



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**441 G STREET NW**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000**

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

CECW-CO

January 2007

**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD**

**SUBJECT: General Riley's Video Conference Call on Natural Resources Management Partnership Program for Division Commanders**

1. MG Don Riley scheduled a VTC with division commanders on 15 December 2006 hrs to: a.) provide an overview of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Management (NRM) Partnership Program; b.) share successful and innovative strategies, techniques and projects used in the implementation of this program; c.) identify obstacles that inhibit the execution of partnerships at each MSC; and d.) create a strategy to overcome these obstacles.

2. Steve Stockton, Deputy Director of Civil Works welcomed the participants and each division introduced their representatives (see enclosure for list of attendees). Also present were John Perez, ASA(CW) and Jim Mietus, OMB. Debra Stokes, Senior Policy Advisor for Partnerships gave an overview of the program and the issues the Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) have been addressing.

a. The program's challenge is to expand the role of non-federal entities in serving the public through partnerships to develop innovative ways to overcome challenges, improve opportunities on public lands and leverage resources. Goals of the program include:

- (1) Increase partnership knowledge at all levels among NRM and affiliated personnel.
- (2) Target increased utilization, alternatives and improvements for funding to leverage but not offset existing resources.
- (3) Build partnering capacity.
- (4) Simplify and improve partnering processes.
- (5) Evaluate existing policies and process and recommend changes to improve success.
- (6) Support the integration of the partnership culture into all NRM business lines (recreation, environmental stewardship and environmental compliance).

b. During the Joint Ventures: Partners in Stewardship Conference in 2003, LTG Strock emphasized his support for the Partnership Program. He and the heads of the six other federal land managing agencies signed a pledge of commitment to work together to advance partnerships and find solutions to common problems. They continue to meet as the Federal Land Management Interagency Roundtable.

CECW-CO

SUBJECT: General Riley's Video Conference Call on Natural Resources Management Partnership Program for Division Commanders

There are numerous resource tools available in support the program including:

- (1) The Partnership Advisory Committee
- (2) Partnership definition and talking points
- (3) The partnership workshop at the annual Association of Partners for Public Lands conference
- (4) NRM Gateway web site - <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/partners/partners.html>
- (5) Partnership CD
- (6) Partnership Business Card
- (7) Challenge Partnership Handshake Program

3. During the discussion, the following challenges experienced with the program were noted:

a. All elements, including NRM, lack the institutional knowledge needed to establish successful partnerships.

b. Fiscal year funding is not conducive to developing partnerships. Continuing Resolution Authority does not help. It is difficult to engage partners when funding is uncertain.

c. Existing authorities and policies do not support decision making or two-way partnering.

d. Divisions/districts are not consistent in policy interpretation.

(1) Decision making is hampered by the widespread fear of taking risks where authority and policy are vague.

(2) Decision making support provided by different districts results in widespread inconsistencies and duplication of effort.

(3) District OCs vary in their ability to support the program due to different knowledge levels.

(4) Other federal agencies have large legal staffs to interpret and support well defined policy and legal determinations.

e. Existing forms and agreements are daunting and intimidating to our partners. There is an implied lack of trust that the partner will not fulfill their commitment and we make the non-federal partner assumes all of the risk. Operation managers are uncertain about what agreement to use for the various types of partnering efforts. There is a need to create clear definitions and templates to simplify the process.

CECW-CO

SUBJECT: General Riley's Video Conference Call on Natural Resources Management Partnership Program for Division Commanders

f. The majority of grants available to the Corps and partners use reimbursable funds. Regulations require funds be provided to the Corps before work can be accomplished. This inhibits our ability to utilize Federal Highway Administration authority and other state funding sources. When a non-federal source of funds has been approved for use by the Corps or a partner, the Corps should be able to obligate funds based on approved grants, regardless of whether the Corps has actually received the funds.

g. Partnerships are difficult to pursue due to limited staffing. Opportunities to search for partners are reduced because developing partnerships is very labor-intensive.

h. Currently, contracting is the only method the Corps has to give local governments and non-profit partners money. Sister agencies are able to use other methods including grants and cooperative agreements.

i. Real estate regulations require outgrants in situations where other agencies use cooperative agreements. In many cases, leaseholders are our best partners. Traditional outgrant agreements define a tenant/landlord relationship which limit flexibility and restrict collaborative management. We need to provide tools which encourage rather than restrict long-term joint operation and collaborative management. Collaborative management builds partnership capacity. Outgrant management does not allow sharing of resources and long-term sustainability.

j. OMBIL partnership data is lacking and the right reporting data is not being collected.

k. The Corps as a community must recognize the value of partnering at all levels and in all business lines. Agency culture needs to promote partnering as part of the leadership/management model.

l. The number of partnerships agreements cannot be used as a performance measure to determine success. It takes time to develop the relations needed to create the foundation on which to build a partnership. Sometimes an agreement is signed, sometimes not. The time and effort expended on developing the relationship has value and must be considered regardless of the outcome.

m. Support elements such as Office of Counsel, Real Estate, Contracting and Resource Management take conservative approaches to partnering efforts.

4. The MSCs provided examples of practices in their divisions that were unique, innovative, and/or highly effective examples of collaborative practices. These are found in Appendix B.

CECW-CO

SUBJECT: General Riley's Video Conference Call on Natural Resources Management Partnership Program for Division Commanders

5. The PAC and MSCs offered the following recommendations. These are grouped by whether they are in the process of being implemented, need additional legal assistance or senior leadership coordination and legislative action.

a. Items being developed for decision/action:

(1) Review OMBIL and ensure the correct reporting data is collected. Coordinate with the OMBIL user group to create an annual MSC report using this data.

(2) Assist the non-profit group developing a foundation to support the NRM program. A page on the NRM Gateway will keep the field informed of coordination efforts.

(3) Designate and elevate specific tags in RecBEST and ES-BEST targeting partnership projects as priority funding packages.

b. Items that need additional legal assistance to move forward:

(1) In the effort to achieve success with the partnership program, additional counsel involvement is necessary. Legal support will be required to address authority and policy issues, and to assist in the development of a legislative package (a "Partnership Enhancement Act") to tackle shortfalls in our ability to participate in partnerships. It is also essential to avoid each district/division reinterpreting policy issues. One solution to finding this manpower may be for the position to reside in a division office, but be a national asset in coordination with the Chief Office of Counsel. During the VTC, NWD stepped forward and offered to lead this effort with their newly created "regional center of expertise" on partnering within their Office of Counsel.

(2) Develop a Partnership Legal Primer and field guidance based on Department of the Interior model.

(3) Extend partnership authorities to leaseholders. Synchronize Real Estate and Operations policies and regulations to streamline partnering process. Encourage agreements that allow for in-kind services to be used as rental or fee offsets. Allow the use of Corps funds on outgrant lands as part of partnering activities.

(4) Simplify forms and agreements.

c. Items requiring senior leadership, OC and legislative involvement:

CECW-CO

SUBJECT: General Riley's Video Conference Call on Natural Resources Management Partnership Program for Division Commanders

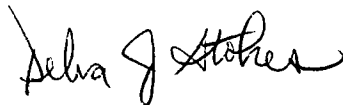
(1) The Corps has accumulated authorities for working cooperatively over many years, and at times the complex patchwork of existing authorities has resulted in inconsistent interpretation and time-consuming processes. A "Partnership Enhancement Act" would give Congress an opportunity to provide clarification and update authorities to the cooperative conservation relationships embraced by other federal land managing agencies.

(2) Investigate alternative funding opportunities to help leverage existing resources. As a start, request fee retention authority for recreation and lease fees and use part of it to fund partnership activities.

(3) Establish multi-year funding sources to accommodate long-term partnerships.

(4) Allow obligation of funds to support partner's grant requirements.

6. Culture change must take place at all levels. Leadership must encourage the development of partnerships and understand there will be some risk involved that they must be willing to take. The Partnership Program's outreach component and its emphasis on community involvement and community connections is critical to the Corps future success in attracting outside interest and investment in NRM activities and facilities. If we truly want to "lean forward in the saddle" and make innovative things happen in the currently financially constrained atmosphere, the NRM program must have the ability to work directly with the private sector and others through partnership opportunities.



DEBRA J. STOKES, CPRP  
Senior Policy Advisor for Partnerships

**ATTENDEES**

USACE Headquarters

Steve Stockton  
Debra Stokes  
Larry Lang  
Mary Coulombe  
Rhonda Jones

John Perez, ASA (CW)  
Jim Mietus, OMB

Great Lakes and Ohio River Division

COL Smith, Deputy Commander  
Mike Loesch  
Mark Wilmes

Mississippi Valley Division

COL Albert M. Bleakley, Deputy  
Commander  
Jim Hannon

North Atlantic Division

Lloyd Caldwell  
Linda Monte  
Mike Johnson

Northwest Division

Karen Durham-Aguilera  
Don Dunwoody  
Greg Miller  
Kevin Paff  
Allen Chin  
John Eft

Pacific Ocean Division

Helen Stuppelbeen  
COL Raymond K. Scrocco, Deputy  
Commander

South Atlantic Division

COL Benjamin H. Butler, Deputy  
Commander  
Brad Keshlear

Southwestern Division

BG Jeffrey J. Dorko  
Michael Fallon  
Joel Trautmann  
Larry Bogue  
Jeff Boutwell

South Pacific Division

COL Richard G. Thompson, Deputy  
Commander  
Phil Turner  
Chris Gallagher

Engineer Research and Development Center

Beth Fleming  
Scott Jackson

## EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS

### **Friends of Caesar Creek Cooperating Association (Waynesville, OH)**

Annually, the Friends provide approximately \$12,000 worth of donations and in-kind services for various programs to support the management of Caesar Creek Lake. They publish and provide specialized materials including a popular detailed hiking contour trail map, a birding check list, a fossil guide and other site specific materials. They have donated interpretive displays and made minor purchases to enhance displays at the project's visitor center. The Friends also provide in-depth educational programs on subjects including fossils, reptiles, birding and other natural resources programs, and provide supplies, recognition patches and food for the Junior Ranger program, the annual volunteer recognition dinner and the Green Up Day (clean up) involving 300 volunteers doing work projects around the lake.

### **Regional Legal Partnership Center**

NWD has established a Regional Legal Partnership Center of Expertise by designating a position as their "go-to" attorney for partnership issues throughout NWD. This could be the model for a future HQ Legal Center of Expertise for the entire Corps.

### **Bashline Memorial Project**

Baltimore District and the Ruffed Grouse Society signed an MOU and dedicated two unique habitat improvement projects at Raystown Lake in memory of a well-known outdoor writer and conservationist. The Society has committed to providing long-term financial and technical assistance to ensure their success. To date, the Society has contributed nearly \$55,000 in contributions and in-kind services to the project. The Corps has more than matched the funds with staff labor and contracts funded through revenues from timber sale activities. Activities include small-block timber harvest operations to provide the dense, young forest habitats and the establishment of conifer seedlings and fruiting shrub plantings to augment local food sources and provide cover. Other activities include trail improved that offers a wildlife habitat management theme with interpretive stations designed to educate the user on the benefits of habitat manipulation, including timber harvest, plantings, wetland habitat, and tree identification to create an unique outdoor "classroom." In 2005, the project received \$10,000 from the Corps Challenge Partnership Handshake Program to provide new educational wayside trail signs.

### **Friends of Quechee Gorge (FQG)**

New England District and FQG partnered to plan, design and build a visitor center for Quechee Gorge at North Hartland Lake. This partnership began in 1993 when a group of stakeholders started to meet on a regular basis to discuss their concerns about preserving the Gorge area which had become a local economic engine based on tourism and a unique natural resource. Partners include the Vermont Department of Forests and Parks, the Quechee Chamber of Commerce, the Vermont Department of Transportation (Veterans), and the Town of Hartford, Vermont, including the Village of Quechee (their Planning Office acted as moderator and grant writing agency for the partnership).

In 2001 as part of a challenge partnering agreement with the Corps, the partners received a grant of \$1.3 million for the design and construction of the visitor center and related facilities. It became operational in the summer of 2005 and the Corps signed a partnering agreement with the Quechee Chamber of Commerce to operate and maintain the facility.