



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

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Conference Highlights IWR's Important Contributions to Mitigation Banking

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. USACE's Institute for Water Resources (IWR) was a prominent participant in the 18th annual National Mitigation and Ecosystem Banking Conference (MBEC) 5-8 May in Orlando, FL. This national conference focuses on mitigation, conservation, and ecosystem banking to provide offsets for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources, listed and at-risk species and other natural resources through the restoration, protection, and management of wetlands, streams, and other habitats.

The 425 attendees included mitigation bank and In-Lieu Fee (ILF) program leads from federal and state agencies, environmental organizations, academia, and the private sector from across the US and 6 nations. District, IWR, and HQUSACE attendees totaled 28, many of whom moderated panels or presented papers. The focus of the conference was on providing current and timely dialogue on third party compensatory mitigation (mitigation and conservation banks and ILF programs) through interactive sessions, panels, moderated forums, and workshops.

Dr. Robert Brumbaugh (Deputy Director of IWR, USACE) participated on the Legislative and Regulatory plenary panel, along with Ms. Angela Somma (Chief, Endangered Species Division, NMFS), Ms. Marlys Osterhues (Director of Environmental Programs, FHWA), Mr. Gary Frazier (Assistant Director for Endangered Species, USFWS), and Mr. David Evans (Deputy Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds, EPA). This plenary session allowed federal agencies to provide legislative and regulatory updates of interest to the mitigation banking community.

Dr. Brumbaugh, along with representatives from the private sector taught a well-received Mitigation Banking primer workshop, as he has done for all 18 of these annual conferences. This session included the history and regulatory background of mitigation and conservation banking, site selection, scientific and technical aspects, and the business of banking (financial, legal, and marketing). Dr. Brumabugh also moderated the session *Emerging Policies, Strategies, and Guidelines* which included presentations on the revision of USFWS compensatory mitigation policies, compensatory mitigation strategies in highly urbanized setting, and a case study of wetland mitigation under climate change.

Mr. Steve Martin (IWR) was on the conference steering committee, helped instruct a workshop on RIBITS (Regulatory In-lieu fee and Bank Information Tracking System) the USACE web application for tracking mitigation bank and ILF activity, and helped moderate a Regulators Forum. Other moderators in that forum included representatives from the USFWS, EPA, and NMFS. Mr. Martin and Mr. David Olson (HQ USACE) were presenters in the session *Analysis of National Mitigation and Conservation Banking: Status and Trends* along with representatives of USFWS and Ecosystem Investment Partners, a national mitigation banking firm. IWR's many contributions to the practice of mitigation banking were strongly complimented throughout the conference.

Learn More

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