

**Recreation Leadership Advisory Team
Winter Meeting – Washington, DC
31 Jan – 2 Feb 2005**

Day 1 –

Welcome - Brad Myers (chair)

2 new RLAT members – Keith Chasteen (Louisville), Greg Webb (SWD, replacing Dan Bentley), plus Kent Dunlap (Tulsa on 6-month assignment). Bob Hanacek is currently serving in Iraq. Doug McMichael (MVD) could not attend. Reminder that we will be electing a new chair during the meeting.

HQ Report – Judy Rice See PPT

FY 06 Budget – Recreation Program will receive \$268 M which is a great accomplishment. \$800K was provided for accessibility improvements per direction from ASA Woodley. OMB directed \$1M for Lewis & Clark improvements. Great use was made of the RecBEST spreadsheet analysis capability to provide rapid responses and provide credibility. \$2M was included in remaining items for RMSP and for Lewis & Clark coordination.

PART – Provided a handout of the complete PART report from OMB and a summary page to attendees. Our score of 73% reflects a “moderately effective” program. Having a good PART score reflects favorably in budget review proceedings.

Lake Improvement Districts – OMB is interested in this concept that would essentially create a taxing authority around the lake to collect funds. The Corps is concerned about the notion of lake managers being “apostles” for receiving funds from the local community to support the lake. The initial language was modified to indicate that the Corps will investigate this concept.

05 Modernization Effort – This program also involves Debra Stokes and seeks innovative ways to encourage partnerships (6 designated projects). Initial funding was an add-on, but this will be competitive in the future. We want to encourage public-private partnerships and add language to use and retain fees.

Fees – The Administration submitted a proposal to Congress to authorize entrance fees and to keep everything over \$37M in collections. The proposal also would allow the Corps to retain the 25% of real estate receipts that currently go to the general treasury. The draft Water Resources Development Act has a different fee proposal which would authorize entrance fees and would allow the Corps to keep all receipts. The other federal recreation agencies received semi-permanent fee demo authority. This authorization included a provision to replace Golden Age and Golden Access passports in other agencies with a “basic” fee and an “extended” fee. – Implementation details are still being worked out for this conversion.

Joint Costs – Joint costs are still undecided for next year. Brad K noted that Susan Whittington of SAD has been working on an O&M oversight group to connect business lines and the O&M appropriations. They are examining the joint cost issue and will likely recommend that these costs be taken out up front and allowed to occur as they accrue instead of programming for them.

Accessibility Guidelines – The Access Board will publish the final rules that should appear in April or May. All agencies are required to provide cost data (cost if implemented). We are already using the draft guidelines, so our expenses won't be as great.

Facilities & Service Standards – This was final as of 1 Nov 04 and is included on the Corps publications site. A memo is pending for signature by the Director of Civil Works. Mike Miller has agreed to provide technical support for this – national center for questions about the guidelines

OMBIL – Inventory data in OMBIL will be used for conducting cost analysis. The data is getting better, but some projects are still not using the program and need to know how critical this is. Mike Loesch noted that some of the data was corrupted over the holidays (visitation, etc.).

Recreation 1-Stop & NRRS – There was a protest on the contract awarded for NRRS. The new schedule shows implementation in the fall. Hope to go live in Nov.

Competitive Sourcing – Mark Mugler sent an E-mail to another ASA office asking for the status of the park ranger exemption letter. Recreation outsourcing is scheduled for 06. We should be working on our METL's, converting rangers from 025 to 401 now.

Seasonal Camping – Mike Loesch noted that one district is proposing a very liberal policy on this. SAD is having the same problem.

Backlog Maintenance – We need to look at capturing our backlog maintenance items in RecBEST – one for Recreation and one for NRM.

Business Line Manager Roles & Responsibilities – This is not understood. We might need to develop written descriptions or a METL to address this. A PM person in the MSC should not be the business line manager and should not control the associated funding.

Strategic Initiatives:

Healthier US – Don Dunwoody See PPT

We need to encourage the public to use the lakes for recreational activities to promote health. Victoria Parks in Australia has a great program – Healthy Parks, Healthy People that is expanding to all of Australia and covers physical, mental and spiritual well-being - <http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1grants.cfm>. We have permission from them to use excerpts from their Communications Plan.

Recreation Program Performance Improvement Initiative (RPPII) – Judy Rice See PPT and Handout

A refined PMP has been developed. Our budget and the performance initiative are closely linked. Bonnie noted that there is a Park Operational Efficiencies Solutions template on the Gateway. One current submission from Seattle District. RLAT members should encourage submissions (deadline is 1 March 05) to <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/recreation/op-submit.cfm?Topic=SignIn>. We want to capture measurable efficiencies and cost savings.

Task 1 – Evaluate current performance status – tied to Facility & Services Standards. Bonnie Bryson has the lead.

Task 2 – Develop performance metrics (draft metrics in PMP). Bonnie B has the lead.

Task 3 – Tool box of strategies – modernization (Jim Lynch lead), park closures, operational efficiencies, partnerships, optimize NRRS, expanded/creative outgrants. Bonnie B has overall lead.

Task 4 – Target opportunities and select strategies (decision tree) for performance improvement. Lead – Bonnie B. Tasks 3 and 4 would be good for incorporation into Lake Discovery on the Gateway.

Tasks 5/6 (Combine) – Standardized project evaluation document and develop an evaluation process based on it. Lead – Larry B, co-lead – Phil T

Task 7 – Process to determine, quantify and document success of strategies. Lead – TBD We need to calculate the Return on Investment here.

Task 8 – Establish one or more demo projects to pilot test RPPII. Lead – TBD. Do demos prior to wholesale use as per USFS. Cost tracking is essential to this effort. We may need to use resource codes by activity.

Task 9 – Continually review national status of efforts and make adjustments. Lead – RLAT. What the national status report will look like/where we are with implementation and integration.

Change Management Plan – We will review progress (maybe Ops Chiefs meetings as milestones). Each task leader will prepare an action plan and deliver a product to the RLAT at the summer 05 meeting. Action plan should be ready by 1 March.

Modernization – Jim Lynch. Provided 2 draft handouts – checklist and 2-page overview. Jim requested comments on the drafts so that a request for proposals can go out. 2-page submittal document by project (great idea and resulting benefits).

LRD Business Program Assessment & Strategic Plan/Recreation BLAST Effort – **Mike Loesch** Conducted an assessment for his Regional Business Center on the recreation program. Found a lot of range in facility condition index. NAD had highest FCI at 4.25, LRD second with average of 4.13, low was SWD with 3.46. Corps average was 3.78. Level of service across Corps ranged from LRD lowest at 27.72 and NAD was high at 33.14. Looked at cost per visit at facility. Corps ranged from 2.92 in 2001 to 2.14 in 2003.

Overview of RMSP Activities

Customer Comment Card – **Dick Kasul** 2 comment card handouts, handout of PPT. – New comment card, methodology, sampling scheduler and training being developed.

VERS Reporting Module – **Sammy Franco**

WebVERS is currently on a PMCL server and will be moved to ERDC server. Installed MSC's/Districts - MVD has St Paul, Rock Island, St Louis, Vicksburg and New Orleans. Includes 2000 thru 2004.

VERS Modernization – **Dick Kasul, Wen Chang**

Handout of PPT. Want to modernize developed recreation areas first. Then dispersed recreation areas and beyond. Spoke about work done in 2004 with White River Lakes Visitation Surveys – Table Rock, Bull Shoals, and Norfolk lakes. They were interested in lake-wide surveys versus project-based, but still allowed us to refine some tools. Meter locations are critical. This has to be evaluated again. Envision having a set of tools on the Gateway to do this. Need one project to help with development this spring. Pilot data collections this fall. Then, need one project per MSC to test entire process meter assessments – winter/spring 2006, survey planning exercises in spring/summer 06, surveys in summer 06.

Day 2

Communications – **Julie Marcy** See PPT. Provided an overview of communications efforts. 4 regional brochures and national camping brochure art has been finalized. Obtaining prices now. ISOP workshop last August was a great success and there are new, updated ISOP pages on the Gateway at: <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/interpretive/interpretive.html>. Pilot Team WET schools project in Galveston District. Julie will be assisting with the Visitation Estimation project in developing and refining training modules.

NRM Gateway – **Bonnie Bryson**. See PPT. Several new pages on the Gateway (ISOP, Trails, other Ops COPs). Will have a Gateway booth at the NRM conference. Proposed 2005 items include another Lake Discovery content development workshop, continued work with Ops COPs, workshop with OM's, and user surveys by Michigan State and Sacramento district.

Other RMSP Work Items – **Scott Jackson**. See **Scott's handout**. Need a formal communications plan for the Gateway. Recreation 1-Stop database is supposed to

provide standardized information on federal projects to agencies like Triple A, etc. SE Regional folks like aspect of highlighting the local community instead of just the Corps.

Project WET Pilot – Larry Bogue See PPT.

Galveston District is the pilot. Kristine Brown is Galveston coordinator with CEE partnership with Team Wet schools.

Open Discussion on RMSP

Meters - Need to look at meter recommendations. New technologies like telemetry etc. What is state of the art, what will reduce maintenance and labor?

RPPII – Really need to focus on this and capture the local inventiveness that has been used to overcome budgetary and manpower challenges. Need to gather a critical mass through OM's etc. of best practices, cost efficiencies that include savings in labor, money, etc.

Discussion of Recreation Program Field Issues Roundtable

Brad Myers – Kansas City District hot topic is extended camping at marinas. In Kansas City, State Parks are testing a 30-day camping permit in low use areas.

Jim Lynch, MVD - Have eliminated most long-term camping along the river and want to continue eliminating this. Rock Island – concerned about reprogramming issue between business lines in FY 06. VERS software – FY 07 budget – want new numbers for it. It is online, but no new load factors. MVD – Consolidated overhead rate – will increase Saylorville's labor by \$600,000. Will make some district's rates go way up, others go down. RecBEST – many sections reward new development versus taking care of what we have – such as credit for repaving roads. Warrant authority varies across MSC's – some have \$25,000 and some have \$50,000.

Brad Keshlear, SAD – Division Commander is putting great emphasis on public safety and has issued District goals such as reducing public fatalities in 2 years by 50%. - Have re-energized public safety initiatives. Looking for new ideas to reach Hispanic communities (large Hispanic radio station in Atlanta – rated #2), implementing a marking system to show where public fatalities occurred such as outside of designated swimming areas (working on a floating buoy in a cross-shape that says father of 2, etc. to increase visibility). Jonathan Davis is now the Allatoona OM. Travel is cut by 50% and will only be able to fill 50% of vacancies.

Greg Webb, Fort Worth District – Use fees – Judy working on legislation to allow us to retain more of fee revenue. Need to let field know HQ is working this issue. Need quarterly HQ update. Will also be asking OM's what type of info they need. Partnership program – want help with doing grassroots efforts. Each district could have a partnering ambassador, etc. Awareness of RLAT and RMSP. Found many field folks didn't know what RLAT is.

Larry Bogue, SWD – Grapevine Lake is renovating parks that were substandard and has established short-term leases with cities with idea of divesting them. Spending funds to increase attractiveness for changing leases. Gaylord Resort – interest in building a restaurant row on Corps property. New employee – Gary Earls (formerly in Planning). Closed some small parks in Little Rock last year and received little or no pushback, so pushing more park closings now. Also in the first spiral of pay banding. Hiring 2 new Chiefs of Operations.

Don Dunwoody, NWD – 401 conversions all done in NWD. NWD conference in Fall 05. Ranger annual conference is February in Kansas City. Another conference in March for Seattle in Walla Walla. Will be replacing Tom Peet (GS 13, NRM Program Mgr). Divestitures of Corps areas to others – Omaha District had a Title 6 incident (gave all S. Dakota rec areas to state). Now state wants all wildlife areas and will get legislation to do this. Will leave Corps only with operational lands around the dam. Rangers are being asked to do security work at some projects – stopping vehicles and inspecting them in Seattle. Not getting information to the Chiefs of Ops, etc. about what should and shouldn't be done.

Will Rogers, NAD – Have no NRM person on their Regional Integration Team. NAD getting a new general. Two new SES's on the way, 4-5 15's planning to retire, Need a succinct storytelling program – this is the NRM program, Operations Program like Partnerships CD in order to help tell the story to new faces, etc. General Temple was very impressed with RecBEST. Need to get VTN data updated. Would be nice to have data mining instructions posted somewhere in OMBIL to access reports such as factoring with multiple variables.

Brad Long, SPK – Sacramento starting 401 series changeover (may do in bundles). Budgets and contracts for services – reaching point where contracts are increasing every year for fewer services and won't be able to afford them much longer. Not getting the competition they used to have for host contracts, etc. Now, lucky to get a single bidder. Getting back to where it is more cost effective to use hired labor for this. When receive budget cuts, there isn't much left to cut and contractors can't make a profit. Had success with a waste mgmt contract – utility contract (only 1 garbage collection franchise per county) that already had negotiated prices.

Keith Chasteen, LRL – Have a new branch chief, Ron Waller retired and haven't filled his position. Green River has a big shoreline mgmt. plan update ongoing that involves 3 projects and they are working closely with congressionals. Had some record water levels over last month at several projects.

Phil Turner, SPD – Mainly concerned with budget issues, especially Sacramento. Water safety efforts are continuing in SPD (have a special committee for this, includes Spanish products). Law enforcement contracts could also be lost due to budget cuts as would water safety. Reorganizing for third time in 3 months.

Mike Loesch, LRD – Seasonal camping already discussed. Nashville’s effort from last year is working well, shared lessons learned. Lewis & Clark – have the state of Kentucky planning stuff in FY 07 that could impact Nashville program (they are thinking it will end in FY 06). Will impact LRD and NAD. RecBEST – need to work on facility condition index to make it sensitive to large rec areas that have lots of stuff, day use versus camping needs, etc. Pittsburgh – had a RIF, didn’t put many folks on the street, but folks have been moved around. Getting a new commanding general this week. Have had record pool levels in a number of reservoirs, especially Ohio River.

Recreation Budget – Judy Rice See PPT and 2 handouts.

Started work on the 07 budget in July by doing an After Action Review by Recreation Business Program Team. Reviewed the AAR at the November meeting to categorize and identify actions. Major categories included budget EC, incremental program, performance measures, changes to RecBEST. Draft budget EC is supposed to go out at the end of February. Recreation Program will not budget GI funds in the future. Some budget information may be found at:

<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/rm/index.htm>. RPPII will be referenced in the recreation annex. Tools will include ABS, PRISM, RecBEST, etc. Mike Loesch to work with Brad Keshlear, Brad Myers, Bonnie Bryson, Larry Bogue and Judy on budget support team and to capture backlog. Service levels are a conceptual success with OMB and ASA. The Facility Condition Index needs to be refined so that it provides equal support to large and small areas. It would help to have a worksheet (list of things to consider) for the facility index.

Performance Measures – Stay with original 3. Customer satisfaction may be used for ranking. Cost recovery added to PART (reference in EC, program-wide reporting). It is a project-wide measure and we will have to look at results and distribution to determine how to factor it in. Perhaps program-wide reporting to OMB for this (very different from rating and ranking). What about measuring the park manager’s ability to leverage \$1. Appears to be a disconnect between leveraging dollars and external performance measures – providing service at a lower cost or higher service at the same cost. Some projects afraid they would be decremented because service level was higher due to volunteer effort and would be reduced. They don’t want to be penalized for these good efforts. Will be creating new work item codes and eliminating some old ones.

Brad Keshlear – Budget Support Team – Looking at work category codes, looking at visitor center information.

Larry Bogue – Service Levels – See PPT and 2 handouts. Recommendation is to stay with one matrix for day and camping, but add more definitions. Expanded service matrix – added plumbing, long-term maintenance. May need to weight Class A areas more heavily and possibly remove small day use. OMBIL has categories – access points, day use, etc. Need to pull out recreation sub-type and normalize scores on this. New matrix will have 60 points. Still need to determine what is acceptable. May be able to say acceptable range is 30-39, but target is 35 or whatever. Still have a problem with types of campsites, types of restrooms, age of facilities. – Won’t be able to address this for

upcoming round, but need to for future. Need to look at integrating REMIS into parts of RecBEST.

Bonnie Bryson – Budget Builder Prototype. See PPT and handout (colored) of spreadsheet. Needed a tool to help people build a budget. Brad Myers worked with Bonnie to develop this spreadsheet. Starting point is FY 04 serving 100% of your visitation. Rolls up 100% non-labor costs, 100% hired labor costs, 75% non-labor costs, and 75% hired labor costs. Much of this information would be very useful to RPPII effort. Starts out with by area costs, then goes to by project costs for salaries, etc. After doing 100%, go to 75% (initial budget in RecBEST) calculations.

Wen Chang – RecBEST Modifications – see his PPT. This supports changes discussed by Larry Bogue, Bonnie, Judy, etc. Major changes – review/modify baseline information from last year (will repopulate this); build initial budget package; build increment 2 packages (bring back to 100%) with changes computed against the initial package; build increment 3 packages with changes computed against the baseline information. Projects will be allowed to make changes to baseline info for FCI, service level based on new refinements, but these changes will be tracked and compared against last year. Increment 2 should have only routine O type of packages for service.

New RLAT Chair – New chair will be Brad Long, SPK-CO-O-SF by unanimous vote. Dan Bentley and Dan Kier are departing. There are letters signed by General Riley thanking them for their efforts. – Judy gave the letters to their MSC contact. Judy presented a certificate of appreciation to Brad Myers for his efforts as chair.

RPPI Sign Ups – Had some sign ups. Need folks for some tasks, and need an overall leader. Gave RLAT members 2 weeks to go back and check with their folks to see about filling these spots. The leader would have to attend all meetings, but may or may not be an RLAT member.

Next RLAT Meeting – May try to tie into the NRM Conference for a status check. Consider doing in DC again due to travel budget restrictions at HQ and the MSC's. Looked at first week in August, last week in July as possibles.

Mike White's Visit

The RLAT is the rudder for the Corps recreation program and the work done is very important. It is also critical in terms of providing direction and momentum for the Corps. Deal with managing the national program. RLAT idea was ahead of its time, but now the time is here. RBC's need to interact with this team. He will continue to champion ERDC work in support of this group. Having performance metrics, etc. offer us a difference in the Corps programs. The time you are investing in the RLAT is critical to where the Corps needs to go. Committed to funding strategic initiatives. How others are looking at Recreation Program – Everyone recognizes model in this business line – a good team with contractor support who know what the program is. Have a good business line manager supported by a great team across the Corps. That is the model for success

in business lines. Navigation, Flood, etc. who don't have this approach – team and R&D support – want that.