



### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Institute for Water Resources

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### **Conflict-Resolution & Public-Participation Center of Expertise Celebrates Fourth Year of Accomplishments**

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. USACE IWR's Conflict Resolution & Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX) recently celebrated its 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Founded in October 2008, CPCX provides technical assistance and training to USACE Divisions and Districts as well as other stakeholders on collaborative processes, facilitation, public involvement, risk communication and collaborative modeling (Shared Vision Planning). CPCX also develops references related to Environmental Conflict Resolution and collaborative processes and coordinates the USACE Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice (CoP).

"With the Corps and the nation increasingly realizing that collaborative skills are a 'gotta have' instead of a 'nice-to-have,' we at the CPC are well-positioned to leverage the experiences and talents across the Corps and more broadly to help Corps managers with their collaboration, public participation and conflict resolution challenges – from stakeholder assessments to design of collaborative processes and collaborative modeling, we are finding the right mix of experts to help Corps staff execute their missions," explained Hal Cardwell, CPCX's Director.

USACE's new Collaboration and Public Participation CoP serves as a forum for connecting experts across USACE and building a community of those committed to improving its collaborative capacity. With coordination from CPCX, the new CoP has grown to over 340 USACE staff from multiple disciplines, business lines and functional areas. This year the CoP sponsored more than a half dozen webinars and served as a forum for information sharing on facilitation, risk communication, collaboration and public participation challenges throughout USACE.

Earlier this year the CPCX team led the communications and public engagement team for the Congressionally-mandated *U.S. Port and Inland Waterways Modernization Study*. The effort included listening sessions, webinar and meeting presentations, web page management, press releases and a series of briefings. The process took the team on the road to meet with stakeholders in person as well as engage with them through a series of webinars. Input from stakeholders was taken into consideration during the study process.

Questions have been raised about the role of climate change in a series of monumental floods that surpassed all previous records in the Iowa-Cedar Rivers Basin. Stakeholders there are motivated to make changes to reduce impacts during future events. The CPCX team led the first effort in the Iowa-Cedar Watershed Responses to Climate Change pilot project, which included a series of five stakeholder workshops to increase understanding of, and give definition to, the problems, objectives, adaptation strategies, and their associated trade-offs and uncertainties. Lessons learned and affirmed from the pilot included that stakeholder understanding of climate change information increases when focused on impacts, adequately preparing for public engagement is important and letting stakeholders contribute to the content is most appropriate.

At the request of USACE Chicago District's (LRC) Great Lakes and Mississippi River InterBasin Study participants, CPCX reviewed the stakeholder engagement in the study and made recommendations for future stakeholder involvement activities. CPCX spoke with dozens of study stakeholders to generate ideas for future ways to involve stakeholders. While many stakeholders were very complimentary of the study team's outreach efforts, the stakeholder engagement review identified additional ideas on stakeholder engagement for the team to focus on during the study's next phase.

The USACE Northwest Division (NWD) requested CPCX to lead the process design and execution of the Missouri River Flood Task Force process. This nine-month flood recovery effort occurred from September 2011 to May 2012. The effort was necessary to address damage to the system caused by the Missouri River Floods of 2011. The Missouri River Flood Task Force provided a temporary forum for communication, coordination, collaboration and cooperation among the Federal officials and designated officers of state, local and Tribal governments within the states of Nebraska, Montana, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Kansas and Missouri. CPCX staff organized and coordinated this forum.

### **Learn More**

CPCX contributed to many more efforts in addition to those mentioned above. Find out more at [www.iwr.usace.army.mil/cpc/](http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/cpc/)