Flood Plain Management Services and Planning Assistance to States

US Army Corps
of Engineers

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Cover Photos

Critical Facility Vulnerability Study/Hurricane Evacuation Shelter, Fire Station Number 11, located on 17th Street, in Virginia Beach, VA.
Photo courtesy of Norfolk District.

Water sampling on the Lehigh River, PA.
Photo courtesy of Philadelphia District.

Introduction

Almost everyone knows that the US Army Corps of Engineers builds water resource projects.

Not so well known, however, is that the Corps also provides assistance to help states, eligible Native American Indian tribes, and local governments prepare their own plans and initiate their own actions to manage their water and related land resources.

This booklet describes two of the Corps' most effective and efficient assistance programs:

Flood Plain Management Services
and
Planning Assistance to States

The details contained here explain what these programs can do and the types of information, technical services, and planning guidance they can provide to help others help themselves.

Also included are instructions on how to request assistance and a listing of the addresses and telephone numbers of Corps offices where assistance and additional information may be obtained.

Corps of Engineers Overview

The US Army Corps of Engineers is the nation's oldest and largest water resources development agency. Congress assigned the Corps this civil works responsibility in an effort to conserve the nation's most vital natural resources. The variety and challenge of water projects demonstrate the Corps' range of engineering skills, which are critical during national emergencies.

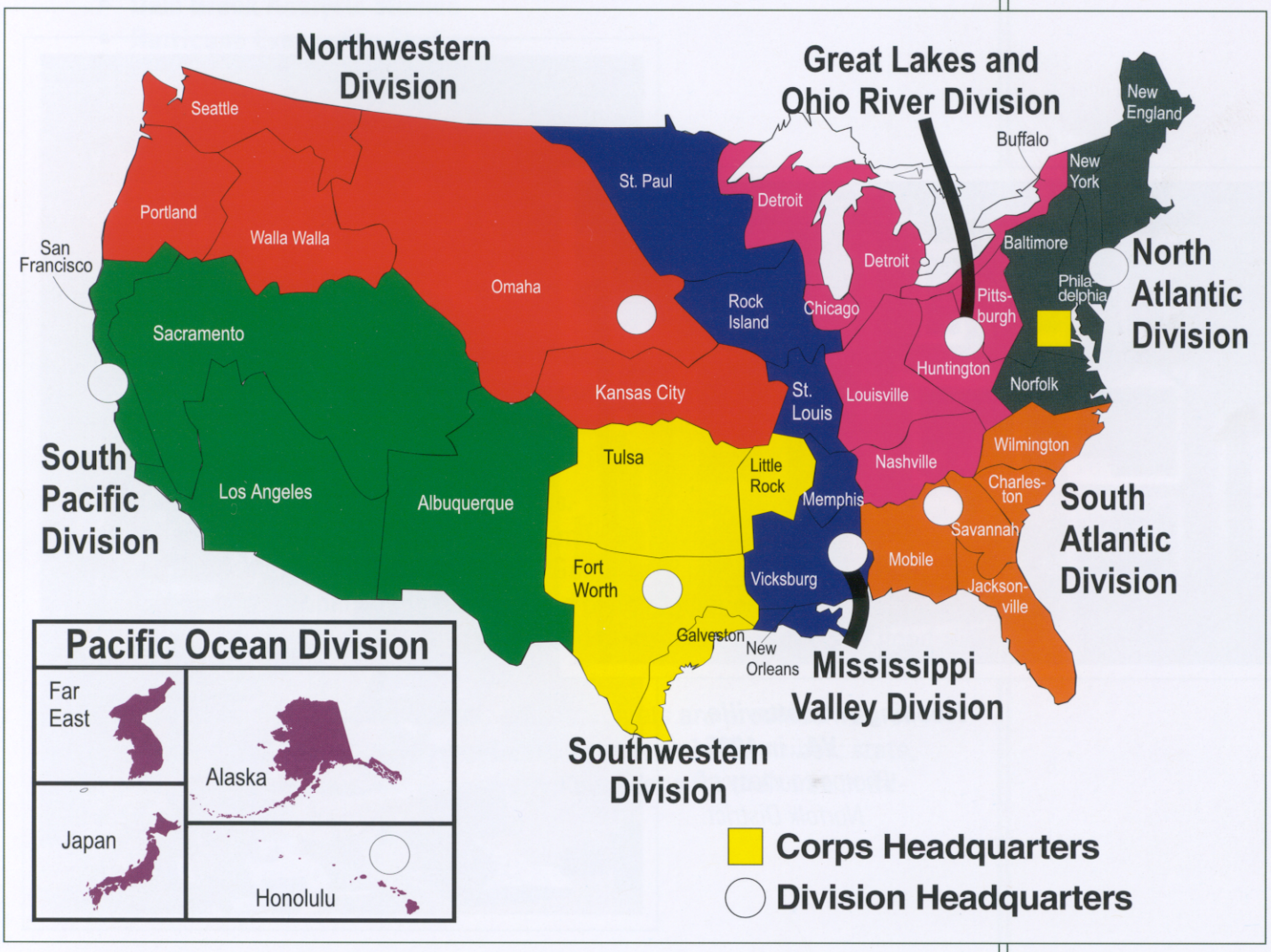
The Corps began its water resources program in 1824 when Congress for the first time appropriated money for improving river navigation. Since then, the Corps has been involved in improving recreation and commercial navigation, reducing flood damage, and controlling beach erosion. Along with these missions, the Corps generates hydropower, supplies water to cities and industry, regulates development in navigable waters, and manages a recreation program. Today the Corps manages nearly 2,000 water resources projects including:

- **Navigation**
- **Flood Damage Reduction**
- **Hydroelectric Power**
- **Fish and Wildlife Conservation**
- **Environmental Quality**
- **Recreation**
- **Water Supply**

These activities call for careful coordination of many interests, including consideration of environmental impacts.

The Corps is organized geographically into 8 divisions in the United States and 41 subordinate districts throughout the United States, Asia, and Europe. The districts oversee project offices throughout the world. Divisions and districts are defined by watershed boundaries, not by states. District and division boundaries are shown on the map below. Each of these district and division offices has designated a Flood Plain Management Services (FPMS) Program and a Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Program coordinator. These coordinators are responsible for drawing on the planning and technical resources of the Corps to provide a full range of technical services and planning guidance on water resources related matters to states, local governments, other non-federal entities, and eligible Native American Indian tribes. Details of the FPMS Program and the PAS Program are described in this booklet.

Civil Works Division and District Boundaries



Flood Plain Management Services

The Flood Plain Management Services Program.

People who live and work in the flood plain need to know about the flood hazard and the actions that they can take to reduce property damage and to prevent the loss of life caused by flooding. The FPMS Program was developed by the Corps of Engineers specifically to address this need.

Authority, Objective, and Scope.

The program's authority stems from Section 206 of the 1960 Flood Control Act (PL 86-645), as amended. Its objective is to foster public understanding of the options for dealing with flood hazards and to promote prudent use and management of the Nation's flood plains.

Land use adjustments based on proper planning and the employment of techniques for controlling and reducing flood damages provide a rational way to balance the advantages and disadvantages of human settlement on flood plains. These adjustments are the key to sound flood plain management.

Types of Assistance.

The FPMS Program provides the full range of technical services and planning guidance that is needed to support effective flood plain management.

Flooding of Scottsville, VA., in 1985.
Photos courtesy of Norfolk District.

General Technical Services.

The program develops or interprets site-specific data on obstructions to flood flows, flood formation, and timing; flood depths or stages; floodwater velocities; and the extent, duration, and frequency of flooding. It also provides information on natural and cultural flood plain resources of note, as well as flood loss potentials before and after the use of flood plain management measures.

General Planning Assistance.

On a larger scale, the program provides assistance and guidance in the form of "Special Studies" on all aspects of flood plain management planning including the possible impacts of off-flood plain land use changes on the physical, socio-economic, and environmental conditions of the flood plain.

This can range from helping a community identify present or future flood plain areas and related problems, to a broad assessment of which of the various remedial measures may be effectively used.

Some of the most common types of "Special Studies" include:

- **Flood Plain Delineation/Flood Hazard Evaluation Studies**
- **Dam Break Analysis Studies**
- **Hurricane Evacuation Studies**
- **Flood Warning/Preparedness Studies**
- **Regulatory Floodway Studies**
- **Comprehensive Flood Plain Management Studies**
- **Flood Damage Reduction Studies**
- **Urbanization Impact Studies**
- **Stormwater Management Studies**
- **Flood Proofing Studies**
- **Inventory of Flood Prone Structures**

The program also provides guidance and assistance for meeting standards of the National Flood Insurance Program and for conducting workshops and seminars on non-structural flood plain management measures, such as flood proofing.

Guides, Pamphlets, and Supporting Studies.

Studies are conducted under the program to improve the methods and procedures for mitigating flood damages. Guides and pamphlets are also prepared on flood proofing techniques, flood plain regulations, flood plain occupancy, natural flood plain resources, and other related aspects of flood plain management.

The study findings and the guides and pamphlets are provided free-of-charge to federal agencies; eligible Native American Indian tribes; state, regional, and local governments; and private citizens for their use in addressing the flood hazard.

Charges for Assistance.

Upon request, program services are provided to state, regional, and local governments; eligible Native American Indian tribes; and other non-federal public agencies without charge. At their option, these entities may provide voluntary contributions toward requested services to expand the scope or accelerate the provision of those services.

Program services also are offered to non-water resource federal agencies and to the private sector on a 100 percent cost recovery basis. For most of these requests, payment is required before services are provided. A schedule of charges is used to recover the cost of services that take up to one day to provide. Letter requests or signed agreements are used to charge for those that take longer.

All requestors are encouraged to furnish available field survey data, maps, historical flood information, etc., to help reduce the cost of services.

How to Request Assistance.

Agencies, governments, organizations, and individuals interested in flood-related information or assistance should contact the appropriate Corps office indicated on the sheet in the pocket at the back of this booklet.

Information that is readily-available will be provided in response to a telephone request. A letter request is required for assistance that involves developing new data, making a map, or preparing a report. A sample letter request is shown on the next page.

Sample Request for Flood Plain Management Services

(Date)

Corps Flood Plain Management Services Program Coordinator
(See address listing in back pocket of booklet).

Dear Sir/Madam:

This is in reference to your Flood Plain Management Services Program. We understand that Section 206 of the Flood Control Act of 1960, as amended, authorizes the Corps to help others mitigate flood losses. The **[requesting agency, eligible Native American Indian tribe, or private entity]** requests assistance for **[body of water or waterway]**, located in **[city, township or borough]**, in **[county and state]**.

[Add brief paragraph describing problem or need].

Property descriptions, **[site plans, maps and/or photographs]** are enclosed. Upon your review of this initial request, we would like to discuss the availability of information, required schedule, and level of effort required **(to negotiate the appropriate charge if applicable)**. Please contact **[name, title, phone number]** to arrange a further discussion of this request.

Signature of Cooperating Agency or Individual

Planning Assistance to States

Other water issues can also be a challenge for states and Native American Indian tribes located near lakes, rivers, or even the ocean. The Corps helps tackle these needs through the PAS Program.

Authority and Scope.

Section 22 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1974 (Public Law 93-251), as amended, provides authority for the Corps of Engineers to assist the states, local governments, and other non-federal entities in the preparation of comprehensive plans for the development, utilization, and conservation of water and related land resources. Section 208 of the WRDA of 1992 (Public Law 102-580), amended the WRDA of 1974 to include eligible Native American Indian tribes as equivalent to a state. To find out if a Native American Indian tribe is eligible for these services, contact the US Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs through the following website: http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html.

Program Development.

The needed planning assistance is determined by the individual states and tribes. Every year, each state and eligible Native American Indian tribe provides the Corps of Engineers its request for studies under the program, and the Corps then accommodates as many studies as possible within the funding allotment. Typical studies are only planning level of detail; they do not include detailed design for project construction. The studies generally involve the analysis of existing data for planning purposes using standard engineering techniques, although some data collection is often necessary. Most studies become the basis for state, tribal, or local planning decisions. To assist in expediting a request for PAS activities, a sample requesting letter and Cost Sharing Agreement are included on pages 10 and 11, respectively.

Typical Studies.

The program can encompass many types of studies dealing with water resources issues. Types of studies conducted in recent years under the program include the following:

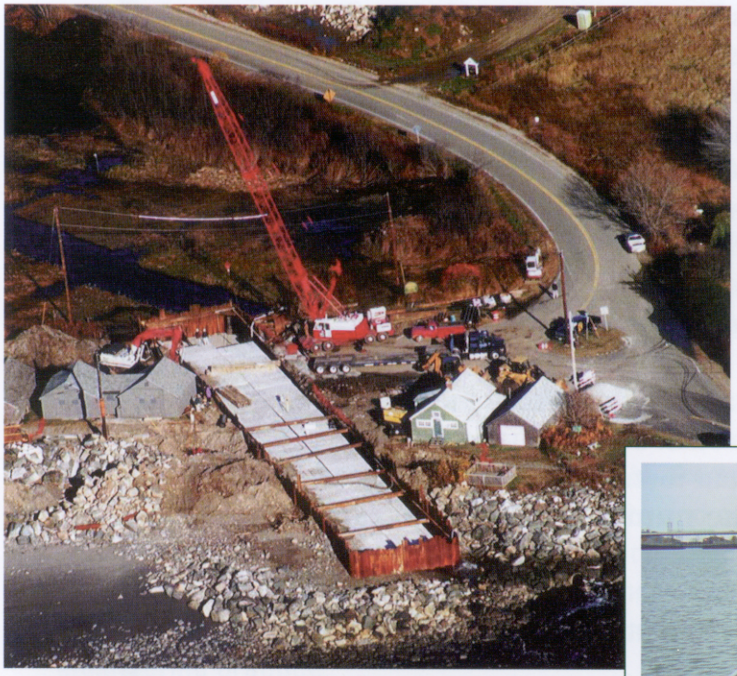
- **Water Supply and Demand Studies**
- **Water Conservation Studies**
- **Water Quality Studies**
- **Environmental Conservation/Restoration Studies**
- **Wetlands Evaluation Studies**
- **Dam Safety/Failure Studies**
- **Flood Damage Reduction Studies**
- **Flood Plain Management Studies**
- **Coastal Zone Management/Protection Studies**
- **Harbor/Port Studies**

Funding.

The PAS Program is funded annually by Congress. Nationwide annual funds may not exceed $10 million, with not more than $500,000 in any one year in any one state. Individual studies, of which there may be more than one per state or tribe per year, generally cost $25,000 to $75,000. These studies are cost shared on a 50 percent federal – 50 percent non-federal basis. The study sponsor has the option of providing in-kind services for up to one-half of its share of the study cost.

How to Request Assistance.

State, local government, and tribal officials who are interested in obtaining planning assistance under this program can contact the appropriate Corps office for further details. Alternatively, interested parties can contact the appropriate state or tribal PAS coordinator to request assistance. In either case, the Corps will coordinate all requests for assistance with the state or tribal PAS coordinator to ensure that studies are initiated on state or tribal prioritized needs. The insert found in the pocket on the inside back cover of this booklet includes a current listing of the Corps PAS coordinator for your area of interest.



Tidal hydrology and hydraulics analysis at Rye, N.H.
Photo courtesy of New England District.

Divers prepare to dive part of the structural analysis of the Union Ship Canal, Buffalo, N.Y.
Photo courtesy of Buffalo District.

Sample Request for Planning Assistance to States

(Date)

Corps Planning Assistance to States Program Coordinator
(See address listing in back pocket of booklet).

Dear Sir/Madam:

This is in reference to the Corps of Engineers' Planning Assistance to States Program. We understand that the provisions of Section 22 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-251), as amended, provides authority for the Corps to assist in the preparation of comprehensive plans for the development, utilization, and conservation of water and related land resources. The **[name of state, eligible Native American Indian tribe, local government, or other non-federal entity]** requests planning assistance for **[briefly describe problem or need, including if appropriate, the name of the body of water or waterway, and city, township, etc.]**, in **[county and state]**.

We would like to discuss the availability of information, required schedule, and level of effort required in order to negotiate the appropriate Cost Sharing Agreement to initiate a Section 22 study. Please contact **[name, title, phone number]** to arrange a further discussion of this inquiry.

Signature of Cooperating Agency

Sample Cost Sharing Agreement

PLANNING ASSISTANCE BETWEEN
THE US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
AND
(SPONSOR'S NAME)

THIS AGREEMENT, entered into this _____day of_____, by and between the United States of America (hereinafter called the "Government"), represented by the Contracting Officer executing this Agreement, and (Name of the Requesting state entity or tribe)(hereinafter called the "Sponsor").

WITNESSETH, that

WHEREAS, the Congress has authorized the Corps of Engineers in Section 22 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-251), as amended, to assist the States in the preparation of comprehensive plans for the development, utilization, and conservation of water and related land resources; and whereas, Section 319 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-640) authorized the Government to collect from non-federal entities fees for the purpose of recovering fifty (50) percent of the cost of the program; and,

WHEREAS, the sponsor has reviewed the state's comprehensive water plans and identified the need for the planning assistance as described in a Scope of Studies; (Name of the study which is described in Appendix A), incorporated into this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the sponsor has the authority and capability to furnish the cooperation hereinafter set forth and is willing to participate in study cost-sharing and financing in accordance with the terms of this Agreement;

NOW THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1. The Government, using funds contributed by the sponsor and appropriated by the Congress, shall expeditiously prosecute and complete the study, estimated to be completed within twelve (12) months, substantially in compliance with the Scope of Studies attached as Appendix A and in conformity with applicable federal laws and regulations and mutually acceptable standards of engineering practice.

2. The Government and the sponsor shall contribute in cash, fifty (50) percent and fifty (50) percent, respectively, of all study costs, the total cost of which is currently estimated to be $_____, as specified in the cost estimate attached as Appendix B. The sponsor agrees to provide a cashier or certified check in the amount of $_____, which shall be made payable to FAO, USAED, **(District Office)**, prior to any work being performed under this Agreement.

3. No federal funds may be used to meet the local sponsor share of study costs under this Agreement, unless the expenditure of such funds is expressly authorized by statute as verified by the granting agency.

4. Before any party to the Agreement may bring suit in any court concerning any issue relating to this Agreement, such party must first seek in good faith to resolve the issue through negotiation or another form of nonbinding alternate dispute resolution mutually acceptable to the parties.

5. In the event that any one or more of the provisions of this Agreement is found to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, by a court of competent jurisdiction, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not in any way be affected or impaired and shall continue in effect until the Agreement is completed.

6. This Agreement shall become effective upon the signature of both parties.

For the Sponsor:	For the Corps:
By: _____	By: _____
	Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Title: _____	Title: District Engineer
Date: _____	Date: _____