

NRM CAP – Scott Hyatt Jul-Dec 2023

A temporary assignment in Headquarters has been on my career “to-do” list for a long time, and having a virtual opportunity allowed me to complete it sooner than I expected and without the disruption to family that usually comes with a temporary assignment at another location. It was a great experience and I recommend it.

Each CAPs experience will be different depending on where they are in their career, the skills they bring, the projects that are going on when they arrive, and what they want to get out of the assignment.

I thought I would be missing out with a virtual assignment, but then I realized that only two people on the NRM team physically work in HQ. When I did get to visit DC, like many district offices, most staff telework so the building is eerily vacant three days a week. Because the staff is mostly remote, they’ve had a lot of practice and do a great job communicating virtually, bringing you onto the team, and keeping you involved.

I was excited to get to work on some broader projects and issues, so what was my first assignment? Assisting on a Congressional inquiry from my home project. Ok, false start there. But after that it took off!

The team will gladly involve you in their projects and teams, make sure they know you want to be involved. Some highlights for me were working on two reports to Congress required in WRDA 2022, one on developing recreational opportunities in the Appalachian region and one on the recreation infrastructure maintenance backlog, assisting with the OPM Prospect Course, developing portions of the Triennial America the Beautiful Report, and developing the Rec-Assessment expenditure table for use in the budget build. I was able to regularly participate in the Interagency Pass Program team (the interagency team that manages the America the Beautiful Pass program), RLAT, SAT, and occasionally sat in on some FICOR team meetings.

The CAP manages the public inquiries that come into HQ, lots of phone calls and e-mails. You gain an appreciation for how big the Corps is, how vast and dispersed our missions are, and how hard the Corps makes it on the public to figure out who they need to talk to. Most people just need help getting connected with a local office or it is not an NRM issue, they don’t know who they need to talk to and are just calling phone numbers from the HQ website until they get someone to answer.

The CAP also manages the tasker system for the section, a digital system that routes work products for review and approval. Even if you aren’t specifically working on a project you will get to see what the team is working on and who is involved. Products often go to very high levels including the Commanding General, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and on to Congress.

The CAP is a great opportunity, you will gain perspective and make connections all over the Corps, I highly recommend the experience.