

JULY 2015

Collaboration Corner



Integration of Collaboration



In This Issue:

This issue focuses on the integration of collaboration. Inside find the introduction of a spectrum of engagement, interagency collaborative efforts, and examples of stakeholder engagement from the field. The purpose of this issue is to show how USACE is strengthening and institutionalizing collaborative efforts in order to make collaboration a sustainable, routine part of USACE planning and implementation.

This newsletter is produced by the USACE Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center (CPCX), located at the Institute for Water Resources. For questions, comments, or to submit articles, contact Maria Lantz at maria.t.lantz@usace.army.mil.

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Cover Image: Baltimore District places shell to restore oyster reefs in the Chesapeake Bay tributary of Harris Creek, part of an interagency partnership to collaboratively restore oysters. (U.S. Army Photo by Sean Fritzges)

Announcements

JULY
23
Leadership Strategies
Webinar
Introduction to Facilitating
Groups: [RSVP](#) Online

SEPT
9
IAP2 North American
Conference
Portland, OR: Register [here](#)

AUG
19
Facilitation Webinar
Facilitating a Conceptual Model
for Interacting Multiple Stressor
Events: [Add to Calendar](#)

OCT
6
USIECR Training Course
301: Facilitation Fundamentals in
Arlington, VA: Register [here](#)

AUG
25
USIECR Training Course
410: Advanced Multi-Party
Negotiation of Environmental
Disputes in Aurora, CO:
Register [here](#)

DEC
7
NCTC Training Course
Collaboration and Conflict
Transformation in Multi-Party
Processes; For more information
contact [Seth Cohen](#)

Featured Resource

[Wiki Library](#): Virtual Collaboration Tools

This wiki library covers the free and for fee General Services Administration (GSA) approved virtual collaboration tools focused on document sharing and knowledge management.

Why a wiki library? A wiki library is a document library in which users (YOU!) can easily edit any page. The library grows organically by linking existing pages together or by creating links to new pages. If a user finds a link to an uncreated page, he or she can follow the link and create the page. By utilizing wiki pages to document the latest and greatest virtual collaboration tools available to us, we can keep this page up to date and off the stack of dusty reports.

Connect

We would like to hear about your stories, events, or announcements that would be of interest to our collaboration community.

Copy the [CoP Calendar](#) to your Outlook to stay connected!



Introducing the USACE Spectrum of Engagement:

An effort to clarify how we work with stakeholders

By Seth B. Cohen, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX)

Collaboration has become a “buzz word” throughout the Federal government and it is a term that is at times both overused and misinterpreted by agency representatives and stakeholders alike. Various types of stakeholder engagement are often simply referred to as “collaboration” or a “collaborative process.”

Collaboration in USACE is required by the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and many other laws. It is also promoted through our cost-share structure, and many of our programs, such as Silver Jackets, Planning Assistance to States, Dam and Levee Safety, Continuing Authorities Program, Flood Plain Management Services, and watershed-informed budgeting.

For some, collaboration might mean shared decision-making, while for others it is simply coordination and information sharing. But conflicts can arise and escalate when parties who are working together have a different understanding of the intended level of involvement and the anticipated outcomes. This is critical for USACE since almost everything we do to manage and regulate the nation’s water, and other critical missions, involves engaging a myriad of stakeholders and consulting with sovereign Native American Tribes.

A stakeholder means every individual or entity that has or perceives themselves to have a stake (an interest) or that is impacted by a project, study etc. Members of the public potentially impacted by a project are stakeholders. Native American Tribes that have an interest or “stake” in a Corps CW project or Regulatory issue should not be referred to as regular “stakeholders” and should be consulted based on Tribal Consultation guidance.

To address the inconsistent use of the term collaboration an effort was undertaken by members of USACE’s Collaboration & Public Participation Community of Practice’s Steering Committee (CPP CoP) and USACE’s Conflict Resolution & Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX) to improve collaboration and other forms of public involvement across USACE. This sub-committee has worked with consultants from the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to investigate how Corps employees understand what it means to collaborate in USACE and to determine

the best ways to promote more effective collaboration and other forms of stakeholder engagement. Discussions with, and surveys of, select personnel across Divisions and Districts confirmed that the term “collaboration” is used formally and informally in different circumstances.

To achieve greater consistency in USACE stakeholder engagement, we are proposing a more rigorous standard be adopted to clarify what is meant when Corps personnel discuss collaboration in their projects or when a stakeholder engagement or public participation process is called “collaborative.” As a result, we have drafted a USACE Spectrum of Engagement to help staff to develop and communicate the appropriate level of engagement with all stakeholders.

The Spectrum of Engagement provides a broad and inclusive way to gauge how to best engage USACE’s cost-share partners and other stakeholders, including members of the public who are potentially impacted by any study or project. The spectrum is not a new idea and was only slightly modified for USACE from accepted models used by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR). The intent of this USACE Spectrum is to highlight the various methods and practices already used across the Corps and to ensure a better understanding of how different forms of engagement might be used to achieve different results. The spectrum also helps to clarify how collaboration varies from other forms of engagement that often get used interchangeably by government agencies and others who convene multi-party efforts.

To “collaborate” as defined in the USACE and other spectrums means: “To work with internal and external stakeholders and the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. This includes sharing information, exploring options and potential solutions, and seeking agreement on decisions and actions.” The USACE commitment for “collaborate” suggests to all involved parties that “We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in (understanding the needs, analyzing scenarios) and formulating solutions. We will incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions.” A variety of tools/techniques are suggested in the spectrum to accomplish collaboration.

CPCX encourages the Corps to move from simply informing or consulting stakeholders to more robust involvement with stakeholders, including collaborative methods for problem solving that can best guide the agency's final decision and implementation strategies.

We hope that you will contact us with your feedback on this spectrum draft and also help to promote this spectrum tool with leadership and staff at Districts, Divisions, and Headquarters.

Increased engagement with members of the public, Tribes, and agency stakeholders throughout the life-cycle of a study or project, or a regulatory permitting process, can help to:

- Avoid confrontations and conflict, minimize cost overruns and study delays
- Use the strengths and knowledge of community and partners to get the best information and save USACE time
- Improve decisions by incorporating stakeholder data, input, and ideas
- Formulate more creative solutions
- Identify the priorities of stakeholders or a given community
- Help build trust with the public and other agencies
- Increase understanding and acceptance of the decision, reducing litigation and increasing likelihood of implementing the decision

SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT DRAFT

INCREASING LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT 

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Description	Provide information to assist others in understanding the issues, options and decision(s) being made.	Informs others about a decision-making process and also seeks their feedback on analysis, options and proposed actions.	Works directly with others to ensure their issues and concerns are understood, considered, and directly reflected in the options developed and decisions made. Feedback is provided on how their input influenced the final decision.	To work with internal and external stakeholders and the public in each aspect of the decision including sharing information, exploring options and potential solutions, and seeking agreement on decisions and actions.	Works directly with others to share information, options, and potential solutions in order for them to make the decision.
Objective	Provide balanced and objective information to others so they better understand the issues, options considered, analysis, and final decision(s).	To obtain feedback from others on data, place-based or specialty knowledge, analyses, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with others throughout the process to ensure that their knowledge, concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To work with others in the decision including the development of data, methods, priorities, options and the identification of the preferred solution.	To accept the decisions made by others (in USACE, this might be accomplished by accepting what others, i.e a Community Coalition, decides is best for their community).
USACE Commitment	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed and listen to and acknowledge input, place-based knowledge, concerns, and we will provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how the input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in (understanding the needs, analyzing scenarios) and formulating solutions. We will incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions.	We will implement what you decide. Or, provide you with information and tools to support your efforts.
Tools/ Techniques	Fact Sheets Web Sites; Open Houses; Site visits/Tours; E-Listserves	Public Comment Focus; Group Surveys Public; Meetings Webinars; Feedback forms; Limited focus groups	Workshops Deliberate polling (of stakeholders) Focus groups Public meetings	Advisory Committee; (Stakeholder) Working Groups; Charettes; Participatory Decision-making (Inter-agency work groups/teams Shared Vision Planning); Table top exercises	Community Coalitions Watershed Plans Floodplain Management Plans (Buying down risks etc); River-basin Commissions

The Vicksburg District's Annual MR&T Channel Improvement Interagency Meeting

By Chris Koeppel, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division (MVD)

The Vicksburg District's (MVK) Annual Mississippi River & Tributaries Channel Improvement Interagency Meeting is held at the Vicksburg District to discuss past, current, and future channel improvements on the Mississippi River with stakeholders, natural resource agencies and academics. Since the river is such a valuable resource and the focus of so much of MVK's work, special emphasis is placed on the annual channel improvements by holding a face-to-face meeting with these representatives to discuss specific work items and how they will further the USACE mission on the Mississippi River. It also allows the resource agencies to ask questions to subject matter experts as well as discuss proposed means for eliminating or reducing impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

“The Vicksburg District channel improvement meetings have proven a cost-effective tool for maintaining the major missions of USACE in the Lower Mississippi River, including flood control, navigation,

and ecosystem management,” said Paul Hartfield, an endangered species biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hartfield continued, “These meetings allow State and Federal partners to share resources and information, have successfully reduced interagency and mission conflicts, and provided great return and value to the American taxpayer.” Annually, the meeting is attended by staff from MVD, MVK, and ERDC in addition to representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas Ecological Service Offices), Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and Mississippi State University.

The result of this collaboration is improved habitat for species in the Lower Mississippi River without compromising the vitally important navigation and flood risk reduction systems.

Successful initiatives from this collaboration include:

- I. Timelier U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews of Endangered Species Act coordination for MR&T Channel Improvement projects
- II. Execution of a formal Conservation Plan with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2013 to better protect three endangered species native to the lower Mississippi River - the Interior Least Tern, Pallid Sturgeon and Fat Pocketbook Mussel. Also, a No-Jeopardy opinion that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued for channel improvement work as it related to impacts to pallid sturgeon.
- III. Notching of existing dikes to provide more permanent flow to secondary channels, improve habitat and provide positive benefits to the aquatic ecosystem.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration in the LRD Continuing Authority Program, Program Management Plan Standard Operating Procedures

By Michael Saffran, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD)

Stakeholder engagement and collaboration are essential components to Civil Works Transformation and SMART Planning, and the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD) is institutionalizing these components into its Continuing Authority Program (CAP) in FY16. The CAP is a collection of nine laws in which the U.S. Congress granted USACE the authority to plan, design and construct cost-shared water resource projects of limited scope. LRD and its District staff have worked to develop a draft LRD CAP Program Management Plan Standard Operating Procedures (PgMP/SOP), consisting of comprehensively updated and consolidated relevant guidance and lessons learned, to be used to more quickly produce policy compliant decision documents and deliver completed CAP projects that maximize return on the Federal and non-federal investments. The PgMP establishes goals, roles and responsibilities, program and project processes, while the SOPs are annotated report and plan templates and standard forms and checklist submittals.

The plan and procedures incorporated into the PgMP/SOP are aimed at facilitating a culture shift. Until recently, LRD has unintentionally inhibited stakeholder engagement and collaboration by limiting external distribution of draft materials until after Agency Technical Review was completed and all comments were successfully resolved.

Under the new PgMP/SOP, early stakeholder engagement is stressed based on the premise that other stakeholder organizations often maintain the most relevant applicable data and subject matter experts.

For example, an initial stakeholder meeting (charrette) is a cost-effective means to promptly determine if there is a Federal interest in addressing a local water resource

problem and if there is a viable non-Federal sponsor to complete a cost-shared feasibility study. When properly conducted, the initial charrette also identifies the best available data and experts that may contribute to defining the water resource problems and opportunities in the context of current and future without project conditions.

The PgMP/SOP also recommends best practices for alternative plans, CAP feasibility studies, and stakeholder input for other project components. These best practices include: 1) A second stakeholder meeting to facilitate identification of a broad range of viable measures; and 2) Provision of relevant data and other draft information and depictions of the future without project conditions to stakeholders approximately a week ahead of the scheduled 'alternatives formulation' meeting. The PgMP/SOP also provides LRD PDTs with a list of contacts and resources for meeting facilitation and facilitators.

Project and Study Managers have voiced valid concerns about meeting schedule deadlines and compromising decision control by inviting "too many cooks into the plan formulation kitchen." The draft LRD CAP PgMP/SOP therefore do not require the execution of planning charettes nor the use of risk registers, decision management plans, decision logs or other recommended SMART planning tool. However, it does highly recommend use of the provided tools and encourages the application of stakeholder engagement and collaboration as widely as possible in the LRD CAP through the use of provided templates and ready access to expertise.

By creating a comprehensive set of documents with guidance on the most effective ways in which to engage stakeholders in the form of the Program Management Plan Standard Operating Procedures, the Districts of LRD are able to more efficiently produce decision documents that are applicable to both the local stakeholders and USACE's needs.

Great Partnerships Lead to Great Progress for Oyster Restoration

By Sarah Gross, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District

In late April 2015, the Baltimore District, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP) began important oyster reef construction efforts in the Tred Avon River, just as restoration on 370 acres is wrapping up in Harris Creek. These efforts represent key parts of the Maryland statewide oyster restoration program which identifies the best tributaries in the Chesapeake Bay for restoration.

Through an authority under Section 704(b) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended, the Corps provides construction assistance for certain oyster restoration projects through its Civil Works program. The goal, as laid out in Executive Order 13508, is to restore 10 tributaries by 2025 in both Maryland and Virginia.

“We are committed to improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay through collaborative environmental efforts, including oyster restoration,” said Col. Trey Jordan, USACE, Baltimore District commander. “The progress we have made - and continue to make - demonstrates the immeasurable value in working together to achieve a common goal.”

Successful oyster restoration requires leveraging funding and expertise from a number of agencies. NOAA, for example, maps the water bottom to tell the team the most suitable sites to place the reefs; these sites are then screened by the team to account for the location of navigational aids, docks, and other potential navigational concerns. The Baltimore District and DNR provide funding and construction contracts to obtain the reef materials and construct the reefs. ORP plants baby oysters, or “spat-on-shell,” on top of the reefs. Harris Creek will be the first tributary where restoration plans are completed. Through the interagency partnership, the State of Maryland has planted more than a billion oysters in Harris Creek since 2011. Areas that had less than one oyster per square meter now have upward of 25.

“Great progress is being made to restore the oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay, and great partnerships provide the path for success,” said Angie Sowers, Baltimore District Integrated Water Resources management specialist. “This

means not only inviting everyone to the table, but allowing for them to have a deeper involvement, especially those whose livelihoods depend on working in the Bay.”

Government partnership serves as just one key element in the process. This spring, the Baltimore District and their partners met with the Maryland’s Watermen Association several times to discuss a path forward for working more closely together throughout the planning and restoration processes. Following a series of meetings and visits to restoration sites, the team is modifying their initial plans and limiting the use of rock in the Tred Avon River for this construction effort. This change was made in order to minimize impacts to trotlining by crabbers. The remaining reef sites planned for this spring will be made of mixed shell that was initially to be placed at Harris Creek.



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, places shell to restore oyster reefs in the Chesapeake Bay tributary of Harris Creek, April 1, 2015. The shell comes from processing plants in the mid-Atlantic region and is permitted to be imported and placed in the river. (U.S. Army Photo by Sean Fritzges)

Oyster populations in the Chesapeake Bay have declined considerably in the last century. There is not sufficient natural shell available to restore oyster habitat in the Bay; therefore, other materials like rock are used to construct reefs. For reefs constructed in Harris Creek and the Tred Avon, mixed-shell materials come from coastal processing plants, and the rock is quarried in Havre de Grace, Maryland. These alternate materials have proven to be successful at restoration sites, including Harris Creek. “To ensure we are truly being stewards of our taxpayers’ dollars, we have to go above and beyond the outreach that is legally required of us,” said Jordan. “It was invaluable to have the watermen with us on our vessels to see restoration at work, hold the actual reef materials in their hands, and express to us their concerns.”

How can I use someone in a Public Involvement Specialist position to help me with my project?

Ask Hal



A cadre of 19 specialists across the country serve as public involvement subject-matter experts to support projects across USACE. Public Involvement Specialists can help assess the need, value, range, and even requirements for public engagement for any stage of a USACE project. The specialists can find the tools and resources to support public involvement for your project, whether to provide information exchange between USACE and a community or to hire a neutral facilitator for a more complex, decision-making process. But remember, many of the Public Involvement Specialists serve as facilitators and moderators too!

Your Division Public Involvement Specialist may be able to provide the expertise directly or connect you to other Public Involvement Specialists that have the talent to get the job done. They will coordinate with district Public Affairs to define the levels of support and division of responsibilities appropriate for a specific project. Project Managers and teams are encouraged to consult with one of these specialists early in your project about the value of public involvement to help keep your project on schedule and within its budget.



CPCX Team & Public Involvement Specialists in Denver, CO

To find a Public Involvement Specialist and to learn more about their services, please visit: http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/Portals/70/docs/cpc/PI_Specialist_Fact_Sheet_Sept14.pdf

Submit your questions on Collaboration and Public Participation to be answered in the next issue of Collaboration Corner [HERE!](#)

