

**Sign Advisory Workgroup Meeting Notes**  
**Truman Lake, Warsaw, Missouri**  
**March 3-5, 2015**  
**Prepared by: Kimberly Rea & AJ Jensen**

**Attendees:** Jack Nichol (LRD), Paul Harris (SPD), Steve Logan (SAD), Jeff Mangum (NAD), Kimberly Rea (MVD), John Derby (NWD), Paula Rafferty (SWD), AJ Jensen (MCX), Tim Grundhoffer (MCX)

**Guests:** Nicole Davidson (FEM support, SPD), Erin Krug (Engineering), Caleb Snider (NWK)

I. Introductions

SAWG members and invitees introduced themselves. Dennis Wallace, Truman Operations Project Manager, provided overview of the Truman Lake Project.

II. Truman Sign Shop Visit

Tour of Truman Lake Sign Shop. Heather England briefed SAWG on fabrication processes and challenges.

III. Reports [AJ]

To bring the SAWG up to speed, AJ reported on program issues and goals discussed in December with Mary Coulombe and Jeff Mangum via conference call.

A. SignPro

1. SignPro History & Status. SignPro is critical to the entire program. SignPro has many issues from going years without software maintenance. All across the Corps know that SignPro is not at its best and have shared that opinion often.
2. SignPro Immediate Needs. In order to get SignPro into any usable condition, it needs to be migrated from a 2003 server to a 2012 server, per Big Army (OPORD). ACE-IT will not do this, as it has tried in the past and failed. The migration deadline has past. This is an urgent issue that AJ is working to resolve.
3. Contract. AJ is working with Kansas City District Contracting to get a contract written to get SignPro to a new server and update it. The three main tasks include a) Software and database migration, b) Software updates, and c) Trouble shooting and maintenance to ensure migration and updates are successful.
4. Cost. The cost should be manageable enough for the National Sign Program MCX budget to pay for it.
5. Extended Maintenance. AJ discussed the possibility of option years for service & maintenance or sending out a maintenance contract for bid, separate from the migration contract.
6. Future of SignPro. No, the plan is not for SignPro to go away. Continue to collect feedback and recommendations from end users. FEM integration and

GIS/GPS integration should not be too difficult. Reports should be simpler. Training should be available.

## B. Sign Program Training

1. Online Training Program. AJ plans to work to get training onto the Gateway. Eventually, this will include videos, but will start out with flowcharts, diagrams, and step-by-step “how-to” instructions (sign plans, sign installation, ordering, maintenance, etc.).
2. Person-to-Person Training. More in-person training at all levels will keep the program fresh and alive. AJ willing to travel to make this happen. SAWG members can work at the division level to train as well.
3. Discussion
  - a. Communication. [Jack] *The Sign Post* newsletter was very good as a communication tool. Regular e-mailing to sign managers was also an effective strategy. AJ agreed and stated *The Sign Post* was something he wants to revive, but may need help and/or contributions from the group.
  - b. Action Committees. [AJ] Are members willing to be part of action committees? Consensus was yes, absolutely.
    - ➔ **Action Item [SAWG]** Send sign program training ideas and thoughts to AJ
  - c. Gateway Functionality. [Kim] The Gateway is difficult and awkward to use and navigate through. What kind of solution can we get? [Paul] Why not embed training into SignPro or get our own dedicated page? [Nicole] SharePoint may be helpful.
    - Why not embed training into SignPro or on a dedicated page? [Paul]

- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** AJ affirmed his goal to seek ways to make sign resources and training on the Gateway more useable, or find other Corps-approved solutions that serve the program’s needs.

## C. Kerning for Helvetica

AJ is working on a contract to fix the kerning issue with our font. This will save time from having to manually adjust spacing when building signs. It will also be available for more than only sign shops. Cost expected to be under \$3K threshold.

## D. Survey Results

A survey was sent out in February. Fifty individuals involved with the sign program (from rangers to division sign managers) responded. AJ had asked for “unfiltered” comments and received a wide array of responses.

Results showed 1) a large demand for general training, 2) requests for help with managing sign plans, 3) confusion about ordering procedures, 4) requests for SignPro training, and 5) frustration with sign fabricators.

### • Discussion

- a. Field Resources. Whatever we can do to simplify processes would make things more smooth in the field [Paul]
  - i. Field App. Use a field app on a smart phone to photograph and tag sign locations. Embracing modern technology for the new generation of NRM staff will benefit the program.

- ii. Field Tablets. Using CAC-enabled tablets could satisfy security requirements while working with the sign program
  - b. Partnerships. Time to build and strengthen relations with partners who can provide resources to us and keep us in the modern world. This will involve visits to internal (Corps) and external points of contact, such as USDoT, Coast Guard, etc. [AJ]
  - c. Education. We need to do a better job of education. Corps vs Army sign regulations.
  - d. Communication. Our approach to communication will make us or break us [Jack]
    - i. Communication must be ongoing and reach out to division/districts to make sure they are aware of the sign program
    - ii. We must sell our product
    - iii. Might be helpful to have FAQs or something similar for each chapter in the manual
  - e. Branding. We are the guardians of Corps branding. No one else has taken on this role. Our best effort is required. [AJ]
  - f. Outreach. We must reach out and let our divisions/districts know who we are and that we are here to help. [Paula]
  - g. Ordering Perspective. UNICOR's priority of order talked about sign order hold ups at UNICOR and that people requesting quotes that are not ready to order hold up people who have money to place order. [John]
  - h. Communicating Ordering Basics. Maintenance shops will go quickest, easiest routes to get what is needed. i.e. safety/OSHA, etc. [Paul] Give specific guidance on where they can get signs (web links, phone numbers, etc.) so it takes the guess work out of ordering items that need to be replaced quickly. Constraints will help us get more compliant signs. When they build a shopping cart it would automatically send an email to the district sign program manager for approval. Jack commented that SignPro is very similar. Rangers email district manager and district manager looks up order number and approves. Tim thinks moving to web based and more automated would be helpful. More modern platform, web based might be something to consider.
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Incorporate guidance on how to obtain sign quotes into training program.
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ/Jeff will follow up to create a committee]** Create an overview/how-to guide for sign manual. Jeff thinks we could do a flow chart/ document that simplifies the sign program and gives new people an overview and helps get them started. The team had discussed this on Tuesday and recommended doing something similar like FAQs. It was decided this was important and would become an Action Item.

#### IV. Sign Plans (Discussion)

- A. There is not accountability for completing/updating sign plan at project level, and by extension, the district has no plan [John]
- B. Phased Plan. Suggestion: One month do traffic signs, next month ID signs, etc. Break it down into manageable chunks so it is not overwhelming. [John]
  - Start small with a token sign plan from a template. Plug-in and refine as you go. Every time work is done on signs, it should be simultaneously documented in the sign plan. [AJ] It should be a working document.
- C. Instructions. Could we put out some flow charts to show the steps and help navigate how to pull all the info together? [Paula]
- D. Sign Plan Purpose. Sign plans help management understand the relevance of signs and how they play in the big picture and with budget. [AJ]
- E. Mapping Capability. GIS mapping needs to function in SignPro. There has to be good mapping available. [Jeff]
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Reaffirmation: Educating people about building and maintaining sign plans is one of AJ's priorities. AJ will address this through in-person and online training. Training District sign program managers will be key.
- F. Sign Inventorying Using GIS/GPS/LYDAR. There is a need to provide an outline of how to do sign inventories. [Paul]
  - 1. Discussion about GPS/GIS/LYDAR. GPS is not the answer. Old school method of collecting the data is better. GPS data isn't worth the cost of collecting and the time it takes to collect quality data. [Paul]
  - 2. GPS Still Useful. GPS data can still address many useful data for project planning. [Paula]

#### V. Education and Communication (Discussion)

- A. Reaching Out Beyond Operations. How can AJ/SAWG spread the word to other sections other than Operations that we have a sign program and sign standards?
  - 1. Branding. Jeff thinks the reason others are not aware is because the program sits under NRM program. Perhaps we need to look at this and see how we can "fix" the problem to gain better branding throughout the Corps. [Jeff]
  - 2. Rewrite the Regulation. Perhaps a rewrite of the reg to list out each of the business lines. [John]
  - 3. Graphic Standards Manual. Another issue might be that sign manual is part of the graphic standards manual that has not been updated since the '90s. [Jeff]
  - 4. Disconnect Between Corps Business Lines. There's a disconnect between the NRM and the navigation programs when dealing with signs. We need to figure out how to get the word out to other functional groups so they know where to find the information. Communication to navigation section needs to improve. Need to educate the district sign program managers so they are aware of the different facets of the sign program. [Tim]
  - 5. Navigation Representation. The navigation section has other priorities and there is a need to fill Mike Kidby's position as navigation rep. [Steve]

- B. Focus on the District sign manager. The success of this program is based on the district sign program manager, they are the key. [Jack]
1. Support. As a group we need to focus on keeping the district sign managers energized, informed, and active. The more tools we can give them will make things better. [Jack]
  2. Active Personal Contact. We need to keep an updated list of district and project sign program managers. The SAWG needs to be making personal contact with each of the District sign program managers at least once a year and making sure we are providing the support and access to the sign program. [Jack]
  3. Regular Contact. The Strategic Plan should address our strategy on keeping the District and Division Sign Program Managers in the loop. [AJ] Likewise, a communication goal and plan should be integrated with monthly/quarterly webinars/conference calls [John & Tim]
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Reaffirmation: AJ will be working on introductory training and also training for district program managers.
  - ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Why we do not have a PROSPECT course? [Jack] AJ to discuss with Mary to see what the options might be for training on a larger scale.
  - ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Speak with Mary check to see if AJ can get on the agenda for commanders training to provide information on the sign program.
  - ➔ **Action Item [SAWG - ALL]** Personally contact each of your district sign managers. Determine what their needs are and let them know what we can do for them.
  - ➔ **Action Item [SAWG - ALL]** Every time a new commander comes in there should be a new district sign manager appointment letter signed by the commander and this would highlight the sign program as important for the commander. [Jack]

## VI. Nonstandard Safety Requests Review

### A. Detroit

Sign Request was approved by HQ. AJ will send the approval packet to the SAWG.

### B. Baltimore District request for Cordurus Creek

1. Requested Sign Change Issue. The requested wording does not address the danger of the dam that you cannot see from upstream. We have to give people time to respond to the danger. Reference page 14-3. The danger of the low head dam is not addressed in the request. [Jack]
  2. Vote to Approve. Team voted to approved wording change to WDA-21 to add the word “boating” and its use as a land based sign, provided they understand that they need to refer to 14-3 to address their greater signage needs.
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Contact Cordurus Creek regarding their nonstandard sign request. Reference signage on page 14-3 of the sign manual.  
Restricted areas have to be evaluated and determination made to sign them as restricted per the ER. [Tim]

### C. Emergency Signage Requests

1. Turnaround Time. Turnaround time for nonstandard safety sign – currently it should be completed within 30 days. 10 days for SAWG. Discussed potential changes to how approvals should be handled.
    - Emergency Signage Needs. Having a flow chart on what level changes/approvals are made for caution, danger, warning. Topic was regarding emergency situations when there is an immediate need for signing a hazard. [John]
  2. Legal Opinion. Need to seek Milt’s legal opinion would be regarding temporary emergency signs. [Jeff]
  3. Default to OSHA. For emergencies we should default to OSHA or approved industry standard signage. [Paul]
  4. Approvals Still Needed. Need to follow thru and get approvals after emergency signage is dealt with. [Paula]
  5. Emergency Signage SOP Needed. Providing a document that addresses emergency signs and basic procedures is really needed. [Jack]
  6. Chain of Command Directives. Different chains of command and local SOP’s for addressing immediate threats trump our official guidance. Our place is to assist, not call shots. [Tim]
  7. Communication of Plans. Whatever is determined, the SAWG should get the word out, not relying exclusively on the Gateway to disseminate program information. [John]
  8. Relation with Safety Officer. The district sign manager should maintain an active working relationship with the district safety officer. The safety officer should view the district sign manager as a valuable team member. Likewise, the district sign manager should have a seat at the safety committee’s table. [A]
- ➔ **Action Item [A]** – Provide information to Milt and see what his legal opinion would be regarding liability (caution, danger, warning signs) and who should approve those emergency requests.

### D. Lights, Horns, and Sirens

1. Reference to Sound Devices on Signage. Tim had provided an email to Jeff regarding flashing lights/horns/sirens following a sign request and his review of the project’s overall sign plan.
2. Cannot Add Sound Devices. The sign manual says you cannot add horns/sirens if they were not already in existence. Reason being is if horns/sirens do not operate properly then the visitor is not relying on hearing a sound but instead they are relying on the wording on the sign. [Jack]
3. No action needed.

## VII. Sign Manual Volume 1 [A]

### A. Status Update

1. Draft copies are In Design format. Colleen Cummins ACEIT person on the project. John Carnes is USACE staff who can assist if ACE-IT drops the ball.

## 2. Proofing Needs

- a. Editing Issues. Inconsistencies, graphics need to be sharp, colors correct, typeface, etc.
  - b. Use of Photos. Need to have good, quality photos for the manual with relevant captions.
    - Concern about using ACEIT for updates because it was not timely and you had to check all of their work to ensure changes were made. [Jeff]
- **Action Item [AJ]** Check into getting an intern at a local college that could work on the project for no charge. [Paul]

3. Distribution Format. Discussion about how this will be distributed. Online or hard copies? AJ discussed option to take a poll to determine how many people would want a hard copy. This would have to be coordinated through ACE-IT.

## 4. Federally Recognized Symbols.

- a. Symbol Inventory Incomplete. For volume 1, Section 8 we do not have all of the federally recognized symbols. Do we want to add them to the manual during this version? [Jeff]
  - b. Database in GIS for Symbols. Could make database in GIS for symbols. [Paul] Jeff has an old database for this that could be updated. Mapbook using GIS would work [Paula]
- **Action Item [AJ]** Send out link or location for all symbol signs to SAWG that can be shared with projects. [Paul]

→ **Action Item [SAWG] SUSPENSE 15 April.** Review of draft manual and provide feedback.

## VIII. Sign Manual Volume 2 [Tim]

A. Sections B & C. Tim and Erin will focus on section B & C (technical areas) and rely on others to review the other sections.

### B. New Materials Issues.

1. New sign substrates that are not included in the manual that would be beneficial for project use.
2. Need to query UNICOR and sign shops regarding materials that are currently being used. Make more general so it would be easier to update when the substrate materials change over time. We do not want to limit the options that would assist in making signs more cost effective or longer lasting.
  - Discussion of making a visit to UNICOR sign shop for QA/QC and discussion with POC.
3. Performance Style Specifications. It would be best to create a performance style specification instead of material specification. That way it is easier to bring new materials into the program as technology progresses.
  - a. Using Appropriate Materials for the Job. Change in types of aluminum. 6061-T6 (\$10.58sf) to 5052-H32 (\$4.45sf) for sign panels.

- b. Updated Reference to Highway Standards. The Federal Highway Administration's website has charts for all retro-reflective sheeting are tested and approved for use on highway signs.
- c. Abandon Company-Specific References. Get rid of reference to Diamond grade now that there are multiple products. 3M Diamond grade DG3 and Avery Dennison OMNICUBE.
  - i. Is there a reason we couldn't use the other available types of retro-reflective materials. [Jeff]
  - ii. Tim stated that the Type 11 is used for critical signs (orange and yellow highway signs) use Diamond grade and we have deemed our waterway signage as critical thus using the Diamond grade material. [Tim]

#### 4. Analysis of Future

- a. What Is Most Practical for the Government. "If we can wipe the slate clean and start over as an engineer what would you use?" "Would changing materials save the government money?" Answer: yes. [Tim]
- b. Due Diligence. We'd probably need engineering and legal review prior to changing material types. Perhaps we need to evaluate material type and look at what our standard currently is and if it needs to be altered during our manual update process. [Tim]

C. Break-Away Materials. Break away needs to be addressed. More direction and explanation of the process and give guidance on where to find more information. Every state has different parameters for break away posts.

➔ **Action Item [Tim, Erin, Heather]** Do a quick cost comparison of materials that are available. Initial cost vs life cycle cost should be considered.

#### D. Engineering Circular for Lock, Dam, and Waterway Signs

1. Expired EC. The EC for Standard Design for Lock, Dam and Waterway Signs has expired and never had funding to convert to an EM. Still a good design document. A little out of date but still good information.
  2. Useful Information for Volume II. EC essentially replaces the info that is in Volume II. Tim has gotten feedback on the EC over the years and has kept notes.
  3. Fate of EC
    - a. Integrate EC or Convert to EM. Do we update EC and get it converted to an EM or do we include in Volume II? [Tim]
    - b. Take Easier Update Path. Which process is easier for updating? Perhaps we should go the route that makes it easier to update. [Jeff]
    - c. Sign Manual Update Schedule. How frequently do we need to update the sign manual? AJ recommends a 5 year update cycle for the manual.
- ➔ **Decision [SAWG]** Integrate EC into Manual. Based on the premise of a five-year update cycle, the team agreed that incorporating the EC into Volume II makes the most sense.



E. External References for Corps Standards

1. 3M Maintenance Manual. 3M has a sign maintenance manual that we might want to use for reference as we update information.
2. USCG Standards. Regarding Aids to Navigation, it may be wise to directly reference the US Coast Guard standards so we do not have to update our manual when there are changes to other agencies' standards.

F. One Sign Manual. Just doing one sign manual and not having 2 volumes since we will not be doing a hard copy print. [Jeff] It has always been odd having two separate manuals and a lot of information is overlooked in volume 2. Would be much easier for the user if all of the information was together. [Kim]

G. Review by NRM. Tim has encouraged NRM members to look at section C in volume 2 and provide insight. This could be a lot more robust and provide some of the institutional knowledge that would help out new employees.

H. Draft. Volume II draft for review anticipated by mid-2015

IX. Unfinished Action Items [Jeff]

A. At Own Risk Wording. Removing "At Own Risk" signs - Memo from HQ never happened. Jeff talked with Milt who said it's an OPS issue whether to tell projects to take down remaining signs. We should not be putting up new signs that say "at own risk".

→ **Action Item [A]** Prepare memo and work with Mary to get a memo out directing projects take out any remaining signs that say "at own risk".

B. Corps Safety Sign Format. Debra Stokes asked MCX for Rand Pixa email regarding Corps safety signs. Could not find this email but SAWG will be moving in a new direction on safety signs. (See later discussions on ANSI safety signs)

C. Increasing Awareness Across Projects. Tim wanted to increase awareness across projects. Action was to add links to websites and Engineer Update. No action has been taken. Any ideas for getting the program more exposure. Getting *The Sign Post* going again. Potential for getting an article in the Our Mississippi newsletter [Kim]. FaceBook posts via HQ.

D. Debra had suggested adding Z-bar info in volume 2. Tim said if we incorporate the EC into volume 2 that would cover the request.

→ **Action Item [Kim]** Review what symbol signs do National Park Service, Forest Service or MUTCD have that we do not already have in our system? Report back to SAWG and group will vote on inclusion of new symbols to the manual.

X. Drone Aircraft Signs [John]

A. Drones Are Security Issue. John Derby discussed the security concern of drones (unmanned aircraft with cameras) flying over Corps projects.

B. Drones are already prohibited per T36.

C. Permitting Drones. To allow drones, an area would have to be designated for drone use. Instead of creating a symbol sign use a worded sign.

→ **Action Item [John]** Check to see if there are any existing symbol signs.

## XI. Corps Brown [Jeff]

- Avery Dennison is no longer making Corps brown. Doug Pecyna at UNICOR wanted to know how we will respond.
    1. Discussion
      - a. Would we want to change to another vinyl color? [Jeff] (Jeff shared samples of other browns)
      - b. Do we even need to source Corps brown vinyl? It may be unnecessary since we can now do ink on vinyl print?
      - c. With ink technology you can clean the face and lay a new face over it.
    2. Aiming for Standard Colors. The same printer may print a different hue of Corps brown on the same day. It's a reality. With stock brown vinyl same Corps brown differs from production lot to lot. The sun and weathering also alter the brown, whether it's printed or stock vinyl. Our best intentions and efforts will have to suffice. We aspire for the standard, and we can realistically do no better. Neatness of appearance goes far. Changing our brown tone now is no guarantee that we won't have to change it again in the future. [AJ]
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** – Need to find out what percentage of cut vinyl vs ink on vinyl UNICOR is doing. Get their thoughts on cost effectiveness ink vs cut vinyl.

## XII. Highway Signs [Kim]

- Kim shared frustrations in working with the local state and county in getting signs installed. Sometimes the state DoT places difficult requirements with one project but not with others.
    - Discussion
      1. State Relations. Each state has requirements for break away, etc. Need to check Missouri's requirements. [Tim]
      2. Gather Information. Before recommending a course of action, check with Mark Twain and other projects to see what agreements they have in place with MODOT.
      3. Use Local Influence. Local chamber of commerce, politicians, departments of tourism with connections to assist in getting the signs placed in the right-of-way.
      4. Feelers for information. Dan from Truman will be doing some tests to see what response he gets from his local region. Kim will provide him the information to do this.
      - E. Purchasing Green/Brown Slat Signs. What is the potential to purchasing the green/brown slat signs on major highways? [John]
- ➔ **Action Item [Kim]** – Check with other agencies to see what agreements they have signed with MODOT.
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** AJ would like to speak with the state's DoT officials to see if reasonable solutions can be reached.

### XIII. Review of Field Observations at Truman Project

- The team discussed the results of Tuesday's field exercise using photos taken. The SAWG provided feedback with recommendations for Truman Lake's sign plan.
  1. Reducing "Sign Pollution"
    - a. Remove Unnecessary Signage. Recommendation from the SAWG to remove the signs from Truman recreation areas that are redundant or that don't address a currently problematic issue.

Fee Signs Sometimes Unneeded

Sign Spacing. Some signs were so close together that a driver would not be able to read them.

Alternatives to Signs. Some bulletin boards had so many signs that the end user will likely disregard any messages on them. Simplify.
  2. Uniformity of Sign Posts. Discussion about making sign posts the same for all signs. Inset or on edge?
  3. Installation Instructions from Manufacturer. Dennis suggested when signs leave the sign shop have the mounting instructions with them.

### XIV. Reflectivity Standards [Jeff & AJ]

- Discussion regarding reflectivity testing for traffic control signs in recreation area. Per 2011 memo by the National Traffic Safety Board. These have to meet the MUTCD standards.
  1. Where the Corps Stands
    - a. Clarification Sought on Requirement. Need to check date requirement on the replacement of the recreation traffic control signs. Did all signs have to be replaced by end of 2014 or just have a plan for replacement?
    - b. Our Level of Compliance. Jeff discussed where divisions/districts are with the testing of their reflectivity to make sure they meet minimum standard for reflectivity. There was a memo addressing the issue. [Jeff] At a minimum we should revisit the issue with the divisions/districts. [Jack]
    - c. DOT: Get a Plan in Place. AJ provided review of the DOT additional guidance that highlighted agencies must have a method in place to assess every two years and a plan for replacement. Group review of the inspection methods.
  2. Tools & Ideas
    - a. Swap-Out & Rotation. Thought was to do full swap out and then put them on a rotation schedule for future replacement
    - b. Plans to Share. Can anyone share any good plans they have so they can be shared on Good Enough to Share? [Jeff]
    - c. SignPro Queries. Tim said being able to query sign life in SignPro would be very useful. [Tim]
    - d. Test Strips. Rick had made test strips available a few years ago. John has a whole bunch and can send them to folks if they need them.

- ➔ **Action Item [AJ/Jeff]** Need to check with HQ about how they wish to handle. Issue a new memo based on the updated DOT guidance since information has changed since original memo was written?
- ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** MUTCD reflectivity options and plans into The Sign Post as an article. Good way to follow-up across the nation.

## XV. Mary Coulombe Conference Call

### A. Headquarters Report [Mary]

#### 1. Replacing HQ Elements

- a. Debra Stokes. Debra retired and they have not appointed a replacement from HQ to fill her slot on the SAWG. Mary will work with us as a team to call in expertise as needed.
- b. Mike Kidby. No replacement for Mike Kidby. Someone is currently detailed to the position but we have been asked to hold off on filling until Mike is replaced.

#### 2. Budget

Look closely at FY16 budget and make sure that everything in there is supportable. Wants to stay as close to the budget as possible. Also look at FY17 budget. Scott Strotman will be coming back to AJ for an FY17 PMP with a budget.

### B. SignPro Contract Status [AJ]

- Mary asked about reasoning behind doing sole source; was the approach in the best interest of the government. AJ responded that doing sole source is in the best interest of the government because migrating from server to server we need the experience of the original developer to ensure there are no issues. Once migrated it would be made fully functional and then it would have capability to be updated by other contractors. ACE-IT has indicated that they do not want to support beyond hosting the server and providing server updates unless there is a MOA. By having option years on the contract it allows us time to evaluate and reassess how we want to proceed in the future.

### C. Sign Manual Update [AJ]

1. Volume I. It will be years before the manual is updated again so Mary is happy the SAWG is working to make it the best product it can be before finalizing.
2. Volume II. Tim provided update to Mary on Volume II which has not been updated since 1993
3. Budgets. Mary is concerned about any increase in budget but she and Scott will work with AJ. Mary requested AJ have a handle on what is needed to complete in a reasonable period of time so they can discuss funding. AJ said he feels the budget needs to increase.
- ➔ **Action Item [SAWG]** Need to compile absolute necessities and minimums as well as what additional items would be nice. [Mary]
4. We are committed to getting Volumes I & II out as quickly as we can based on available funding. [AJ]

## D. Strategic Plan [Mary]

### 1. Reinvigoration of the program

- a. Tactical Options. The Strategic Plan will outline the short- and long-range tactical options we will work with.
- b. Signs Are Mission Elements. Signs are a huge part of the Corps operational missions and she hasn't really seen anything that communicates that.
- c. Relevance. HQ needs something that describes and shows how this program links into the Operations on the ground. What is the current status on the ground? What are some steps that can be undertaken over the next 5 years to fix/upgrade the status of the signs in the field? In order for her to argue and be an advocate for this program in HQ she needs to be able to link up signs with the efficiency and effectiveness at the operations at the projects.
- d. Tactical & Analytical Approach. Succinct and to the point. Longer range look. Can include the tactical things that are done thru the course of the year but can describe for the operations chiefs where we are now and where we need to be and what the gaps are.
- e. Leadership Perspective. Leadership does not have a good view of the program and how important it is and having something like this will allow Mary to answer the questions. i.e. if Gen Peabody asks why signs are like this or why they are in the shape they are in she can answer this.

### 2. Things to Consider

- a. Look at the Recreation Program Strategic Plan for Inspiration. Goals, objectives, Action Items (this is on the Gateway and will show us the structure). However, be more direct and to-the-point. [Mary]
- b. Clear Communication Tool. The need is a concise, down and dirty, effective communication tool to assist in communicating with others. [AJ]
- c. Goal of Strategic Plan. A good Strategic Plan will be used to defend our program to the Chief of Operations and other HQUSACE elements. [Mary]
- d. Branding Emphasis.
  - i. AJ asked how Mary feels about the sign program being seated in the NRM program. Is there a desire from senior leadership to use the sign program as an effective communication tool? Do they still want the branding?
  - ii. Mary said, yes, it will be variable from district to district. She has heard from people that we do not effectively use our signs for branding purposes. She feels having a document that leadership can endorse is important. Wants in writing and agreed to at the leadership level.

➔ **Action Item [SAWG]** Mary would like final plan by **August**. Scott and Mary can review prior to finalizing.

➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Mary requested that the SAWG write down the key points of why Kidby replacement and a POC for hydropower are important and what is needed from those folks. That could be in a briefing paper to Mary.

#### E. Accountability

1. John spoke about accountability for properly doing the sign program at powerhouses. Would be nice to have a champion for power houses for signage especially industrial safety to help move along the upgrading of signage at the powerhouses. This has major safety implications. Would be nice to have a champion letter that highlights the expectations form HQ.
2. Mary response - Address in both - Short term: The letter would highlight importance of a hydropower POC. Long term: The strategic plan would address so there is understanding of the program.

F. Safety Correlation with Signage. If there were a way to show injuries that occurred due to sign deficiencies this might provide ammunition and highlight the importance of having good signs for safety program. [Paul] The safety office may be able to help with this one.

#### XVI. Outdoor Accessibility Guidelines and Signs

- A. ADA References. Can we move over the symbols from the new ADA guidance? [Jack]
- B. Discussion of addressing trail signs in the sign manual so the field staff have a little information when planning their signage of trails.
- C. Discussed scale ability of signs so you can make signs that meet the need i.e. smaller signs for trails.
- D. There should be wording in the sign plans that any deviations within the projects sign program should be documented so it is known why decision was made to deviate (all sign plans should be doing this, anyway).

#### XVII. ANSI Safety Signs

- AJ presented how OSHA (Department of Labor) has adopted ANSI Z535 format for workplace safety signs. Corps signs were developed in the 1980s, and at the time exceeded the 1967 ANSI standards for legibility. However, many revisions have occurred since then, which have overtaken the old 1967 standards and bypassed the Corps' 1980s standards. New ANSI signs have pictograms and universal symbols. The Corps doesn't have the funding to develop Corps-specific signs that meet the new ANSI standards. Why reinvent the wheel? Also, let the Department of Labor (OSHA)'s standards apply to the industrial environment.

##### 1. Disadvantages to Updating

- a. Proprietary Catalog. The only disadvantage that AJ can see if going with the ANSI standards is that the catalog of the standards is proprietary. However, working with the safety office, we can likely develop our own catalog.
- b. Deviation from Standard. ANSI 2013 appears to take us away from our standards. Legends are pretty small. [Jack]
- c. Embrace New without Discarding Old. Since the 1967 and new ANSI standards are both still OK to use can we keep our chapter 11 and just add

wording that lets people know they can use Corps or ANSI standards.  
[Jeff]

- d. Seek Counsel's Opinion. The Corps has invested a lot of money over the past 25 years buying signs to meet our safety sign needs. How does mixing the two affect potential liability? We need to get safety office and office of counsel thoughts on moving forward from our current standard to use ANSI standards as an option for use. Are the reasons we went to our own system still valid today? We need to answer that question. [Jack]

## 2. Advantages to Updating

- a. Universal Nature of ANSI Standards. Kim offered that in her experience the navigation and fleet staff as well as contractors are familiar with the ANSI/OSHA standards and that it is more likely to gain compliance if we adopt the ANSI standards.
- b. Older Memorandum from Rick Magee. Jeff read segment from memo that Rick Magee wrote to support adopting ANSI standards.
- c. Graphic Images Are a Need. People need graphic images. That is what is becoming prevalent in the world. [Paul]
- d. Priorities in Safety Signage. Main 2 goals are to #1 minimize and eliminate risk and #2 minimize or eliminate liability. [Steve]
- e. Cost Questions. Paul discussed sign costs. Will moving this direction help with cost effectiveness? In time, yes.
- f. Phased-In Approach. Our signs are still useable but perhaps we need to also embrace the industry standard. Perhaps this system would allow us to get the navigation folks on board and compliant. [Steve]
- g. Industry Perspective. It would be prudent to see how the industry has embraced this new ANSI standard. We do not want to make a change and see that others are not using it. [Tim] Tim has always wondered why the Corps had their own standards when the norm for work areas has always been the OSHA/ANSI signs. Signs are reminders to workers that there is a hazard and they need to use due diligence. Signs are also there to reduce liability. They are a safety reminder. Tim likes the graphics and formatting of the 2013 ANSI standard.

## 3. Action Vote: Should AJ proceed with pursuing this with Counsel and Safety?

- a. Tim - Yes, with the caveat that we should query personnel to get their perspectives
- b. Jack - Yes, worth pursuing, researching, and items to be addressed before we make a change. Biggest concern is safety and also the huge investment that has already been taken on over the years by projects. We need to keep that in mind and not just trash that at least for their service life.
- c. Paul - Yes, would like to see complete turn over
- d. Steve - Yes, no comments

- e. Jeff – Yes, thinks it works well with strategic plan. We need to be relevant and practical and cost is a big factor. Readily available signs do not have to be custom made.
  - f. John – Yes, likes the new sign with pictogram (stress the word pictogram), would be a good mental reminder to employees for the hazard that exists.
  - g. Paula – Yes, if the purpose is safety and the ANSI standard convey safety at the highest level that is the way we should go.
  - h. Erin (Non-voting) As someone who is unfamiliar to work sites but is having to visit active sites with work being performed the pictograms would be helpful to know what the danger is and how to respond.
  - i. Kim – Yes, we need to be practical and make sure what we have available as compliant meets the needs of the people using the sign. Safety is paramount.
  - j. AJ – (Non-voting Comment) Good placement, appropriate location, height, installation quality are the basic principles in our manual and need to be followed at all times. Procurement approval process needs to be followed.
- ➔ **Resolution [SAWG]** – Group consensus that we should move forward with review of potential adding the ANSI standards to the safety signs.
  - ➔ **Action Item [AJ]** Coordinate with safety and counsel to get their thoughts and determine path forward. AJ will bring information back to the SAWG to make final recommendation on whether to include or not.

## XVIII. SAWG Succession Plan Brainstorming

- A. Context of Discussion. The Sign Advisory Work Group (SAWG) has recently had some experienced team members leave its ranks. The Group can only perform at its best when each position is filled with individuals seasoned in their respective sign-related roles who contribute to the success of the national program. Because a formalized succession plan has not been in place, the group now lacks key members and their input.
- B. Purpose of a Succession Plan
  - 1. To find the best ways to preserve and pass-on critical institutional knowledge within the SAWG
  - 2. To ensure continuity of service and representation from each division within the SAWG
  - 3. To ensure a consistent and balanced full-organization perspective in all SAWG discussions
- C. Thoughts
  - 1. Replacement Shadow. When someone is thinking about retiring they should go to their division and request a replacement that can shadow for a year and prepare them for taking over the position.
  - 2. Proposed Replacement SOP. Perhaps draft an SOP and address when someone if stepping down or retiring they would seek out replacement with considerable notice.



3. Position Criteria. Discussed criteria for members to the group. Certain number of years? Function/position based? Getting a full array of sign-related skills.
4. Pass-Along Institutional Knowledge. We can't afford to lose institutional knowledge. Encouraged the senior members to share knowledge they have prior to retiring. [AJ]
5. Mentor Program. Perhaps having a mentor program if candidate was within district. If outside district could be teleconference mentoring. [John]

#### D. Written Institutional Knowledge

1. Develop a sign library or depository vault for institutional knowledge.
2. SharePoint? Gateway for public items? What is the right mechanism?
3. Need to continue thinking of best way to keep institutional SAWG documents.

### XIX. Sign Program Relationships & Roles (Discussion)

#### A. Mobilizing District-Level Assets

1. Relationship with Safety Manager. Each sign manager should have relationship with the safety managers at the project and district levels. [AJ]
2. Program Management. Section 1 Program Management, page 1-11 in the hand out. Might want to review to refresh yourself or if you are new get a perspective of what is needed. [Jack]
3. District sign managers need to be energized.
4. Role of District Sign Managers. Discussion of district sign managers and how we ensure that those appointees have the background, knowledge and passion to do the job and do it correctly. District sign manager are the ones who provide the education to the local projects, coordinate with safety and others and also tells the story and importance to the senior leadership.

#### B. Division Sign Manager versus Division SAWG Member. Should these two positions be the same person?

1. Concern that Division Sign Manager and SAWG Division Rep are different people. [Jeff] It could be the same but in most cases it isn't because we want the SAWG made up of members from different levels/positions. [Jack]
2. Same or Separate. Should the SAWG reps should be the Division Sign Managers? [AJ] Much discussion followed. There is a structure we have to work within some felt. Others felt that we need to be looking outside the normal way of doing business.
3. Variety of Staff. Discussion regarding having a variety of field and district staff. Adding statement that references a variety of field and district people from all business lines.
4. Steve asked what was broken. AJ responded that we have been talking about communication and that is what is broken. Two problems are lack of training and lack of communication. That is why he wants division people here. From his perspective, the SAWG member is the division person.

5. Impractical Cost. The cost will exceed the benefit if we make SAWG rep the division sign program manager. [Steve]
6. Benefits to Separation. Depending on the issue, SAWG members may not be as effective because they do not have the access and knowledge of all districts to meet all of the needs that would arise. [Jack]
7. Engage Division Managers. Maybe the focus should be to get the Division program managers more engaged. [Tim] The group agreed.

#### C. Communication Methods

1. Sign Brown Bag. Tim is doing a sign brown bag discussion/education session in his district office. All interested in sign-related issues are invited.
2. Quarterly Conference Calls. Recommended quarterly SAWG conference calls to keep everyone engaged. [Tim]
3. Dissemination of New Knowledge. AJ should send anything new to the SAWG so we can help with dissemination. [Jack]

#### D. Potential Future SAWG Makeup

1. Sign Manufacturer Representative. Discussions about adding a sign shop rep on the SAWG. Could the SAWG be made up of different business-line reps?
2. Navigation Representation. Navigation holds a large stake in the sign program and needs to be represented. [Tim] Many concurred.
3. Invitees. How does group feel about bringing project level staff along to the SAWG meetings? This would allow new blood to obtain information. [Paul]

#### E. Charter Revisions

- John looked at the original charter and wanted to see signature mark on header. The Corps has 161 navigational locks, 456 civil works projects. John played around with mission statement. Thoughts: One rep from each division, 1 from HQ, 1 for navigation, 1 from Office of Counsel, 1 safety, 1 hydropower, Debra's replacement. Thinking about if there is a need for term limits for chair.

#### F. Funding for SAWG

- AJ asked how each SAWG member is funded. Discussion ensued. All members are supported differently overhead, project direct, etc. Financial barriers should be sent to AJ so he can assist in addressing any issues as needed.

## XX. Strategic Planning Brainstorming

Per Mary Coulombe, the National Sign Program needs a strategic plan to define its role, mission, goals, and a plan to get it there.

#### A. Discussion

#### B. Approach & Format

1. Roles. Define the MCX and SAWG and how we make it work.
2. First page 2-3 paragraphs and to the point
3. Business Document. We need to look at our plan as a business document. We also need to speak to our intended audience (HQUSACE). [AJ]

- a. Input from Previous Publications. We may find some value by reviewing a couple of sign articles that were written in the '80s for the leadership to use to present to the nation. Engineering Update [Jack]
4. Buzz Phrases & Catchy Wording
- a. We must be relevant, practical, agile, engaging communication, smooth, creative, resourceful, cost-effective, emphasis reducing liability, benefits of the national branding and consistency, sustainability, current, future.
  - b. Being current, relevant and active.
  - c. Adapting to changes in technology and sign materials; adapt with times; adapt with partners (county/state roads)
  - d. Recycle. We are mandated to recycle. Shouldn't we have a mechanism for doing this?
  - e. Continue to look for ways to make the program more cost efficient. i.e. composite
  - f. Using the word RISK is a word that people link onto.
  - g. Signs are key Assets and asset is another key word
  - h. Signs save lives [Paul]
  - i. Adapt communication needs. Protecting environment. Good stewards taking care of public lands.
5. Practical Relevance
- a. Link to operational mission. Highlights stats regarding signs, business lines, etc. that link all the pieces together.
  - b. Value of what we are doing and what signs mean. Value to Nation - use this catch phrase to link back to how we are highlighting and branding or value throughout the Corps.
6. Defining Ourselves to the Outside. Sell ourselves, using the Who, What, When, Where, Why, How
- a. Who? We are the National Sign Program, endorsed by Bostick (we hope), and endorsed by ER 1130-2-500 and EP 1130-2-500 & 550, etc.
  - b. Gateway. Purpose and mission from the Gateway
  - c. Communicating a Consistent Brand. The Park Service #1 thing is to have that brand. (How much does the National Park Service spend on their sign program?)
  - d. Sign Manual Introduction. Borrow the existing charter language and also the forward to the sign manual. If you took intro from manual, article and letter from General you could use it to get probably 70% of what you are looking for. [Jack]
  - e. Defining Goals. Need to do some additional thinking about what our short and long term goals are.
  - f. Signs are the "voice" of the agency.

## 7. Other Notes

- a. We have to be the “squeaky wheel” to establish our relevance.
  - b. What would happen/what are the consequences if we weren’t here? [Tim]
  - c. We have worked to long and hard to get to where we are with our sign branding to let it fall apart. Jack
  - d. If we sell ourselves better, then Mary can assist in finding additional support for funding and needs to continue good implementation.
  - e. FEM could be the tool to show what funding needs there are and to help manage
  - f. Release of volume 1 is an opportunity to get some exposure
  - g. Having a regular cycle of review/revision. ANSI is revised every 5 years.
- ➔ **Action Item [Tim & Erin]** will check on the Adobe product and perhaps do a test chapter to see if the process will work.
- ➔ **Action Item [SAWG]** mid-April for a conference call to go over volume 1 edits.
- ➔ **Action Item [SAWG]** Please send to AJ the contact info for 1st and 2nd line supervisors and anyone else that a thank you note might benefit