DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

29 MAY 2001

CECW-BW

MEMORANDUM FOR Commanders, Major Subordinate Commands

SUBJECT: Implementation Guidance for Section 202 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2000, Watershed and River Basin Assessments, which Amends Section 729, WRDA 86, Study of Water Resources Needs of River Basins and Regions

1. Section 202 of WRDA 2000 amends Section 729 of WRDA 1986 to provide the Secretary discretionary authority to assess the water resources needs of river basins and watersheds of the United States including needs related to ecosystem protection and restoration; flood damage reduction; navigation and ports; watershed protection; water supply; and, drought preparedness. It also establishes cost sharing provisions, defines cooperation and consultation requirements, and expands the authority from $5 million to $15 million. Copies of these provisions are at enclosure 1.

2. The basic policy related to watershed activities is found in Policy Guidance Letter No. 61 and should also be consulted when undertaking any watershed activities. In keeping with the intent of the law and our policy, these assessments will involve greater consultation and cooperation with Federal, tribal, State, interstate and local governmental entities and will have a multi-purpose and multi-objective scope that can accommodate flexibility in the formulation and evaluation process. The objective of the watershed assessments will be a watershed planning document that furthers watershed resource management. The objectives and scope of this document will be agreed upon by the Corps and sponsor(s), and outlined in a negotiated agreement. Watershed planning documents may be watershed management plans, but if not, the documents must provide information that would feed into subsequent watershed management planning efforts. These plans should identify actions to be undertaken by the various partners and stakeholders in order to meet the objectives of the plan. The planning document may or may not recommend further Corps studies or projects. Budgetary priority for watershed assessments will not be based upon the potential for future Corps projects. For your information and use, typical characteristics of watershed plans and assessment processes are at enclosure 2. This guidance will also apply to those watershed assessment new starts that were budgeted and funded in Fiscal Year 2001.

CECW-BW
SUBJECT: Implementation Guidance, for Section 202 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2000, Watershed and River Basin Assessments, which Amends Section 729, WRDA 86, Study of Water Resources Needs of River Basins and Regions

Watershed assessments may be recommended in future budgets in accordance with the annual Program Development Guidance, EC 11-2-177.

3. In order to track the progress of the watershed assessments, traditional reporting and review procedures will be utilized. Upon receipt of funds in the initial work allowance, up to $100,000 of Federal funds may be used to prepare an initial assessment to identify a cost sharing partner(s), define the scope of the assessment, and negotiate an agreement. Proceeding with the next phase will be subject to HQUSACE approval of the initial assessment and execution of a cost sharing agreement. This agreement should follow the model Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement and should be approved in the same manner. The activities included in the agreement will be cost shared 50/50, consistent with the provisions of Section 202, WRDA 2000. Note that for this authority, in-kind services may not exceed 25 percent of the assessment costs.

4. Upon completion of the final assessment, it will be submitted to HQUSACE for review and processing to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) and Congress as appropriate. Any potential Corps of Engineers projects identified for further study in the Assessment will be pursued through the normal authorization/budgeting process.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

2 Encls

HANS A. VAN WINKLE
Major General, USA
Director of Civil Works

ENCLOSURE 1 – AUTHORIZATIONS

SEC 729, WRDA 1986. STUDY OF WATER RESOURCES NEEDS OF RIVER BASINS AND REGIONS.

(a) The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, is authorized to study the water resources needs of river basins and regions of the United States. The Secretaries shall report the results of such study to Congress not later than October 1, 1988.
(b) In carrying out the studies authorized under subsection (a) of this section, the Secretaries shall consult with state, interstate, and local governmental entities.
(c) There is authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for fiscal years beginning after September 30, 1986, to carry out this section.

SEC 202, WRDA 2000. WATERSHED AND RIVER BASIN ASSESSMENTS.

Section 729 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (100 Stat. 4164) is amended to read as follows:

(a) IN GENERAL. – The Secretary may assess the water resources needs of river basins and watersheds of the United States, including needs relating to-
  (1) ecosystem protection and restoration;
  (2) flood damage reduction;
  (3) navigation and ports;
  (4) watershed protection;
  (5) water supply; and
  (6) drought preparedness.
(b) COOPERATION. – An assessment under subsection (a) shall be carried out in cooperation and coordination with-
  (1) the Secretary of the Interior;
  (2) the Secretary of Agriculture;
  (3) the Secretary of Commerce;
  (4) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; and
  (5) the heads of other appropriate agencies.
(c) CONSULTATION.- In carrying out an assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with Federal, tribal, State, interstate, and local governmental entities.
(d) PRIORITY RIVER BASINS AND WATERSHEDS. – In selecting river basin and watersheds for assessment under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to –
  (1) the Delaware River basin;
  (2) the Kentucky River basin;
  (3) the Potomac River basin;
  (4) the Susquehanna River basin; and
  (5) the Willamette River basin.

(e) ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS. – In carrying out an assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary may accept contributions, in cash or in kind, from Federal, tribal, State, interstate, and local governmental entities to the extent that the Secretary determines that the contributions will facilitate completion of the assessment.

(f) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENTS.-

(1) non-federal share. – The non-Federal share of the costs of an assessment carried out under this section shall be 50 percent.

(2) CREDIT. –

(A) IN GENERAL.- Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary may credit toward the non-Federal share of an assessment under this section the cost of services, materials, supplies, or other in-kind contributions provided by the non-Federal interests for the assessment.

(B) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF CREDIT.- The credit under subparagraph (A) may not exceed an amount equal to 25 percent of the costs of the assessment.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.- There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $15,000,000.

ENCLOSURE 2 – CHARACTERISTICS AND PROCESSES

Basic characteristics of a comprehensive watershed assessment:

- A defined hydrologic unit study area.
- Establishment of a watershed group (partnership) to participate during the planning process.
- A framework for state, local, tribal and Federal level involvement to help identify kinds of activities that should be undertaken in the watershed to address comprehensive water resource issues.
- An investigation of the problems, needs, and opportunities of a watershed (as determined through a collaborative effort of interested stakeholders) to include, but not limited to, flood damage reduction, environmental restoration, water quality, water supply, drought preparedness, recreation, and navigation.
- A qualitative assessment of the cumulative effects of various activities in the watershed.
- Identification of potential future changes/initiatives in the watershed including the identification of resource uses, needs, and conflicts.
- Identification of ecosystem protection and preservation initiatives
- A preliminary quantitative assessment of anticipated outputs from potential Corps projects.
- Preparation of a watershed resources management plan

Watershed Assessment Process:

- Establish partnership to participate in determining problems, needs and opportunities
- Develop intended focus of the study by establishing goals and objectives
- Determine the most adept resources for investigating the historic and current conditions of different aspects of the watershed
- Develop a scope of work for accomplishing the watershed study tasks, i.e. type/amount of data collection and analyses, public initiatives
- Research historic and current conditions and uses of the watershed
- Determine the likely future conditions based upon proposed activities and development
- Evaluate alternative uses of the resources including the positive and negative effects on economic development, the environment and social well-being based upon factual scientific, social and economic information.
- Prioritize water and land-related resource problems and opportunities
- Identify and evaluate conflicting uses and monetary and non-monetary trade-offs among conflicting uses.
- Work with stakeholders to collectively develop possible project measures for recommended future activities
- Complete a preliminary assessment of project costs, benefits and environmental impacts of any recommended activities

- Work with stakeholders to collectively determine initiatives to recommend in a watershed action plan.
- Use a decision framework and stakeholder involvement to justify recommendations and to explain how recommended activities would systematically improve integrity of the watershed
- Determine the best schedule for implementing activities, programs or construction activities and identify which agency is best suited for accomplishing such activities.
- Prepare comprehensive watershed plan
- Pursue any Corps identified projects under normal budget process.