

## NRM CAP – Allen Gwinn Jan-Jul 2024

It's hard to believe how quickly six months can pass, but given that it is July as I write this means that my six month experience as the HQ CAP is coming to a close. Like many others, I was hesitant to apply for the CAP position because it's tough to leave home for six months and tough to leave the work from our "real job" behind to focus on supporting the NRM team. There's always more to do at the office, and given that most of us will eventually return to those real jobs and jump back into them when the temporary assignment ends, the hesitation is understandable. But, wow I'm glad I applied and I'm thankful I was chosen for the CAP.

The first few weeks were a bit uncomfortable learning how to manage the inboxes and taskers, and truly finding how I fit into the NRM team, as I'm sure Rachel Rush, my replacement, is feeling right now. There is a long list of ongoing projects, teams, meetings, and programs that all have opportunities for CAP involvement, and discovering which ones you can help with, or are assigned to, takes a little time. It also has a lot to do with what topics are hot at the time you are serving and what national team meetings are on the immediate horizon.

One of the first things I jumped into was processing the conference approval for the spring RLAT/SAT meeting that was headed for Albuquerque, NM. The work isn't hard once you find examples and discuss with the NRM proponent but given that the CAP position is virtual, there's not a neighboring cubicle where you can ask. Now it requires more autonomy and individual drive to go out and search for things. The RLAT/SAT conference exemption was one example of a project I coordinated, there were many more that helped me see how the team functions. Being involved in the Federal Interagency Council on Recreation (FICOR) and the Federal Interagency Team on Volunteerism (FITV) was pretty cool, interacting with members from all the other recreation providers like NPS, USFS, BLM, and others to help plan policy involving barriers to recreation, transportation limitations for disadvantaged groups, volunteer recognition, and similar issues speaks to the USACE role nationally. Managing the Enterprise Task Management Software Solution (ETMS2) to route documents and packages through leadership was also pretty cool. I previously had some experience with the end result of these processes from my time on the Partnership Advisory Committee involving award and recognition announcement letters, but seeing all the steps in how the document gets signed is pretty eye opening.

Some other things I worked on included providing NRM information to other HQ programs like PAO and Regulatory, supporting Senate information requests, reviewing and providing input on congressional reports, sitting in on Ranger CoP meetings, budget ranking meetings, coordinating award recognition for NRM staff members, helping to plan briefing updates to Ops & Regulatory division Chief Thomas Smith, General Graham, and other senior leaders to name a few. There were lots of opportunities to get involved with various parts of the team, but there is also lots of independent work that takes place.

I would like to thank Jeff Krause and the NRM team for their support during my time as CAP. Everyone was helpful and willing to work with me to accomplish tasks, and as busy as Jeff can be, he always found time when we needed to talk about things. My time as HQ CAP was a great experience and helped learn more about the USACE from a bigger perspective. If you are considering but not really sure, I highly recommend throwing your name in the hat to be considered. The connections, experience, and relationships are things that will help build your career for years to come.