operational guidelines for Corps project managers and meaningful recommendations for Corps policy makers?

## **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

**Identify and communicate ways to build and operate facilities for an ethnically diverse America**

The purpose of this proposed research effort is to identify and communicate ways to build and operate Corps recreational facilities that work well in the face of an increasingly ethnically diverse customer base. Research products will support the efforts of CE project managers and the RMSP to reshape the Corps' recreation program to address the diverse needs of minority and non-minority customers. In addition, the proposed research and its products will assist other Federal and state agencies in their own attempts to meet America's ethnic diversity challenge.

The study will achieve the following objectives:

\* Provide practical information to support CE managers in their short-term and long-term planning for the modification of existing facilities, the design of new or upgraded recreational facilities, and the operation and management of existing CE recreational facilities,

\* Identify specific regional demographic trends and their projected socioeconomic impacts to the Corps' national recreational program;

\* Identify specific recreational needs and preferences for each of the four minority groups studied by the U.S. Bureau of the Census

(e.g. African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans)

\*Identify approaches to improve relations between minority and non-minority customers and ways to improve communications between Corps personnel and their minority customers'

\* Identify what constitutes the best mix of "special" and "universal" facilities for COE projects in different regions of the U.S: how to design parks that work for an ethnically diverse group of visitors;

\* Identify and analyze existing Corps projects which have successfully coped with the needs of traditional and non-traditional users, identify those factors that make certain projects (or parks) so successful, i.e. appeal to the white majority population as well as mostly urban minority visitors

## **GENERAL APPROACH**

The following general approach will be used to accomplish the stated objectives:

### **Team approach**

\* Team approach including ERDC researchers, advisory committee members from academia and recreation professionals from the Corps and other agencies, and the RMSP leadership team;

\* Semi-annual review of progress in accomplishing study tasks;

### **Empirical approach using demonstration projects**

\* Empirical approach to proposed research using demonstration projects throughout the U.S. to test current theories about intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic recreational behavior;

### **Pre- and post- implementation monitoring**

\* Pre- and post- implementation monitoring at the selected demonstration projects; intensive analysis of monitoring results prior to preparation of final recommendations, technical reports, and proposed training course;

### **Active pursuit of leveraging opportunities**

\* Active pursuit of leveraging opportunities for this research both within and outside the Corps of Engineers;

**STUDY TASKS**

**Regional demographic trends**

**Identify facility modernization success stories**

**Desired customer improvements**

**Selection criteria for three demonstration projects**

**ERDC workshop**

**Interim report/article**

**Internal and external audience**

**TASK 1 (Year 1)**

\*Identify regional demographic trends and their specific impacts on COE projects (literature review; interface with current Corps work unit on National Recreation Trends);

\*Contact recreation professionals in academia, government, and private industry with first-hand experience in designing and modernizing recreation facilities for minority groups; compile a list of those facilities, projects, and programs that have actually been built or implemented and determine what features make them successful; visit and analyze a representative sample of these successful projects;

\* Identify desired customer improvements for all customer groups (whites and minority groups). This effort will build on survey data obtained in previous Ethnic Culture research work unit and also utilize data obtained from the current National Recreation Trends work unit. We will also conduct focus groups with white groups to supplement data obtained from previous ethnic minority focus groups;

\* Work with Advisory Committee to Develop Selection Criteria for Demonstration Projects; select Demonstration Projects (3) in Different Regions of the CONUS where the following ethnic groups predominate: Hispanic American (1), African American (1), and Asian American (1)

**TASK 1 PRODUCTS**

\* Workshop at ERDC on Demographic Trends in Recreation

\*Interim Technical Report

\*Journal Article

**TARGET AUDIENCE**

\*RMSP Leadership Team

\*Corps Project Managers

\*Recreation Professionals

**Recommendations for facilities modifications and service innovations**

**Pre-implementation monitoring to establish baseline**

**Interim report on monitoring efforts and facilities modifications**

**Corps audience for task 2 products**

**Complete post-implementation monitoring and analysis**

**Final technical report and journal articles**

## **TASK 2 (Year 2)**

\* Provide Specific Recommendations to Participating Districts for Modifications, Redesign, and Modernization of Facilities at Selected Demonstration Projects

\* Recommend Service and Policy Changes at These Projects to Participating Corps Districts and Divisions

\* Begin Pre-Implementation Monitoring using University researchers and support personnel (e.g. Texas A&M, Oklahoma State, Penn State, Michigan State, Clemson Universities, etc)

\* Conduct Monitoring During and After Implementation Phase

## **TASK 2 PRODUCTS**

\*Design and Facilities Upgrade Recommendations

\*Service and Policy Changes Recommendations

\*Interim Report on Monitoring Efforts

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

\*Corps Project Managers

\*Operations Divisions Administrators

## **TASK 3 (Year 3)**

\* Completion of Post-Implementation Monitoring by University researchers and ERDC team members

\* Compilation and Analysis of Monitoring Results at Demonstration Projects by joint team of University and ERDC researchers

\* Preparation of Technical Report and Journal Article(s)

\* ERDC Training Course for COE Operations Personnel at One

**Training course at one or more demonstration projects**

or More of the Demonstration Projects

**TASK 3 PRODUCTS**

- \* Technical Report
- \* Journal Articles
- \* Training Course

**TARGET AUDIENCE**

**Wide audience for task 3 products**

- \* USACE Operations Personnel
- \*Other Federal and State Land Managers
- \*Leisure Science Professionals
- \*Other Social Scientists

**TECHNOLOGY TRANSITION**

- \*Tasks 1 and 2 products published in electronic version except for journal article
- \*Task 3 products published on Internet and hard copy

**LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES**

**RAMP**

Revitalization of the Corps of Engineers-managed recreation areas has been identified as a priority by the Chief of Engineers. The purpose of the Recreation Areas Modernization Program (RAMP) is to meet the needs of recreation users at Corps managed recreation areas, by improving facility functionality and protecting the natural resources that draw people to our lakes and recreation areas. Mr. Darrel Lewis, Chief of the COE Natural Resources Management Program, has indicated that future modernization efforts must include meeting the needs of the various ethnic groups that make up America's diverse population. In the fall of 1999, Corps project managers were asked to submit modernization proposals in FY 200. Seventeen of the proposals were selected for priority funding in FY 2001 for recreation modernization. The President's FY2001 Budget included \$27,000,000 for the Construction General account to support the modernization of Corps of Engineers managed recreation areas.

This was to be the first year of a five-year \$330,000,000 program to modernize about 225 Corps managed recreation areas. Unfortunately, the House and Senate chose not to include funding for the RAMP program in the FY 2001 appropriation because it is a new start. No new starts included in the Committee Recommendations for the Corps. The 17 areas selected for FY2000 are at the top of the list for whenever initial funding is provided. Eight additional priority projects were selected for FY 2002 funding.

**USAED, TULSA**

ERDC is presently conducting a market study of facilities supply and visitor demand for outdoor recreation on water resources development projects in the Tulsa District. It will address the adequacy of recreation facilities on CE projects to meet current and future demand for outdoor recreation and the resulting need for rehabilitation and/or modernization of existing recreation facilities. The goal of the study is to work with the Tulsa District to develop a process for determining the best future recreation investment opportunities. It also seeks to develop information resources needed to implement the evaluation process in the Tulsa District and assist the Tulsa District with the evaluation of recreation facility needs. This study is projected to run from FY00 through FY01 and be completed in FY02.

**STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ETHNIC MINORITY RECREATIONAL USE**

ERDC is presently conducting a study for HQUSACE using as principal contractor the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Sciences, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station of the Texas A&M University System. The study consists of nine tasks divided into two parts. Tasks 1-4 describe an assessment of geographical and temporal patterns of recreation use of Corps projects by racial/ethnic groups across the United States. Tasks 5-9 describe outreach activities to identify methods for improving service to current and potential ethnic minority tasks. Part 1 (Geographical and Temporal Patterns of Minority Recreation on Corps Projects) will be completed during FY00 and FY01 with a comprehensive reports on tasks 1-4 due by September 30, 2001. Part 2 (Outreach Activities) will be conducted during FY01 with a final report on Tasks 5-9 due by September 30, 2001 and draft research articles as appropriate by December 30, 2001.

**FEDERAL LAKES**

Major General Van Winkle serves as the Co-Chair of the Federal Lakes Recreation Leadership Council, an eight-agency group that

**DEMONSTRATIO  
COUNCIL**

was formed in the fall of 1999 to review and implement appropriate recommendations of the President's National Recreation Lakes Study Commission. The Council is implementing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed on 27 October 1999 by establishing pilot lake demonstrations to show how recreation opportunities at federal lakes can be enhanced. The Charter for the Council states that the agencies will work with other interested stakeholders to "develop and implement a series of processes and actions that will provide an environment for success to enhance recreation opportunities at federal lakes that will better serve the public, protect the resources, and create a healthier social and economic environment." The Corps will participate in this effort since it offers opportunities to improve services to our customers. The Corps' leadership has placed primary emphasis on collaborative efforts between federal, state, and local governments, and the private sector to plan for, develop and operated the recreation facilities and services at Corps projects. The Corps of Engineers plans to submit 10-12 nominations for Council consideration as part of the Federal Lakes Recreation Demonstration Laboratory.

**FOREST  
SERVICE  
PROGRAM ON  
ETHNIC  
RESEARCH**

Of the major Federal recreation resources management agencies, only the USDA Forest Service has an institutionalized research focus that explicitly addresses management and social science issues pertaining to ethnicity, race, and outdoor recreation. It has conducted ethnicity research on forest recreation in three regions of the United States: California, Illinois, and Georgia. Much of the research in California has investigated the environmental values and perceptions of Anglo vs. Hispanic Americans through personal interviews of recreation areas and regional household surveys. In Illinois the Forest Service has focused on the recreation behavior and environmental perceptions of racial and ethnic minorities in urban settings. The work unit in Georgia has emphasized national studies of recreation customers and the projected demand for outdoor recreation. Racial data was usually collected in the Forest Service surveys conducted for this work unit.

**CONCLUSIONS**

An approach has been presented here which fully responds to the "Statement of Need". To successfully implement the plan of study there is first a clear need for an integrated team approach which includes ERDC researchers, advisory committee members taken from academia, from the Corps and other federal agencies, and the RMSPP committee members. Second, to successfully

complete the stated objectives leveraging opportunities both within and outside the Corps should be actively pursued (e.g. RAMP, the U.S. Forest Service and others).

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## APPENDIX A

### STATEMENT OF NEED

#### **TITLE: Accommodating Traditional and Non-Traditional Customers at Corps of Engineers Operating Projects**

##### **Current Situation**

Three major trends reported from the 1990 U.S. Census caught the attention of the Corps' Recreation Research Program administrators in the mid-1990's: 1- the projected increases in ethnic minority populations; 2- the large aging population of post WWII "baby-boomers"; 3-the increasing urbanization of the American population. A number of incidents, serious problems, and disturbing anecdotal information coming in from the field in the early 90's led the Corps' decision makers to focus first on the ethnic minority "problem". The creation of the work unit on Ethnic Cultures and Corps Recreation Participation was also a clear response to the 1993 Executive Order 12862: Setting Customer Service Standards, and the 1994 Executive Order 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations. The overall objective of the Ethnic Culture work unit was to develop baseline information on ethnic minority use and recreation needs associated with Corps projects that could be used by decision makers for project planning and operations.

Since its creation in FY95 the Ethnic Culture work unit has utilized an extensive literature review (Gramann 1996), interviews with Corps project personnel and visitors, focus groups, and user surveys to identify and describe distinctively different recreation styles for the following four minority groups: Native-Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanic-Americans. One initial finding of the literature review, which has been substantiated through subsequent fieldwork, is that the process of cultural assimilation or "acculturation" may modify the recreation style of ethnic minority groups but it does not eradicate their recreational stylistic differences. The reason is that recreation, unlike activities directly tied to economic survival, is an "expressive behavior" that preserves and transmits core cultural values of the ethnic group. So long as their culture remains intact the core values will be preserved and expressed in certain expressive behaviors such as recreation.

The work unit has identified several factors in the Corps' current management and policy that now act to inhibit recreation participation by minority groups e.g. perceived discrimination, facilities unsuitable for the average ethnic group size, communication problems, and numerous others. For each of the four groups which have been studied a Tech Note has been prepared in which recommendations for changes in Corps facilities, services, and policies have been made that should help the Corps in the future better serve the needs of its minority customers. Significant amounts of information developed by the Ethnic Culture work unit can be used for future Corps

decisions on facilities upgrades and operational changes. One example is the clear need for the proactive recruitment of minority rangers at Corps projects with high minority visitation.

By 2020 one in three Americans will belong to an ethnic or racial minority (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1994). By 2020 Hispanics (now 11%) will surpass African-Americans (now 12%) as America's largest minority group (Frey 1998). By 2020, white middle-class baby-boomers will also be at the height of their economic influence. A white "baby-boomer" born in 1950 will be 70, retired, interested in devoting an increased amount of time to recreation and have the disposable income to indulge in these pursuits. For the Corps of Engineers and its 456 operational projects the projected convergence of two very different segments of the American population will be here in a time span of about twenty years.

### **Why Current Situation is a Problem**

Traditionally, the Corps has designed its recreational facilities with a specific customer base in mind, white middle-class nuclear families. This traditional customer base will continue to exert a powerful economic influence as baby-boomers reach their peak earning years and then begin to retire in greater and greater numbers. This large population of white middle-class baby-boomers and their families require recreational facilities for their relatively affluent recreational interests, e.g., camping with recreational vehicles, the increasing use of personal water craft, sailing and power boats, and the Corps should continue to accommodate their needs. Yet, Corps of Engineers projects must serve all the American public. They cannot and should not cater to any one age group or ethnic/racial group.

Ethnic minority groups in the United States are strongly regionalized and urbanized (with the exception of Native Americans) and these trends are projected to continue. Urban minority visitors to Corps of Engineers projects can have very different needs and expectations than the Corps' traditional customers. Ethnic minority visitors to Corps projects are coming in ever-greater contact with white middle-class baby-boomers with different recreational habits and preferences. This trend is projected to increase as more baby-boomers begin to retire and the minority populations continue to increase.

The growing number of minority visitors coming from urban areas require facilities to accommodate their distinctive recreational styles and the Corps of Engineers, a federal agency with a heavy investment in recreation, has been directed by two Executive Orders to accommodate their needs as well. The problem, stated succinctly, is this: How do we accommodate both the traditional and the non-traditional user? How do we rehabilitate our aging infrastructure to meet the needs of our minority customers? How do we resolve, or better still, prevent recreation use conflicts between our traditional (white middle-class) customers and the ever-increasing number of minority visitors? How can the Corps be "all things to all people?"

## **Extent, Frequency, and Immediacy of the Problem**

Many Corps of Engineers projects have already begun to encounter difficulties in accommodating ethnic minority customers. This is the reason the Ethnic Culture work unit was created in the mid-1990s. Certain rural regions of the northern U.S. still have a mostly white visitation. Corps projects there will be primarily coping with the increasing demands of the white middle-class baby-boomer population. But Corps projects near major metropolitan areas in the SE and SW United States, in California, and large metropolitan areas of the Northern U.S. already have difficulties coping with the growing numbers of minorities with different recreational needs. Some of these difficulties have been documented in the four Tech Notes prepared by the Ethnic Culture work unit.

The most noticeable effects of the projected convergence and anticipated conflict between traditional and non-traditional users will be in those regions of the United States which currently have large minority populations, e.g., Hispanics in the Southwest and California; African-Americans in the Southeast and in metropolitan areas in the North; Asian-American groups in California and the other Pacific Coast states; and Native Americans in the Northern and Southern Plains and the Pacific Northwest

## **Capability Required to Solve the Problem**

The Ethnic Culture work unit has been a broad-brush investigation of four ethnic minority groups. It is only a first step. Such “intra-ethnic” research needs to continue, especially among the two largest minority groups, African- and Hispanic-Americans, who will have the greatest future impact on the Corps recreation program. In addition, research is needed on the “inter-ethnic” aspects of recreational behavior involving the interaction of different ethnic groups (e.g. between blacks and whites), particularly when those groups are at vastly different socioeconomic levels. Research work units are needed to undertake the following investigations:

- 1) Investigate urban source visitation to Corps projects by traditional and non-traditional users; provide a rigorous statistical analysis of the current and projected trends for minority recreation; investigate the rate of projected recreational growth among minorities for the major regions of the U.S. with high percentages of minorities; identify and develop census data on a county by county basis in those areas;
- 2) Identify more precisely desired customer services; conduct demand analyses for each major ethnic minority group (e.g. African- and Hispanic-Americans); identify infrastructural improvements that would benefit minority recreation;
- 3) Investigate in greater detail how major COE programs in water safety, interpretation, etc., could be improved to benefit ethnic minority visitors while continuing to serve the

needs of its traditional customer base;

4) Determine through fieldwork and published case studies how best to cope with serious communication problems that currently exist in regions of the U.S. with minority populations, e.g., numerous Asian languages and an increasing number of Hispanics visiting COE projects;

5) Conduct additional data acquisition on recreational habits and preferences of the least studied minority groups, e.g., highly diverse Asian groups, and low-income African-Americans;

6) Identify and analyze existing Corps projects which have successfully coped with the needs of traditional and non-traditional users, identify those factors that make certain projects (or parks) so successful, i.e. appeal to the aging white majority population as well as urban minority visitors, e.g. the redesign of Comal Park at Canyon Lake, Texas.

7) Identify institutional policy and process changes the Corps will need to make in order to successfully meet the needs of traditional and non-traditional users during the first 30 years of the 21st century.

### **Future Desired Situation Following Implementation of Research Recommendations**

Highly focused research will be needed to acquire the knowledge of how to solve the “ethnic diversity problem” or, more accurately put, prevent the development of a major problem. Research conducted under the sponsorship of the Recreation Management Support Program can put the Corps of Engineers in the forefront of federal land managing agencies adapting to the growing ethnic and racial diversity that will be America in the 21st century. The types of knowledge we will require to accomplish this include the following:

\*Knowledge of where we are (current visitation) and where we going (projected trends) in providing services to ethnic minorities; specific knowledge of current regional differences and projected trends for these regions;

\*Knowledge of how to cope with the communication problems we now have with Hispanics and the diverse Asian groups; identify specific proactive approaches in training and recruitment of Corps personnel;

\*Knowledge of how to rehabilitate the Corps aging recreational infrastructure to best meet the needs of an ethnically diverse visitor population; identify the types of “universal” facilities that appeal to traditional and non-traditional visitors alike e.g., children’s playgrounds, sports facilities, water-based recreation, community facilities for community activities etc.;

\*Knowledge of the types of “special” facilities that appeal to each of the four major ethnic minority groups (Native-, African-, Asian-, and Hispanic) e.g. Native American dance arbors and facilities for cultural interpretation, larger shelters with cooking facilities for large extended Hispanic and African-American families, fishing piers and interpretive facilities for Asian-Americans, sports facilities for African-American youth;

\*Knowledge of the facilities that will most appeal to the traditional Corps visitor population as the baby-boomer generation achieves economic prominence and moves into retirement age, e.g., campgrounds for RV’s, marinas, special facilities for personal watercraft, etc;

\*Knowledge of what constitutes the best mix of “special” and “universal” facilities for COE projects in different regions of the U.S., e.g., what works in rural Alabama may not work in urban California; how to design parks that work for an ethnically diverse group of visitors;

\*Knowledge of the changes in the COE infrastructure and policy that will be needed in the future; how to operationalize this knowledge into policies, designs, schedules, and budgets; the development of operational guidelines for Corps project managers and the preparation of specific recommendations for Corps policy makers.

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**APPENDIX B**  
**LIST OF TASKS/ACTIVITIES**

<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>
<b>1. IDENTIFY TRENDS AND DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS</b>				
a. Review Demographic Data	Utilize data from Trends work unit; Woods & Poole demographic projections			
b. Identify Desired Customer Improvements For All Customer Groups	conduct four focus groups with whites; utilize minority survey and focus group data from Ethnic Cultures work unit; utilize data from Trends work unit nationwide Project Managers survey; utilize RAMP survey data at ERDC			
c. Organize ERDC Workshop on Ethnic Recreational Trends; Formulate Selection Criteria for Task 2 Demonstration Projects	ERDC Team; recreation professionals and university researchers  ERDC Team and Advisory Committee			
d. Select Demonstration Projects (2-3) in Different Regions of the CONUS;	ERDC Team and RMSPLeadership			
e. Prepare Interim Technical Report and Journal Article	ERDC Team			
<b>2. FORMULATE RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENT MONITORING AT DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS</b>				
a. Provide Specific Recommendations to Participating Projects and Districts for Modifications to Facilities at Demonstration Projects			ERDC team	
b. Provide Recommendations for Service and Policy Changes at Demonstration Projects			ERDC Team	
c. Begin Pre-Implementation Monitoring at The Demonstration Projects			USDA contracts with land-grant universities;	
d. Conduct Monitoring During and After Implementation Phase;			ERDC oversight of university researchers; site visits and small surveys	

e. Prepare Interim Report on Monitoring Efforts

ERDC team prepares report

**3. ANALYZE AND REPORT RESULTS OF RESEARCH**

a. Complete Post-implementation Monitoring

ERDC oversight of university Researchers; final site visits and surveys

b. Compile and Analyze Monitoring Results at All Demonstration Projects;

ERDC team performs analysis; Meetings with university researchers

c. Prepare Technical Report

ERDC team

d.. Prepare Journal Article(s)

ERDC team

e. Conduct Training Course for COE Operations Personnel at One or More of the Demonstration Projects

ERDC team

## **APPENDIX C**

### **CURRENT AND POTENTIAL PROGRAM PARTNERS**

#### **Recreation Areas Modernization Program**

**U.S. Army Engineer District, Tulsa**

**Federal Lakes Recreation Demonstration Council**

**U.S.D.A. Forest Service Program on Ethnic Recreational Trends**

**Texas A&M University's Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism**

**Oklahoma State University (Dr. Lowell Caneday)**

**Pennsylvania State University**

**Clemson University**