

**USACE Join the Dialogue
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To: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

From: Richard L. Poor
President, Little River Wetlands Project Inc. (501.(c3))
0830 E. 465 S.
Wolcottville, IN 45795-9010
Ph. (219) 463-2344 email: rlpoorol@ligtel.com

The issue I would like to address is contained in your "Dialogue" brochure; Wetland Protection. I have two suggestions for future improvement in attaining this goal.

1. From my own experience I know that local governments, especially county authorities, feel encumbered on many wetland violations. They are in a position to offer immediate relief, but defer until county ordinances are violated. This, knowing full well that the USACE might well have a legitimate jurisdiction.

I know local politics play a role in this. But I feel that a dialogue between the Corps and local county (and state) governments would be beneficial. Tools given to local authorities for reporting, warning letters before violations have progressed, and best of all local media coverage pertaining to wetland regulations and public information would surely make the job of the Corps easier and promote the attainment of our water quality and flood preventing goals through wetland protection.

2. Wetland laws have been on the books since the early 1970's. I believe individuals, as well as corporations and business, should no longer be able to plead ignorance of the law in cases of after-the-fact wetland violations. Occasionally there are instances where an after-the-fact permit might be applied for and granted, but I believe these are rare.

It would help in the long run if penalties were levied more frequently (and heavier ones). I realize this would put a heavier burden on the legal staff of USACE, but I believe it would pay off in the long run with fewer violations. Thirty years is a long time for violators to be able to say, "I didn't know it was illegal for me to drain or fill a wetland", and receive an opportunity to obtain an 'after-the-fact' permit, without penalty or mitigation.