

**Minutes of the National Sign Advisory Work Group Meeting**  
**HQ USACE, Washington, D.C.**  
**9 & 10 August 2006**

**Attendees:**

Jeffrey Mangum, New England District, North Atlantic Division, Chair  
Adele Braun, National Sign Standards MCX, St. Paul District  
Debra Stokes, Natural Resources Management CoP, HQUSACE Sign Proponent  
Dennis Wallace, Kansas City District, Northwestern Division  
Duane Johnson, Sacramento District, South Pacific Division  
Jack Johnson, Little Rock District, Southwestern Division  
Jack Nichol, Lakes & Rivers Division  
Karl Anderson, Safety Office, HQUSACE  
Kimberly Rea, St. Louis District, Mississippi Valley Division  
Rick Magee, National Sign Program Manager, St. Paul District  
Stephen Logan, Mobile District, South Atlantic Division  
Tim Grundhoffer, National Sign Standards MCX, St. Paul District  
Tracy Gruis, Office of the Chief Counsel, HQUSACE  
Absent: Mike Kidby, Navigation Proponent, HQUSACE

Wednesday, 9 August 2006

**Introduction.**

- The meeting began with each member introducing themselves. New members welcomed are Jack Nichol from LRD, Jack Johnson from SWD, Tracy Gruis from HQ Office of the Chief Counsel, and Rick Magee the new National Sign Program Manager. Also welcome was given to Adele Braun attending from the St. Paul Sign MCX.
- Meeting was held in the 6<sup>th</sup> floor meeting rooms of Headquarters in Washington D.C. The Sign Advisory Work Group is chaired by Jeff Mangum.

**Headquarters Perspective**

Debra Stokes reported on hot sign program issues:

- Manual revision and publication – the revision has been completed and will be published on the Electronic Library as soon as the Chief signs the command message page.
- Litigation – There is a case in NY District involves a Personal Water Craft going over a submerged dam resulting in personal injury. The sign manager at the site did a good job with preparing a sign plan, however the Judge did not rule in favor of the Corps to dismiss the case using the discretionary function exception. A trial is scheduled for sometime this winter.
- Tube Kiting (a.k.a. “Kite Tubing”) –
  - A sub-committee has been developed by Steve Austin to address this issue in HQ.

- The group discussed why we used the “Notice” sign in our example. The statement was made that the Corps does not ban things, but regulates activities. Jack Nichol advised the group that the State of Ohio is very progressive in the water safety arena and has banned/restricted use of “airborne” devices on the water rather than a particular product.
- The group suggested that the posting of this notice would likely be temporary and eventually all signs would be removed. Why? The industry would regulate itself and there would be no need for posting a sign to restrict this activity.
- Information on this, including suggested compliant signs, is on the NRM Gateway, Sign Program, “Good Enough To Share.”
- Karl Anderson suggested that if the device was banned, then likely Title 36 may have to be changed.
- Security Signs – Army guidance on security signs is in conflict with the Corps sign program. Debra advised that the Headquarters Homeland Security Office of the Corps has agreed that our sign program would address this issue appropriately. Related information on this issue can be found on the NRM Gateway at: <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/sign/security.html>
- Signs Standards Compliance– General Riley, Director of Civil Works has requested division commanders report two items by 30 September 2006: the total number of signs and how many are in compliance with sign standards, and the number of Standard ID signs and how many of those are compliant with sign standards.. OMBIL only reports the number of signs at each project and number compliant. It is unlikely that Corps Sign Pro will be ready to answer the question about Standard Identification signs. The group decided to coordinate this data call within their own divisions and report back to the MCX.
- AAA Audit is ongoing on recreation safety. Sign compliance will be a component.
- Debra also reported that we should delete the word “waiver” from our sign vocabulary and replace with “request for non-standard sign.”

### **Improving Work Group Performance**

Jeff Mangum led a discussion of how the team could improve their response time to the field. Some ideas discussed included:

- Using Outlook more effectively
  - Use the “out of office assistant”;
  - If you have no comment, then reply “no comment”;
  - Use a standard subject line – “SIGN ACTION” followed by the issue. For example, “SIGN ACTION – Tornado Sign Request.
- Jeff proposed use of a matrix, similar to that adopted by the Uniform Committee, for recording work group discussions and decisions – a “decision matrix” – this suggestion was adopted and will be worked out between Jeff and Rick.
- Minor changes to the Gateway page stating response times for nonstandard safety sign requests were suggested. One suggestion is to add the statement, “Circumstances may extend the time frame.”

## The New and Improved Sign Manual

- Jeff reported on the revisions to the Sign Standards Manual. The manual has been extensively revised. There are new signs, corrected information, a few signs deleted, and revised text to reflect changes made in the program over the past several years. Most of the changes are listed in the Addendum to the Minutes, Sign Manual Revision Highlights
- The manual will not be printed, but will be available digitally at the following location: <http://www.usace.army.mil/publications/eng-pamphlets/cecw.htm>. There will be links from the NRM Gateway.
- Recommend that the old, paper version of the Manual be retained by sign managers as a reference, and because the sheeting color samples will not render accurately by computer monitors and printers.
- General discussion on sign manual issues
- Jetty signs – Debra stated that the question to be asked when considering jetty signage should be used is, “What do you want the public to do?” Is the object to keep people off or merely to warn of the danger?
- The Work Group agreed that the correct web site for the new campsite reservation sign be [www.reserveusa.com](http://www.reserveusa.com) and that Jeff would correct the graphic. (This will also need to be fixed in Sign Pro--easy since it doesn't change panel size.)
- The Color Yellow – Tim reported that 3M said colors that are referenced on page 14.7 do not exist. Do we need to change the name of the color “lemon yellow”?
  - Jeff responded no, that the color references back to the color swatches, not to a particular product by any manufacturer.
  - Tim – advised that only 3M produces diamond grade material. He suggested we send a memo or “technical bulletin” to the sign program managers and UNICOR to advise them of the best yellow match. Showed a sample of chartreuse yellow which seems to be the best match to the sign manual swatch.
  - Discussion ensued among the group on how to handle the color name differences between the sign manual and 3M. Tim will talk with 3M and look at larger samples to ensure that we have the closest match. Rick will also review the colors with 3M.
  - After much discussion it was decided to leave the colors in the manual as is and issue a technical bulletin to the field noting that the USACE color names do not correspond to those used by the manufacturer.
- Tim – suggested we start issuing technical bulletins to keep the field up to date on changes, etc. They will also appear on both the Gateway and MCX websites.
- Lessons Learned in revising the manual
  - It was challenging to do pdf changes with ERDC and it was suggested that next time someone in the work group have the necessary program to make changes to keep it close to home.
  - Eliminate repetition in the sign manual (e.g. grid notations, font, material) by referencing a standard (e.g. grid CST-01)
  - Duplicated information in different sections made the revision difficult.

- Recommend changing matrixes to relative sizes, e.g. 12A x 14.66A instead of select sizes. This will make the matrix simple and save space and eliminate chance for error
- Kim stated that a lot of people are still not aware of, or are not using the Gateway and that we need to continue encouraging people to use the site.
- Debra stated that the MCX site should link to Gateway
- For more detail on the changes to the Manual, see the appended [Sign Manual Revision Highlilghts](#).

### **New Recreation Symbol Proposals**

Duane Johnson led a discussion and showed some illustrations of icons proposed by New Hogan Lake. Sacramento District is updating a brochure and some symbols they would like to use were not available. Proposed symbols included:

- Rafting
- Nighttime mooring
  - Tim suggested putting anchor at a slight angle
- Group camp
  - Symbol needs people in the tents to be consistent with USACE standard tent symbol
- Boat in camping
  - Tim stated that the State of Minnesota has a symbol for this. He will find it and provide to the Work Group.

Discussion on the symbols included a snap poll to see if people could identify the meaning of each symbol. Some needed work to be recognizable, particularly the rafting and boat-in camping. The question was raised whether anyone had checked with other agencies or elsewhere for the existing symbols? Duane encouraged anyone to send comments and symbols if you have them for these four recreational uses. More information is needed to adequately respond to Sacramento District.

### **Ideas for Gaining Compliance**

- The Sign Program is an extension of the professionalism of USACE, and it creates its corporate image.
- It is recognized that money is always an issue. Managers should be ready to order needed, compliant signs whenever funding becomes available, such as end of fiscal year. Needed signs should be included in the annual budget. Decisions to “zeroed out” sign purchases at a higher level should be documented.
- Some courts are not accepting reduced budgets as a reason for not having compliant signs.
- Chief of Ops must be behind the program. It is important for senior leadership to raise its significance..
- The report due General Riley by 30 Sept. plus imminent release of the revised sign manual may be a window of opportunity to raise the visibility of the sign program.

- Now that we have a revitalized program we need training for personnel, e.g. District Training for rangers and managers
- Get district on board and project folks up to date on sign program (memo for HQ)
- Should there be more frequent sign training for district sign managers?
- The AAA audit on recreation safety includes signs. It may offer an opportunity for increased awareness and budgetary action.
- Sign inspections as part of performance standards of project managers.
- Create a 1 page bullet list to ask projects how their sign plans are (bullet on what is needed)
- Produce a newsletter - no more than quarterly (Jeff). The SAWG decided that Rick, Jeff, Steve will put together the newsletter and everyone will contribute.
- Announce the launch of Corps Sign Pro and the Sign Standards Manual revisions in *Engineer Update*,

### **General Discussion of Sign Topics**

- Decided Rick will check with other federal agencies and reopen the discussion regarding a standard “federal brown”
- Jeff will check cost of Corps Brown with Avery and compare that to a new manufacturer.
- Jeff showed examples of Sherwin Williams color swatch for latex, exterior, satin paint that matches Corps Brown for the back of signs. The color formula has been posted on the NRM Gateway. Other paint companies may also duplicate the formula.
- Signs as real property – HQ Real Estate and Asset Management have determined that signs are not real property and do not have to be on a 3013. If there are questions within districts please let Debra know.
- Discussion of aluminum sign erosion due to pressure treated posts. This is an example of a subject for a technical bulletin.
- Jeff shared an example to show different sign color uses and which ones show up the best. Black on yellow and black on white were the two most visible color combinations. White on Corps Brown also made the top ten list of combinations.
- Rick discussed changes, updates, additions on the Gateway, an on-going process.
- Also discussed kite tubing examples. The words can be modified slightly to fit your needs. The examples on the Gateway were intended as examples of complaint signage.
- Discussion of revising the rest of the manual, Volume 2. Tim will submit a budget to accomplish this.
- Jeff asked who was responsible for appointing district sign managers. The answer is whomever is responsible for the NRM program determines who, from within the NRM function, will be the district program manager.
- Jeff suggested that projects contact a USACE sign shop for emergency sign needs.. There are three listed on the NRM Gateway at <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/sign/corps.html>

Thursday, 10 August 2006

### **A Glaring Problem**

Tow boat operators have reported a severe glare problem off a waterways sign at Lock and Dam 24. The USACE personnel have tried to mitigate the problem by mounting the sign posts on wedges to angle the sign panel approximately 8 degrees from perpendicular. The problem persists, but has not been reported recently from other locations. Tim Grundhoffer presented information from 3-M on diamond grade sheeting and offered suggestions to reduce the reflection glare complaints from tow boat operators.

- Original diamond grade 3970 has been discontinued
- There are now 3 types of diamond grade:
  - 3970 (LDP) discontinued
  - Diamond grade VIP
  - Diamond grade DG3
- Video of sign test presented to the group demonstrated the new DG3 seemed to be more visible without as much glare when compared to the older 3970 product.
- Recommendation that waterway signs be fabricated with diamond grade DG3
- Also suggested that tow operators be advised not to shine their lights straight onto signs.

### **Tornado Shelter Request**

A request was received from Omaha District for a tornado shelter sign, similar to those in use at the Denver International Airport.

- Karl expressed that the symbol does not explain what it is and remains word dependent.
- The idea of safe haven should be part of the symbol. Is there an international symbol in use for safe haven?
- If a symbol is adopted, it should be for emergency shelter / safe haven whether that be from tornado, thunderstorm, earthquake, etc.
- The sign suggested could create false assumption of safety and create increased liability issues. It was mentioned that engineering standards must be met before a building is designated as an emergency shelter.
- Suggested alternatives:
  - If a better international symbol is found, the SAWG would reconsider the request
  - A custom recreation or SECNID sign could be used on the outside of the building
  - See SDR-CS, section 11 for another option
  - Safety related interior signs could be used, such as for fire extinguishers. See 18.18.

## Miscellaneous

- Brenda Warren and Karl Anderson discussed the possible need for information signs about lightening in recreation areas due to the death of 5 people recently in a Corps recreation area. IT was the consensus of the work group that this decision should be made locally.
- All traffic signs should conform to the MUTCD in terms of format, color, and placement.
- Debra Stokes discussed issues associated with the Tuttle Creek warning sign with lights. Due to extenuating circumstances in this situation, this sign was approved as a temporary measure that must be removed once the current dam retrofitting is complete.
- The Sign Advisory Work Group approved a request from Fort Worth District for a new caution sign in the Recreation CST- 1 format. The approved wording will be, “Caution / Low Flying Radio Controlled Aircraft”
- Any text on an Industrial Safety sign in the UNICOR catalog can be used as a Corps Industrial Safety Sign without further SAWG and HQ USACE approval. See the Frequently Asked Questions on the Gateway at:  
<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/faqs.cfm?Id=signprog>

## Corps Sign Pro

Corps Sign Pro is a windows based software program that will assist PARK rangers and managers in managing their sign program. Major sections of the software include inventory, catalog, and reports. The catalog will help in preparation of sign orders and includes the capability to format signs with the text needed. The inventory will be the basis for the sign plan required at each facility. The program is nearing completion, but gremlins have repeatedly delayed its rollout. The SAWG reviewed the capabilities of Sign Pro during the meeting as Jeff demonstrated the software. He started with the inventory screens, showed examples of how to import, export, print, add photographs, edit, etc., plus how to create new and custom signs.

- Rick Magee will have “administrator privileges” so that he can set up passwords. He will be able to delegate to district sign managers the ability to assign passwords to the field.
- Database files from the Sign Manager software will be able to be imported into Corps Sign Pro, however it will have to be done one area at a time.
- For HELP you can print the PDF manual. Help is in the upper right of every screen, and will also be linked from the Gateway.
- Edit button can be used to change sign numbers
- Maps, jpgs, and photographs may be imported into the inventory. Photos must be less than 250 kb.
- The MCX is attempting to soft launch the program ASAP.
- It will be difficult to accidentally delete information as the server is backed up every 24 hours. Lost information can be restored the next day.
- Program changes, including adding new approved signs to Sign Pro, will be made by an expert from the Corps or contractor.

- Incorporating GIS data into Sign Pro is possible. Although Mobile District was able to accomplish much in the beta version, there may be problems now that the software is located on the Corps server with the additional security firewalls.
- The MCX will discuss with UNICOR what access, if any, they will have to Corps Sign Pro? With it located on a Corps server, there will be security issues.
- District Sign Managers are responsible to review orders. When Sign Pro prepares an order, it goes to the District Sign Manager for review and signature before the order can be placed.
- The group reviewed the reports section, particularly how to report compliant vs. non-compliant signs. The consensus was to report signs that are installed and not signs that are in stock, on order, missing, proposed, etc. Rick will discuss this issue with the contractor and explain what is needed and how to best accomplish this. This may require additional contract action.

**Action Items noted during review of Sign Pro:**

1. Import function not working.
2. Could not access specifications for day boards.
3. There was an issue with the single post/ double posts for the day board signs. I believe single posts were noted for the larger signs and double posts for the smaller signs.
4. The box indicating sign status defaults to “compliant”. This item needs to be individually selected for each sign to ensure proper designation. It was suggested that a pull-down menu of possible options be used to sign status.
5. Size -- some signs can legitimately be made larger or smaller than “options” allowed in Sign Pro software.
6. Flash Problem – problem with seeing some of entered data. Photos did not load.
7. Issue with symbols not displaying correctly. E.g., RSID 2 usually comes up with one symbol overlaying ¼ of the field of the other symbol. Hitting refresh button usually corrects problem.
8. Custom Grid for land viewed restricted signs should default to restricted. It now defaults to “Custom”.
9. **Important:** Place guidance (sidebar) on this page showing the priority order of arrows for the Approach Roadway Directional and Project Roadway Directional signs.
10. Add link to Sign Standards Manual from help the help menu.
11. Official logos for other federal agencies will be provided to Jeff from Debra.
12. W 41 missing from traffic custom warning drop down list.