

Regulatory Guidance Letter 86-10

SUBJECT: Special Area Management Plans (SAMPS)

DATE: October 2, 1986

EXPIRES: December 31, 1988

1. The 1980 Amendments to the Coastal Zone Management Act define the SAMP process as "a comprehensive plan providing for natural resource protection and reasonable coastal-dependent economic growth containing a detailed and comprehensive statement of policies, standards and criteria to guide public and private uses of lands and waters; and mechanisms for timely implementation in specific geographic areas within the coastal zone." This process of collaborative interagency planning within a geographic area of special sensitivity is just as applicable in non-coastal areas.
2. A good SAMP reduces the problems associated with the traditional case-by-case review. Developmental interests can plan with predictability and environmental interests are assured that individual and cumulative impacts are analyzed in the context of broad ecosystem needs.
3. Because SAMPS are very labor intensive, the following ingredients should usually exist before a district engineer becomes involved in a SAMP:
 - a. The area should be environmentally sensitive and under strong developmental pressure.
 - b. There should be a sponsoring local agency to ensure that the plan fully reflects local needs and interests.
 - c. Ideally there should be full public involvement in the planning and development process.
 - d. All parties must express a willingness at the outset to conclude the SAMP process with a definitive regulatory product (see next paragraph).
4. An ideal SAMP would conclude with two products: 1) appropriate local/state approvals and a Corps general permit (GP) or abbreviated processing procedure (APP) for activities in specifically defined situations; and 2) a local/state restriction and/or an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 404(c) restriction (preferably both) for undesirable activities. An individual permit review may be conducted for activities that do not fall into either category above. However, it should represent a small number of the total cases addressed by the SAMP. We recognize that an ideal SAMP is difficult to achieve, and, therefore, it is intended to represent an upper limit rather than an absolute requirement.
5. Do not assume that an environmental impact statement is automatically required to develop a SAMP.

6. EPA's program for advance identification of disposal areas found at 40 CFR 230.80 can be integrated into a SAMP process.

7. In accordance with this guidance, district engineers are encouraged to participate in development of SAMPs. However, since development of a SAMP can require a considerable investment of time, resources, and money, the SAMP process should be entered only if it is likely to result in a definitive regulatory product as defined in paragraph 4. above.

8. This guidance expires 31 December 1988 unless sooner revised or rescinded.

FOR THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS: