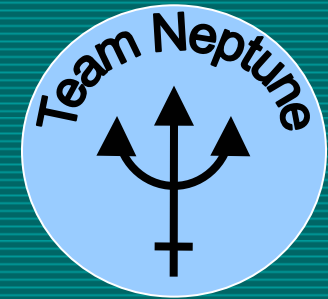




# Team Neptune's Critical Think Piece

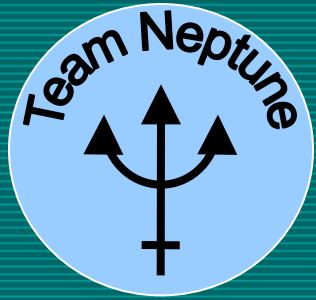


## USACE Challenges and Opportunities

September 2006

Martin Gonzalez  
Vechere' Lampley

Joan Lanier  
Jason Needham

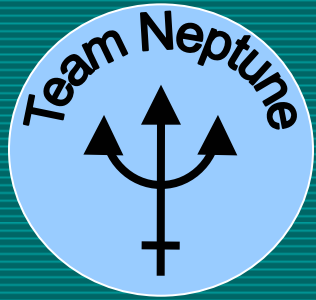


# **USACE**

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

### **Purpose**

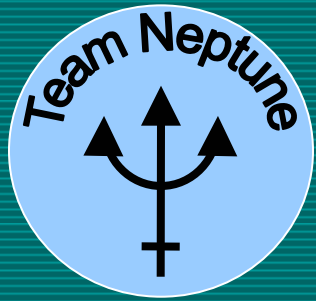
**To identify challenges in the Corps, as seen from a district staff perspective, and to provide our leadership possible solutions.**



# USACE Challenges

- 1. Unprepared Supervisors**
- 2. Erosion of Planning Expertise**
- 3. Balancing Resources**
- 4. Infrastructure Education**



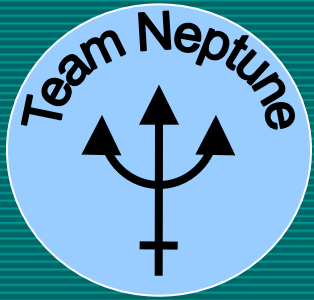


# USACE Challenge

## Unprepared Supervisors

### *Current Practice*

- Supervisors selected from technical pool
- Training “encouraged” post-selection
  - 50% obtained within 1 year
- Office poll: 90% unprepared for role

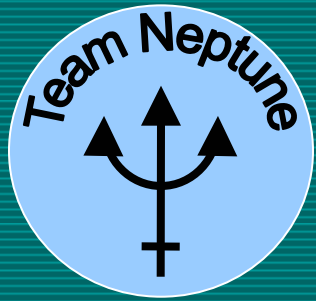


# USACE Challenge

## Unprepared Supervisors

### *What is wrong?*

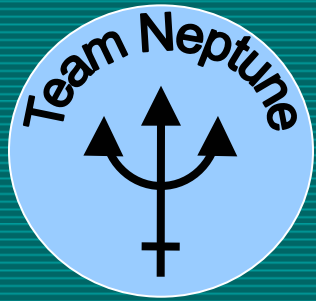
- Good technical capability  $\neq$  Good supervisor
- Lack leadership skills
- Removes high performers from their job
- No do-overs
- Bad feedback = loss of respect
- End result: cynicism and low moral



# USACE Opportunity Unprepared Supervisors

## *Improve training*

- **Mandatory training prior to application**
  - Weeding process
  - Start prepared
- **One-year probation or temporary assignment**
- **Assessment**

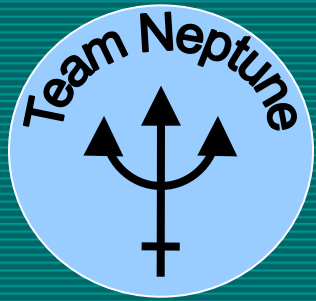


# USACE Opportunity Unprepared Supervisors

## *Improve feedback mechanism*

- Rating system
- Professional courage and commitment
- Empowerment
  - Provide boundaries – rating goals
  - Share information – ratings by district/lab/FAO

***“A supervisor without information and boundaries cannot act responsible, but one with the necessary information cannot help but act responsibly.”***

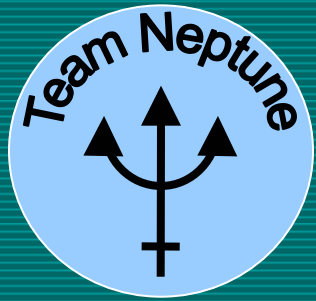


# USACE Opportunity Unprepared Supervisors

## *More technical opportunities*

- Create more tech 13s, 14s, and 15s
- Improve efficiency
- Improve supervisor pool



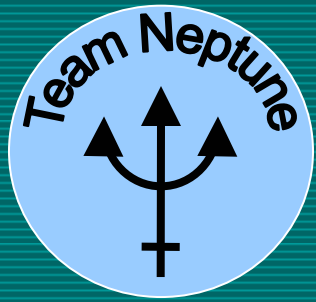


# USACE Challenge

## Erosion of Planning Expertise

### *What is wrong?*

- Loss of Corps Planning Expertise is significant
- Many experienced Corps planners are retiring
- Fewer younger employees are attracted to the plan formulation arena



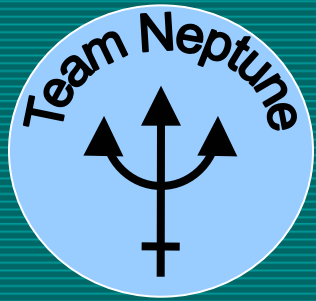
# USACE Challenge

## Erosion of Planning Expertise

*“Reasons are complex but advent of Project Management has contributed to loss”*

### *Project Manager Functions*

- Lead Teams in overall project execution
- “Face” of Corps to public and stakeholders for specific projects
- Consistent, familiar presence to sponsor
- Responsible for budget/schedules

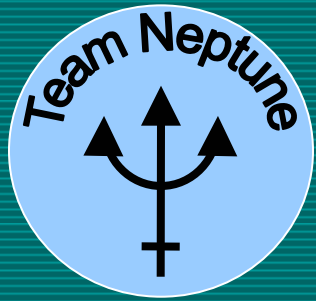


# USACE Challenge

## Erosion of Planning Expertise

### *Patterns Developed*

- PM qualifications are most embodied by planners; exodus of planners to PM
- Higher pay due to more elevated stature and increase in overall project responsibility
- Project Manager now seen as the lead even during preparation of study documents
- Overlapping responsibilities in districts where planner and PM are distinct create friction

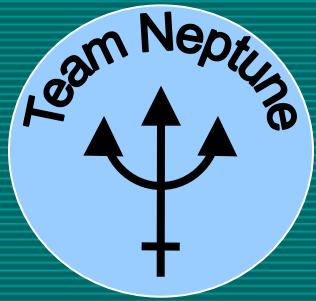


# USACE Challenge

## Erosion of Planning Expertise

### *Effects*

- Planner leadership role diminished – loss of morale inevitable particularly amongst more seasoned planners – those eligible to retire
- Younger, incoming planners view planning as “stepping stone” to project management – where grades and clout are.
- Quality of planning documents has suffered particularly where the PM is dual hated and lacks planning background

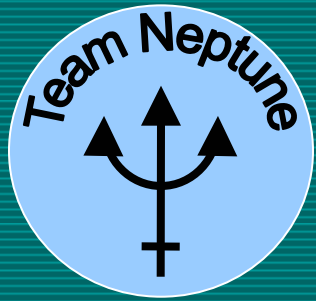


# USACE Opportunity

## Erosion of Planning Expertise

### *Recover Planning Expertise*

- Become much more aggressive in creating incentives to cut back on number of planners retiring, i.e., increase pay, flexible or part time hours, etc.
- Retired senior planners are a significant resource to the organization. Recommend creation of a stand alone mentoring program using retired senior planners.

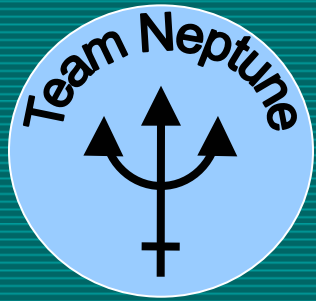


# USACE Opportunity

## Erosion of Planning Expertise

### *Emphasize Planners Role*

- Apply consistent policy across Corps as to whether or not project manager and planner are “dual-hatted” or distinct.
- In any event the Planner should be the “manager” during study phase of a project.

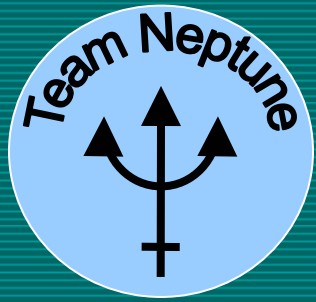


# USACE Opportunity

## Erosion of Planning Expertise

### *Leadership Training*

- To lead is not to supervise nor manage. Leadership development and training for planners must become more deliberate.
- Make the Corps healthy leadership programs mandatory:
  - Planning Associates
    - Leadership Development Program

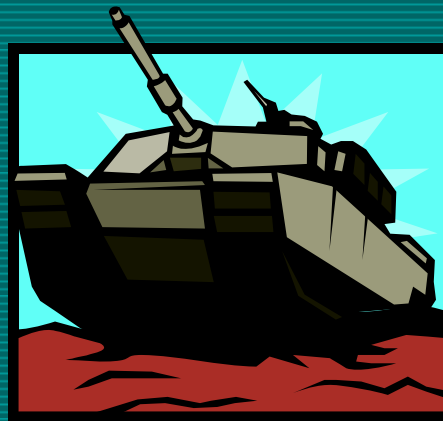
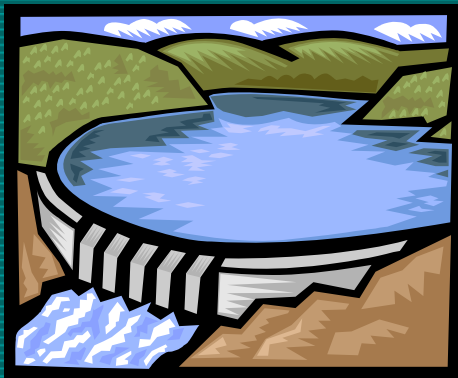


# USACE Challenge

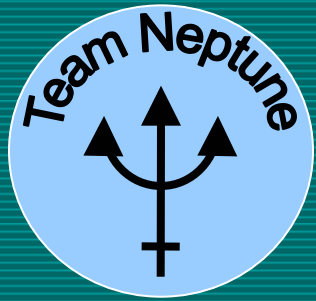
## Balancing Resources

When war and natural disasters occur, Corps of Engineers resources shift between:

- Civil works and military missions and
- Specific geographical regions





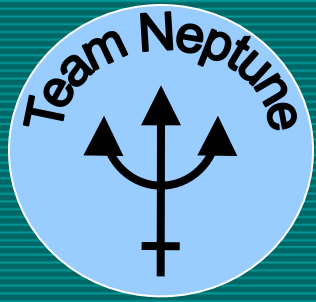


# USACE Challenge

## Balancing Resources

### *What is wrong?*

- Inefficient completion of Civil Works projects
  - Inconsistent presence on individual projects
  - Potential loss of Planning capability throughout
  - Increased backlog of uncompleted projects
    - Reprogramming/Project Coop. Agreements restrictions

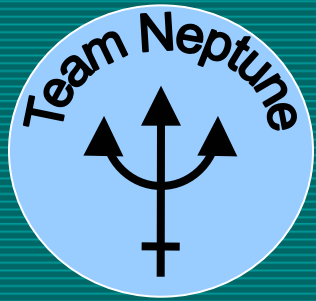


# USACE Opportunity Balancing Resources

*How?*

- Build on framework of 2012

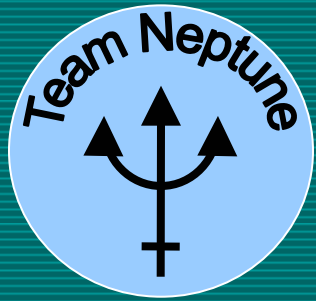




# USACE Opportunity Balancing Resources

*How can resources be used more effectively  
to improve Efficiency?*

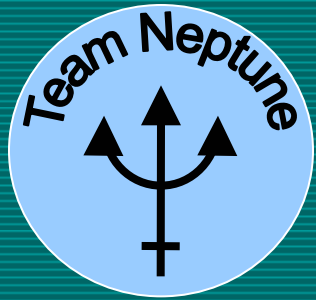
- National as well as Regional
- Re-structure Planning within Districts
- Increase Planning Capability



# USACE Opportunity Balancing Resources

*How can resources be used more effectively to improve Efficiency?*

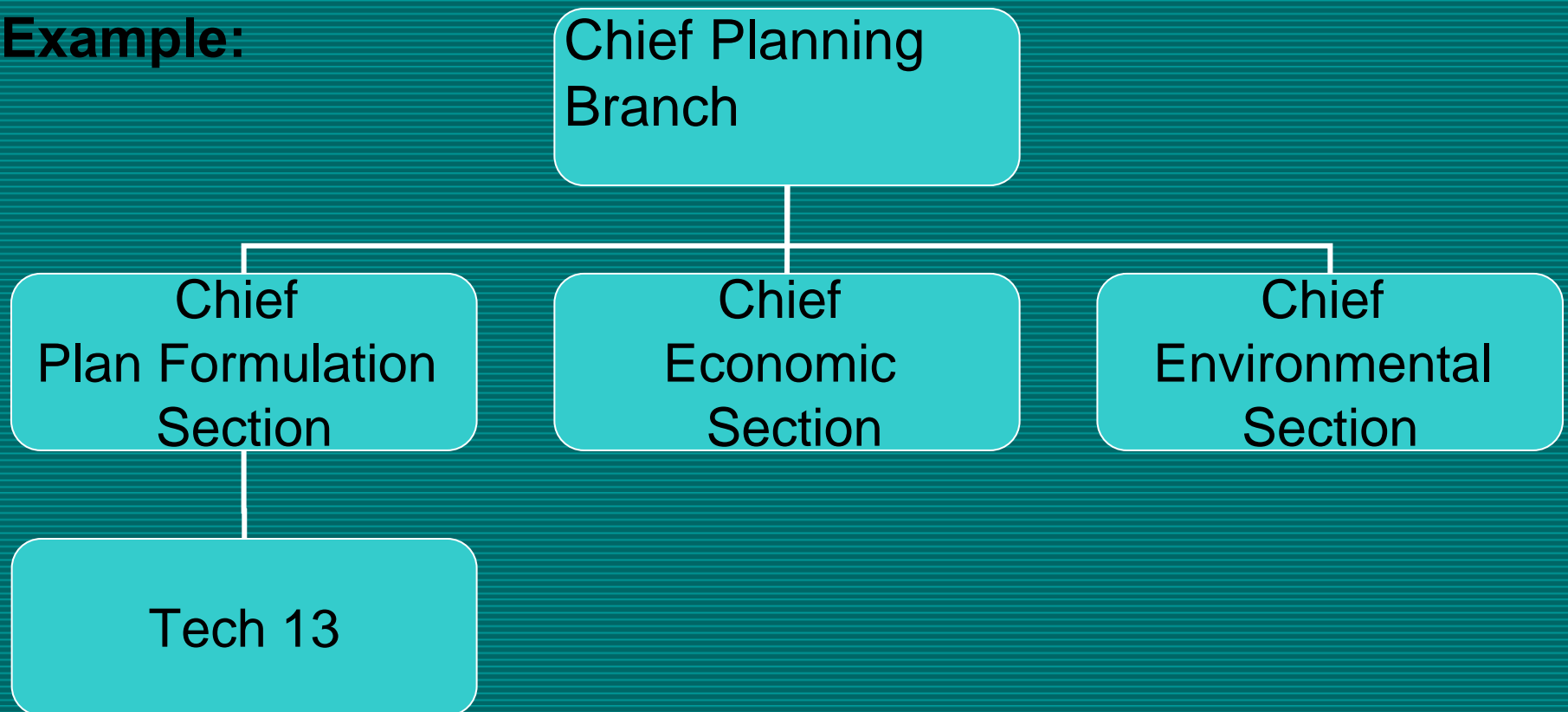
- National as well as Regional
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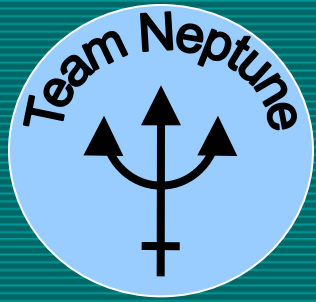


# USACE Opportunity Balancing Resources

## *Re-Structure Planning*

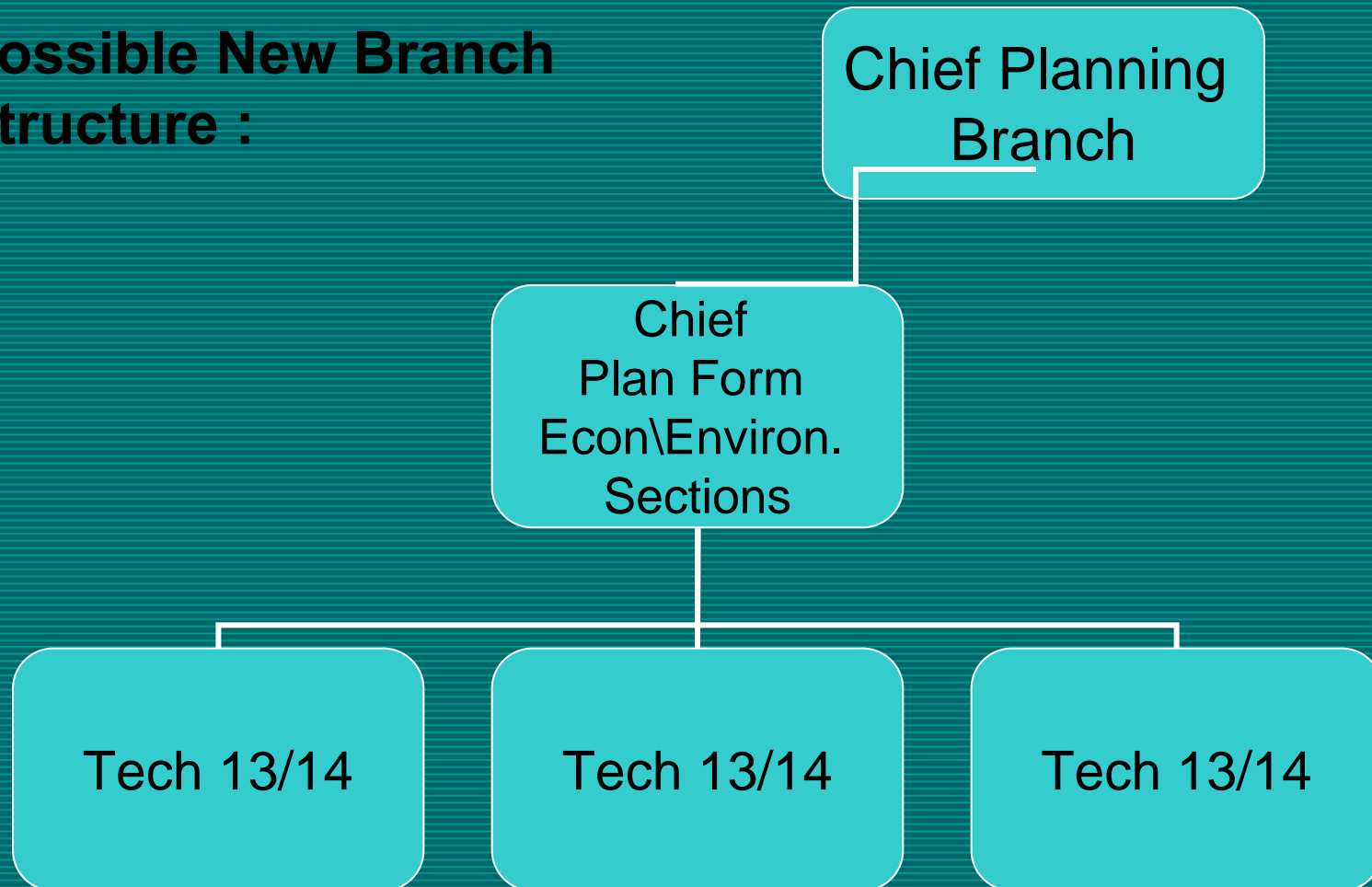
**Example:**

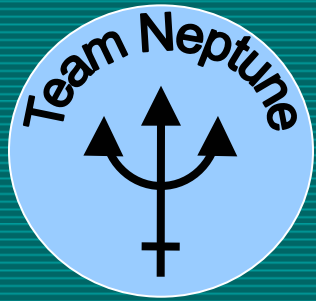




# USACE Opportunity Balancing Resources

**Possible New Branch  
Structure :**

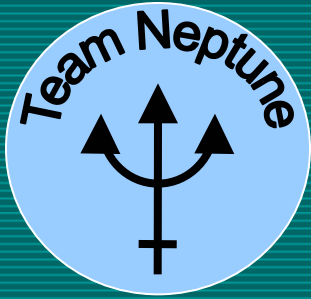




# USACE Opportunity **Balancing Resources**

## *Increase Capability*

- **Cross train District personnel to backfill CWAT team positions through developmental assignments**
- **Fund full time leadership position per Community of Practice**
- **Expand toolbox - Create online project depository**



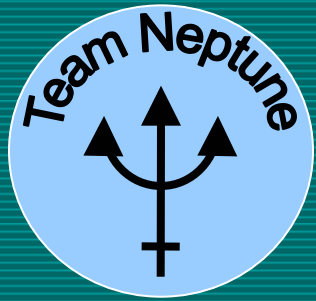
# USACE Opportunity Balancing Resources

## *Improved Efficiency*

Performance Indicators	Investigations	Construction	O & M	Flood Damage Red. & Emergency
Present	Red	Amber	Red	Red
Future	Green	Green	Green	Green

“Green” (Met) “Amber” (partially met) or “Red” (not met)





# USACE Opportunity Balancing Resources

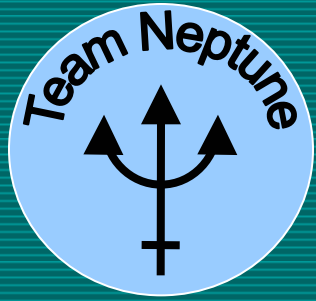
Improve  
Efficiency



Balanced  
Resources

=

Reduced Backlog & Maintained Capability



# USACE Challenge Infrastructure Education

*How are we doing?*

## ASCE Report Card

Bridges: Grade = **C**

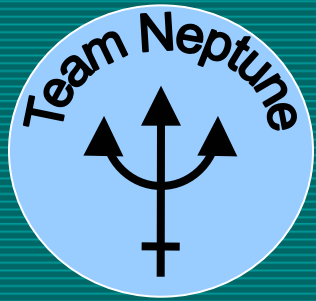
- Deficiency decreased
- 2000 – 28.5%
- 2003 – 27.1%
- **Cost for next 20 years  
\$188 billion**



Navigable Waterways: Grade = **D-**

- 257 Locks and 12,000 miles of inland waterway, nearly 50% are functionally obsolete
- By 2020, 80% will be obsolete
- **Cost \$125 billion**



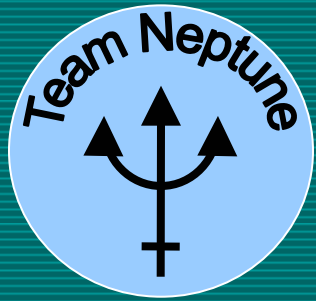


# USACE Challenge

## Infrastructure Education

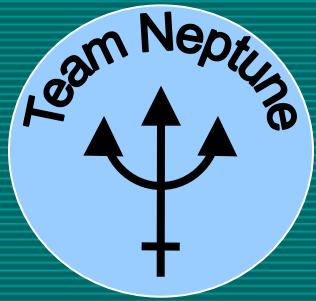
***Leaders should educate USACE's workforce on...***

- Infrastructure needs
- Every person within USACE contributes to the process
- Making the connection with infrastructure and public safety to optimize the Nation's investment



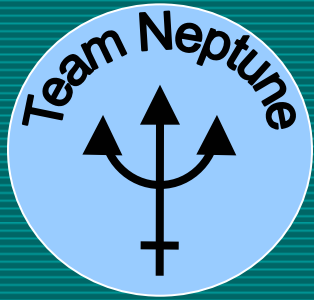
# USACE Opportunity Infrastructure Education

- **Mandatory Civil Works Orientation for all employees**
- **Certify persons within each district to teach course**
- **Make Civil Works Orientation a line item in Project Management Plans (PMP)**



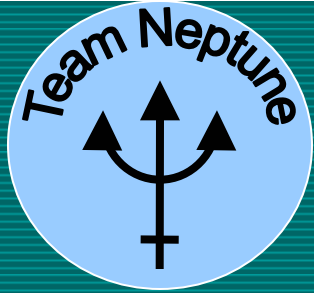
# USACE Opportunity Infrastructure Education

- Encourage local sponsor to attend civil works orientation
- Take opportunities to learn about the sponsor's business practice



# USACE Opportunity Infrastructure Education

- Public speaking events at schools / civic organizations / throughout district / division geographic boundaries
- Invite interdisciplinary team members
- Mandatory Home Office Back Briefs (HOBB)



# Challenges & Opportunities

## Conclusions

- **Unprepared supervisors**
  - ✓ Create more technical advancement opportunities
  - ✓ Make supervisor training mandatory
- **Erosion of planning expertise**
  - ✓ Planner/project manager as one
  - ✓ Recruit retirees back as part-time mentors
- **Balancing resources**
  - ✓ National as well as Regional culture – Creation of CWAT
  - ✓ Restructure – Decrease # of supervisors/increase tech. 13's
- **Infrastructure Education**
  - ✓ Inform and empower personnel of our infrastructure needs