

MANAGING FOR EXCELLENCE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS – Team 4
Decision Making

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Action Item Statement From The Managing for Excellence Action Plan: Identify structured decision-making process gaps and potential remedies with particular attention to the recommendations of *Review of Decision Making in Reclamation*.

Scope Statement from Managing for Excellence Project Management Plan: The M4E Decision-making Team (Team 4) will build off past efforts to assess issues with Reclamation's decision-making process raised in the National Research Council and make recommendations for continuous improvement. Using the work of the previous Decision Process Team of 2004 as a starting point, Team 4 will assess how well Reclamation's current decision-making processes support consistent implementation of policy and long term goals. Team 4 will identify the extent to which recommendations and approaches in the 2004 report are being implemented, including positive results, lessons learned and gaps where best approaches are not being implemented widely or consistently. Upon completion of the analysis, Team 4 will make recommendations to increase the implementation of best practices and address gaps where there are identified problems with a lack of structured and consistent decision making processes.

Approach and Methodology: To accomplish the objectives, Team 4 identified a number of important questions that needed to be answered:

- 1) How familiar are decision makers in Reclamation with the DPT Report and the tools provided?
- 2) Have the tools identified in the DPT Report, or something similar, been used/incorporated into Reclamation's decision-making processes?
- 3) What progress has been made in the past 2 years in implementing or addressing the DPT Report's major recommendations?
- 4) Has the quality and accountability of decisions made in Reclamation improved?

In order to understand the impact of the DPT Report, Team 4 reviewed the report and met with the DPT members to receive a briefing on the process, the thinking and steps used to develop the DPT Report and on the dynamics within the organization that lead to the various conclusions and recommendations.

As a result of its review of the DPT Report, the meeting with the DPT members and other interviews and discussions, Team 4 concluded that the DPT Report reflected a thorough and comprehensive review of the steps and activities that comprise Reclamation's decision-making processes. The DPT provided sound recommendations and offered useful and potentially effective tools to aid in the decision-making process. The DPT Report also included a comprehensive review of the current academic and professional thinking in this area. Therefore, Team 4 determined that it would not revisit the processes, conclusions or recommendations of the report, but would focus on how the report, and its information, has been implemented. In other words, to "*take the pulse of the organization*" as it relates to Reclamation's decision-making processes.

In order to gauge the use and implementation of available decision-making tools in Reclamation, whether formal or informal, Team 4 developed a 10 question survey which was distributed to decision makers throughout Reclamation's regions, area offices and offices in Denver and Washington, DC. Once completed, Team 4 reviewed and analyzed the results and then came to a set of conclusions about the use of decision-making tools in Reclamation and the views of its decision makers.

Observations Related to Other M4E Tasks:

Team 4 endorses the efforts of M4E Team 5 to clarify the principles concerning the consistent delegation of authority for decision making (i.e. is it intended to be centralized and to what level?).

Team 4 endorses the efforts of M4E Teams 6 and 7 to issue policies and guidance on documenting significant decisions that may have impact on Reclamation, as a whole, while considering and incorporating local circumstances.

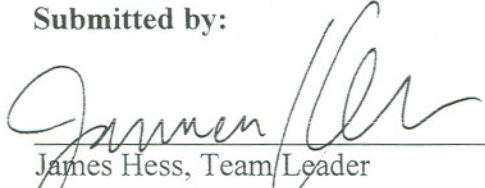
Deliverables: Team 4 developed a summary report of survey results, observations and recommendations to be considered. The report was available for a 2 week review and comment period, after which the comments received were considered and incorporated, where appropriate.

Recommendation: The Commissioner should direct those specifically identified to take the appropriate steps to address the following recommendations:

- All Directors should communicate decisions that have been made which have Reclamation-wide implications.
- The Director, OPPS, should evaluate the potential for incorporating Departmental guidance related to the compilation of Decision Files and Administrative Records into the Reclamation Manual. As appropriate, OPPS should participate in any Departmental effort to address the subject matter in the Departmental Manual.

- The Chief of Staff should communicate to Reclamation staff the role of the RLT and associated processes, including how related information will be shared.

Submitted by:


James Hess, Team Leader 12/21/06
Date


Roseann Gonzales, Executive Sponsor 12/21/06
Date


Larry Todd, Deputy Commissioner, PAB 12/21/06
Date