

# Energy initiatives promote sustainability

By Karen J. Baker

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October is National Energy Awareness Month, a time to take a hard look at how we are managing our energy usage, to focus on reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, and to intensify efforts to identify areas where we can begin using more renewable energy.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers views sustainability as an umbrella concept that encompasses the environment, climate change and energy. As the agency strives to make progress on its sustainability metrics and targets, energy-related activities have received special emphasis.

First and foremost, this past summer, the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville awarded the first Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) for a civil works facility — the 234-mile Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, which is managed by Mobile District. ESPCs leverage third-party financing from the private sector to make infrastructure improvements to federal facilities to reduce energy and water consumption. The \$2.8 million ESPC will result in the installation, replacement or retrofitting elements of the Tenn-Tom's infrastructure — primarily lighting at its 10 locks and dams. During its 21-year performance period, the ESPC is expected to save Mobile District and USACE about \$5.05 million in energy costs.

Our districts and divisions have adopted challenging sustainability program goals, most notably the requirement to implement not less than \$10 million in ESPC contracts by the end of fiscal year 2016 to support the President's Performance Contracting Challenge.

The Tenn-Tom contract provides other

USACE districts with lessons learned that will further enable them to take advantage of the ESPC program. We can now continue to accelerate adoption of ESPCs at other sites and move forward on our ESPC and sustainability program goals (see ESPC articles on [page 1](#) and [page 5](#)).

One of the hallmarks of the agency's sustainability efforts has been the ability to establish and use databases and cutting edge data visualization software to provide managers the information they need to make decisions to improve energy and water conservation USACE-wide.

One such example is our Sustainable Recreation Campaign, which encourages those who use our recreation facilities across the country to try to reduce their energy and water usage while camping. The campaign, initiated in the summer of 2013, was developed after it was learned that electrical usage at USACE recreation facilities, primarily in the camping areas, accounts for more than 40 percent of the overall energy usage at our dams, levees, lakes and river facilities — an average cost of about \$12 million annually. If we can get those who camp at our facilities to think about conserving and recycling, we can reduce those costs and use that money to keep the facilities open.

We are involved with energy on another front, as well — the Army Regional Environmental and Energy Offices, which serve to promote greater understanding of the Army's commitment to sustainable practices and energy security. Each regional office director now reports to a USACE division (see the article to the right).



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In the future, USACE can expect to have an increased support role in the newly formed Office of Energy Initiatives. The office is focusing on increasing Army renewable energy activities, such as finding more solar, wind and hydropower opportunities and cutting down acquisition times for projects that have already been identified.

We continue to make strides in becoming more sustainable. Focusing more on renewable energy, reducing our energy usage and our dependence on fossil fuels will help, not just during Energy Awareness Month but throughout the entire year. Saving energy is something that each of us can do — turn off the lights, car pool, use public transportation, unplug electronics when not being used. Simple steps like these are at the heart of reducing demand, and that's the foundation of our sustainability program. It starts with personal accountability and responsibility — standards exemplified by two members of the USACE sustainability team: Rumanda Young, chief of Southwest Division's Regional Planning and Environmental Center Master Planning Section, and Kathleen White, senior lead for global and climate change at the USACE Institute for Water Resources.

Both Young and White were honored at the Strategic Leaders Conference in August. Young, who also serves as the Southwestern Division's regional energy program manager, received the Lt. Gen. John W. Morris Civilian of the Year Award. White received the Lt. Gen. Elvin R. "Vald" Heiberg III Engineer of the Year Award. When it comes to the sustainability arena, these two women can be considered pioneers in that they take initiative and are continually looking to see how to move their programs to the next level. Their initiatives have gone a long way in putting the Army Corps of Engineers on the right path toward sustainability.

Army Strong! — Building Strong! — Essayons! 🌀

## Army regional environmental offices transition to Army Corps of Engineers

The Army Regional Environmental and Energy Offices (REEOs) transferred to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, effective Oct. 1.

The Army Regional Environmental and Energy Offices, as part of the larger Department of Defense Regional Environmental Coordinator program, were established in 1995 to support Army and Department of Defense readiness, training and testing. The offices engage with state legislators, federal and state regulators, and nongovernmental organizations on behalf of DOD and the Army to enable military installation training, testing, operations and readiness. The offices also conduct strategic communications to promote greater understanding of the Army's commitment to sustainable practices and energy security.

As part of the Department of Defense Regional Environmental Coordinator program of "representatives in the field," the Army REEOs serve as the DOD leads in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Regions 4, 5, 7 and 8. The Air Force serves as the DOD lead in Regions 2, 6 and 10, and the Navy is the DOD lead in Regions 1, 3 and 9.

Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations, Energy and Environment) [ASA(I&E)], and Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, USACE Commanding General, signed a Memorandum of Agreement approving the transfer in early June.

Details are still being worked out, but the Headquarters Department of the Army will retain the DOD lead agent function and oversight of the four REEOs. USACE will maintain operational control and program execution. Each regional office director will report to a USACE division — the REEO-Northern to the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, the REEO-Western and REEO-Central both to the Northwestern Division, and the REEO-Southern to the South Atlantic Division.

The REEOs have five functions that sum up what they do for the Army and DOD: monitor state-level legislation; monitor state and federal regulations; provide outreach; provide information on trends and emerging state legislative and regulatory issues; and fully support ASA (IE&E) as DOD's Regional Environmental Coordinator lead agent.

"These functions will not change as both USACE and the office of the ASA (IE&E) look for synergies with the REEOs as they continue to fully implement their mission and function while focusing on Army energy and environmental priorities. Given that USACE programs also support these priorities, it's a great fit," said Karen Baker, acting chief of the USACE Environmental Division.

For more information about the Army REEOs, visit [www.asaie.army.mil/Public/InfraAnalysis/REEO/index.html](http://www.asaie.army.mil/Public/InfraAnalysis/REEO/index.html). 🌀

# ENVIROPOINTS