Chapter 4.   CASE FILES

1. <u>Purpose</u>. A case file may be either a physical or electronic folder containing information or documentation relating to a specific action, event, person, place, transaction, or project. There are two common types of case files. One is a group of individual folders containing all the documents or records relating to an assigned project or task which has a specified beginning or ending, and concludes with an end product such as a published report. The second is a collection of folders concerning a specific activity, such as construction of an entire Project, individually constructed features, studies, or investigations, etc. Case files may be divided and subdivided to provide greater detail of the work being done. Both individual and multi-folder case files may use one or several of the records series ACM through WTR. Project case files created during construction of a large irrigation Project, Division, or Unit are typically voluminous and subdivided by subjects such as those found in a records series like Project Management (PRJ). These files may also be arranged by topics such as land, water, structural design, storage dams, or water conveyance which are linked to the Project where the records were physically created.

   It is important to remember that the main case file about the Sun River Project will contain sub-folders concerning water rights, land transfers, project authorization, repayment contracts, construction, O & M, dam safety, etc. These may be further sub-divided into Gibson and Willow Creek Storage Dams, Sun River Diversion dam, Pishkun Canal, Simms Coulee Siphon, Fort Shaw Irrigation District, or Cultural Resources and so on. Sub-folders for Gibson Dam may include, design, spillway modifications, Safety of Dams inspections, structural analysis, or replacement cost projections. Some of these topics may be further sub-divided depending upon frequency of activity or work in progress. They may then be arranged according to type of record such as photographs, drawings, reports, correspondence, etc., for convenience of filing, reference, or research.

   Therefore, a case file may include one or more subjects related to a particular topic and contain original and/or copies of memorandums, letters, e-mail, maps, drawings, calculations, forms, photographs, charts, ledgers, hand drawn notations, decisions, and similar materials.

2. <u>Functional Categories of Case Files</u>. Case files may also be arranged according to the functions performed by the office that created them. These may include:
   a. Assistance provided to the public or individuals
   b. Efforts to implement policy or regulatory responsibility
   c. Public safety and law enforcement
   d. Relations and activities with local, state, other Federal agencies, and foreign governments
   e. Obtaining products and services from individuals or companies

Examples of case files may include:
- Official Personnel Folder
- Contract File
- Studies or investigations File
- Audit File
- Project File

3. <u>Case File Arrangement</u>. Each group of case files should be arranged by the most commonly used function, feature, or activity. When requesting or searching for records, information, and data, people will usually ask for it using the most frequently referenced term such as name, number, project, program title, topic, or location. Most often researchers will ask for all the records on Willow Creek Dam, not realizing that Reclamation has 5 dams with that name, two of which are in the same Project, one a diversion dam and the other a storage dam. Therefore, it is important to make certain the case file contains the correct records for that Project.

4. <u>Working Reference Files</u>. These consist of reference materials used on a frequent basis during the life of the project or task. They may consist of published reference works, standard technical texts, professional articles from journals, or a collection of information used on a consistent basis. These materials assist the staff in the decision-making process, design, or development of program/project management techniques. Working references may be required over a long period of time and used for numerous projects. Reference materials are frequently revised, are part of a published book/journal, or are no longer relevant to the completed project. Segregate these materials and purge them frequently to maintain the most current information.

Although important, they should be kept separate and not included in the official case file when the work is completed. Including them in the official case files only clutters the file with extra copies of the same materials or obsolete references