

**Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board (EAB)
Public Meeting Summary Minutes
2 December 2015
West Palm Beach, FL**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Mindy Simmons, the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), called the Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) meeting to order at 9:00 AM on 2 December 2015 at the South Florida Water Management District, 3301 Gun Club road, West Palm Beach, Florida, Rollin Hotchkiss, Chairman, presiding. Ms. Simmons read for the record that the EAB was created by the Chief of Engineers, Lieutenant General Frederick Clarke, in April of 1970 as a means to gain outside expert and independent advice on environmental issues facing the Corps of Engineers. The board is subject to the rules and regulations of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972. This is a Sunshine in the Government Act meeting and, as such, is open to the public. The Army Corps of Engineers is the sponsor of the board and provides the supporting activities for the board.

EAB Members Present:

DR. ROLLIN H. HOTCHKISS, Chair
SAMUEL ATKINSON, Vice Chair
MARY C. BARBER, Member
MELINDA D. DANIELS, Member
LYDIA P. OLANDER, Member
CHARLES A. SIMENSTAD, Member
FRED H. SKLAR, Member
CHARLES SOMERVILLE, Member

Also Present:

LTG THOMAS BOSTICK, Chief, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
MINDY SIMMONS, Designated Federal Officer
KAREN BAKER, Acting Chief, Environmental Division, USACE Headquarters
THEODORE A. BROWN, Chief, Policy and Planning Division, USACE Headquarters
DR. BETH FLEMING, Director, Environmental Laboratory, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center
Al Cofrancesco, USACE
Anne Cann, Alternate Designated Federal Officer, USACE
MAJ Lisa Mann, USACE
Jeanne Judd, USACE
Howard Gonzales, USACE Jacksonville District
LTC Jennifer Reynolds, USACE Jacksonville District
Jeannette Gallihugh, USACE
LeRoy Rodgers, South Florida Water Management District
Jon Lane, USACE Jacksonville District
Gretchen Ehlinger, USACE Jacksonville District

Victor Wilhelm, USACE Jacksonville District
Kelly Keefe, USACE Jacksonville District
Kimberly Taplin, USACE Jacksonville District
Joel Van Arman, South Florida Water Management District

2. INTRODUCTION OF EAB MEMBERS AND CHIEF'S STAFF

Chairman Hotchkiss thanked Fred Sklar and the South Florida Water Management District, and the USACE Jacksonville District, for hosting the meeting and field trip. He introduced himself and had each EAB member introduce themselves. Eight of the current nine EAB members were present. Senior Corps staff who were present (Ms. Karen Baker, Mr. Tab Brown, Dr. Beth Fleming) introduced themselves.

3. OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHIEF

LTG Bostick opened by thanking the South Florida Water Management District and all who helped to organize and execute the field tour of the Everglades. He also thanked all EAB members for their voluntary service. He emphasized the importance of broad communication between the EAB and all of USACE leadership, and committed to having presentations from the EAB on the agendas of both the Commanders Course for incoming District Commanders, and the Executive Governance Meetings at which all USACE Senior Leaders convene.

Action: Work with the planners and organizers of both Commanders Course and Executive Governance Meetings to ensure that EAB presentations are on the agenda/program.

LTG Bostick reported on recent meetings with counterparts in China and Brazil, how China is learning from USACE experience in water resources development, and Brazil is looking to the U.S. for help on how to deal with drought and its' associated environmental impacts. He observed that both of these countries should have an EAB.

LTG Bostick recounted these visits to demonstrate that the EAB is making an impact not only on USACE, but globally, through USACE's international technical support and outreach.

LTG Bostick discussed three major USACE efforts: 1) Resilience – how to measure it, how to increase it; 2) Watersheds – viewing them as systems; and 3) Alternative financing – how to do it. He mentioned the Fargo-Moorehead project which may be executed as a public/private partnership.

Action: Share the North Atlantic Comprehensive Study with EAB members.

4. OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

Dr. Rollin Hotchkiss thanked the South Florida Water Management District, USACE Jacksonville District, and the other agencies which cooperated to organize a very enlightening field trip to the Everglades and the full scale laboratory of LILA. He said that

the restoration effort was a fine example of how to get things done through interagency cooperation. In fact, the coordination was so smooth that one couldn't tell who was from which agency. He suggested that Members of Congress and the Council for Environmental Quality should visit and have a tour.

Action: LTG Bostick suggested that the EAB invite CEQ to their next meeting.

5. PRESENTATION OF THE STEM REPORT

Dr. Melinda Daniels presented the final STEM report with an addendum, to the Chief. She mentioned the challenges which active duty personnel face in getting further education.

Action: LTG Bostick responded that USACE will take the EAB's recommendations on board. They will encourage use of the GI bill to complete STEM degrees, and make efforts to hire veterans as interns.

6. PRESENTATION OF USACE RESPONSE TO THE EAB'S E-FLOWS LETTER REPORT

LTG Bostick presented a signed letter response to the EAB's E-Flows Report. It contained the following action commitments:

Action: The EAB and E-flows will be on the program of each pre-Command course

Action: The EAB will be invited to join and make a presentation at the Executive Governance Meetings

Action: A segment on E-Flows will be included in the Planning Associates curriculum

Action: Three HQ positions will be identified as E-flows representatives, one each in Planning, Engineering& Construction, and Operations.

Action: A technical coordinator for E-flows will be designated at the Hydrologic Engineering Center in Davis, CA.

Action: The Sustainable Rivers Program will identify the best reservoirs for E-flows management and will seek funding for these.

7. PRESENTATION OF THE LOW HEAD DAM REMOVAL REPORT

Dr. Hotchkiss presented a report recommending that a Nationwide Permit be developed to cover low head dam removal actions for environmental restoration. He acknowledged the assistance of David Olson at USACE HQ on this task.

8. WORK PLAN UPDATES

Ecosystem Goods and Services

Dr. Lydia Olander mentioned a 7 October 2015 Presidential Memo on Ecosystem Goods and Services, requesting federal agencies to provide a work plan on how they are going to incorporate ecosystem services into their planning and decision processes. These work plans are due by 30 March 2016. Dr. Olander also reported that the EAB has been working on Ecosystem Goods and Services and plans to submit a draft report to the Chief early in 2016.

Partnerships

Dr. Melinda Daniels stated that the EAB wishes to table this task, since others are higher priority and better defined at this time. LTG Bostick concurred.

Prioritization of Ecosystem Restoration Projects

Dr. Sam Atkinson reported that this task is nearing completion. He and Prof. Charles Simenstad will be recommending some actions which USACE might undertake to improve the prioritization process. These range from separating new from existing projects, adding columns to the spreadsheet for Ecosystem Goods and Services and a broad system-scale watershed approach, to various levels of internal and external review.

Aging Infrastructure

Dr. Charles Somerville shared a report card on the Mississippi River done by America's Watershed Initiative which rates the infrastructure at a D- . He also mentioned that the EAB is reviewing a recent National Academies report on USACE infrastructure. This task is just beginning.

9. EAB WORK PLAN – FUTURE TASKS

NEPA/Regulatory

Dr. Hotchkiss reported that this task will be combined with reservoir sediment management.

Sustainable Energy in the USACE

This task will be tabled/dropped.

Sustainable Water and Energy in USACE

Dr. Charles Somerville said that this task will investigate water quality/quantity issues, such as those associated with fracking. He said this is very relevant in West Virginia in the context of climate change.

Future Directions

Dr. Hotchkiss reported that the EAB has been discussing IWR's Future Directions program with the leader of that effort, Ms. Lauren Leuck. They want to focus their effort on bigger picture ideas. Work will continue in 2016 on this topic.

Action: LTG Bostick mentioned the USACE Resilience program and suggested that the EAB receive a briefing at a future meeting on this work.

Adaptive Management

Fred Sklar will be the lead on this task. He discussed the definition of “adaptive management” He said that there is a developing tendency to manage adaptively rather than to do adaptive management. The difference between these two is related to setting up the science in advance versus trying to deal with trial and error after the project is already built. When people say the words "adaptive management," it's often in the context of using the current infrastructure to facilitate a restoration project when really adaptive management was designed with a scientific method in mind.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no oral public comments. Ms. Mindy Simmons summarized several written public comments which had been received on the Columbia/Snake River Dams: one from the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association and one from Jim Waddell.

11. CLOSING REMARKS

LTG Bostick thanked all for organizing the session. He said that the dialogue was very helpful, the EAB has taken on a lot of work, and has given USACE valuable feedback and recommendations. He mentioned a recent trip to Stanford University and suggested that the EAB might consider visiting both Stanford and the Pacific Northwest for a future meeting.

Dr. Hotchkiss said that it was a pleasure to work with the Chief again, and reiterated that the response to EAB’s E-Flows letter is the way to invigorate volunteer boards, making them feel that they’ve been listened to and that something is going to happen as a result of their efforts. So on behalf of the Environmental Advisory Board, he thanked all.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mindy Simmons adjourned the meeting at 11:25.

 _____ date 30 Sep 16

Dr. Rollin Hotchkiss, Ph.D, P.E., D. WRE, F.ASCE
Chairman, Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board