

5th Inter-Agency Social Science Roundtable Meeting Notes

Date: January 10, 2011
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Hosted by: Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
<http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/>

Welcome to the Institute for Water Resources– Bob Pietrowsky, Director, USACE-IWR

Mr. Pietrowsky spoke briefly about the History of the Institute for Water Resources. The Institute has several roles related to economics, policy and data management for the Corps of Engineers. Pietrowsky spoke about the newest centers at IWR including the International Center for Integrated Water Resources Management, Center for Public Participation, and the Risk Management Center.

Overview of the Corps' Natural Resources Program – Jonathan Davis, Deputy Chief, Operations, Headquarters, USACE

Mr. Davis provided an overview of the Natural Resources program and provided participants with fact sheets on the Recreation and Environmental Stewardship business lines. Davis described how the natural resources mission fits in with other Corps missions and some key issues faced by the agency in the future. Davis discussed the visitor profile and how the differences of location and water impact the role of the Corps in provision of recreation as compared to other federal agencies.

New capabilities of the Economic Profile System - Human Dimensions Toolkit – Joel Larson, BLM

Mr. Larson reviewed the Economic Profile System used by the Bureau of Land Management and showed participants some of the report features and functionality. The system has not been released yet. For more information - <http://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/eps-hdt>

Regional Economic System (RECONS)- economy and jobs – Wen Chang, USACE

Dr. Chang reviewed the RECONS system and showed how regional economic impacts associated with ARRA, Civil Works, and other non-federal spending can be estimated. This modeling tool automates calculations and generates estimates of jobs and other economic measures such as income and sales associated with Corps Civil Works programs. More than 1,500 regional economic models were built specifically for USACE's project locations. Multipliers were then imported to a database and the tool matches various spending profiles to the matching industry sectors by location to produce economic impact estimates. There is also a GIS component in the tool to map the study areas.

Update on BLM's Socioeconomic Strategy – Rob Winthrop, BLM

Mr. Winthrop presented the three goals of the BLM's Socio Economic Strategy that include Support of policy mandates, management priorities and programs; managing internal and external socioeconomic capabilities and providing cost effective support; and ensure that relevant socioeconomic information can be obtained and applied. For more information on the BLM Social Science Program - http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/planning/social_science.html

Paperwork Reduction Act – Susan I. Stewart, USFS

(Notes missing)

Natural Resources Management Gateway, Community "In" Practice – Kathy Perales, USACE

Dr. Perales described the Community of Practice (CoP) structure in the USACE as the CoP being the info from the people and the Gateway being the place where you go to get the info. The Gateway knowledge management system serves over 20 communities within the Corps and is structured with multiple ways to get to information that allow various user types to find what they need. Content is kept up through a network of over 100 subject matter experts in the field that also answer questions within their subject area from gateway users. The site is kept low tech in terms of graphics and high memory technology to ensure that all users in the field, even those without T-1 lines, can access the information they need. Most content is public, but items with a castle logo are available to Corps staff only. Natural Resources Management Gateway - <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/nrm.cfm> Public Visitor Info - <http://www.corpslakes.us>
During discussion after the presentation: the Federal Knowledge Management Working Group was mentioned – km.gov (<http://wiki.nasa.gov/cm/wiki/?id=1926>)

GIS aided visitation modernization program – Wen Chang/ Kathy Perales, USACE

Dr. Chang and Dr. Perales discussed some of the challenges in visitation calculation through use of traffic counters/visitation surveys and the NRM programs efforts to modernize the system. In a project with the University of Michigan, the program is working to update boundary mapping of recreation areas and location of traffic counters. Resulting system will allow project management to relocate a meter and indicate that relocation in the GIS system (flooding or other issues may cause portions of a recreation area to close). In the future this will provide comprehensive and nationally consistent info on Corps recreation facilities.

During discussion after the presentation: the Mapping Social Values system (SolVES) was mentioned - http://gcmd.nasa.gov/records/USGS_SolVES.html

Update on the roundtable's human dimensions of climate change work group – Rob Winthrop, BLM

Mr. Winthrop discussed a draft interagency proposal that was being developed and provided a draft copy to participants. Includes several tasks and the intent to fund a graduate student. USGS in Fort Collins is the lead, Jessica Montag (<http://www.fort.usgs.gov/staff/staffprofile.asp?StaffID=938>). They are open to additional agencies to be included in the partnership. There may be a conference call held on this project soon.

Social safeguards for upcoming climate change programs – Diane Russell, USAID

Ms. Russell provided a general overview of USAID and discussed several initiatives. USAID has a climate team and a separate Natural Resources team. Climate Change program has three pillars: Adaptation, clean energy and sustainable landscapes. The REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) program was highlighted. Russell discussed that governance was incorporated into the Natural Resources program through their guidance framework and Nature, Wealth and Power. For more information - <http://www.usaid.gov/>; REDD+ - http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/climate/policies_prog/redd.html; Climate Change - http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/environment/climate/; Natural Resources Management - http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/agriculture/landmanagement/index.html, Nature, Wealth & Power - http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/agriculture/landmanagement/pubs/nature_wealth_power_fy2004.pdf

National Climate Assessment through its socioeconomic indicators working group– Susan Stewart, USFS

Dr Stewart deferred to Melissa Kenney to discuss the Socioeconomic Indicators Working Group work related to the National Climate Assessment Reports. They are looking for a dozen or so societal indicators that would provide pulse of issue and linkage to climate change. Would like to leverage existing efforts for this, not looking to necessarily develop new indicators; they could be direct, proxy or constructed measures. Anticipate a workshop to be used to identify broad categories of indicators. For more information, National Climate Assessment - <http://www.globalchange.gov/what-we-do/assessment>,

Around the Room: Agency updates or reports

Next Meeting – Will be hosted by USAID. Date to be announced, but requested to occur within next 6 months.

Team website/forum – Tom would try to see if there could be a place made on HD.gov or the USGS server. Would need to get more organized to make this happen.

NOAA – Projects mentioned include collecting oral histories from fishing communities related to the oil spill; additional context analysis will be done on these. Looking into county level indicators of oil spill recovery and restoration. NOAA is assessing their social science program. Lynwood Pendleton (sp?) will start as their new Chief Economist in Feb. There is a national strategic initiative for social science research that is anticipated to result in expanded portfolio for funding and investment. Hosting a workshop to ID indicators to measure success of CatchShare(sp?) programs. There is an east coast collaboration on socioeconomic indicators for community based fisheries management.

USACE – Funding issues related to flat budget over past 5-7 years and anticipated budget cuts for FY12. Concerns that America's Great Outdoors is not really creating any leverage for additional funding. Visitation measurement modernization was mentioned again and the Recreation program is working on a new strategy that should be available in the spring.

USAID – Developing a research agenda. With changes in congress and budget, anticipate adjusted opinions on climate change and related funding. Needs info on training related to biophysical and social modeling techniques (several participants provided ideas).

NPS – Bruce Peacock will lead the new Social Science Division. Looking at some secondary data sources for understanding on sociodemographic changes. Have an inventory monitoring program and are developing a socioeconomic monitoring program in a similar format. Anticipate will be announcing a fellowship opportunity with the Climate Change Response Program and CESU program. Conducted a DOI employee greenhouse gas survey.

BLM – Workshop on improving visitor monitoring and modeling calculations.

FS – Noted recent court case regarding visitation monitoring and subsequent decision; case challenged monitoring formula. Mentioned FIA (inventory analysis) of land use and land cover. Discussed need for employee education on climate change. Research arm is struggling with obtaining support for recreation research funding and staff. Looking at “shared indicators” and trying to rollup some of the existing.