



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

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Third-Party Assisted Collaborative Processes Featured in Report on the Use of Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Conflict Resolution & Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX), located at the Institute for Water Resources (IWR), submitted its “8th annual USACE Report on the Use of Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution,” as required by the 2012 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) joint memo on Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution. This year's report includes reporting on third-party assisted collaborative processes in addition to third-party assisted conflict resolution.

The information in this report is based on responses from each USACE Civil Works division as well as the USACE Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC). CPCX compiled the information that forms the basis of the report and coordinated its review within USACE and the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works).

In its report, the CPCX team reported that third-party environmental collaboration and conflict resolution (ECCR) usage increased 25 percent over last year. Eight of the 15 reported uses were sponsored by USACE. The volume of non-third-party collaborative efforts was also significant. The report cites six priority or emerging areas of conflict and cross-cutting challenges within USACE: aging infrastructure, climate change, endangered species act and NEPA, Clean Water Act 404 permitting, watershed approach and regional sediment management.

The report includes six notable advances in the use of ECCR, including SMART Planning charrettes, the Missouri River Recovery Management Plan, USACE Tulsa District and the Oklahoma Water Resources Board Planning Assistance to States study, Tennessee Environmental Streamlining Agreement, North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study, and Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable. The report gives in-depth treatment to a third-party ECCR example for the Lower Mississippi River Endangered Species Conservation Plan.

This year's report showed more detailed information about ECCR investments and benefits, and the CPCX team is working on improving USACE-wide quantitative performance and accountability measures to track the benefits of ECCR use. In their responses to requests for information about ECCR, USACE divisions and districts indicated an interest in onsite training in public involvement and team building in planning, [Shared Vision Planning](#), collaborative leadership, facilitation and risk communication. They also expressed interest in the following types of assistance: public involvement/communication planning, vertical integration support, situation assessments, workshop design, consultation via phone, assistance with charrettes, and evaluation of collaborative effort effectiveness. Divisions and districts also nominated a number of people to participate in the environmental conflict resolution certification program with United States Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR), suggested additions to the USACE facilitator database, and gave suggested topics for webinars for USACE's Collaboration and Public Participation Community of Practice.

More about the Conflict Resolution & Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX)

The USACE Conflict Resolution & Public Participation Center of Expertise's mission is to help USACE personnel anticipate, prevent and manage water conflicts, ensuring that the interests of the public are addressed in USACE decision making. The CPCX achieves this mission by developing and expanding the application of collaborative tools to improve water resources decision making. Key tasks include training, research, and the application of collaborative process techniques and modeling tools. Collaborative process techniques include collaborative process design, conflict assessment and resolution techniques, and decision-making methods.

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