

CHAPTER 7 – STEWARDSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM

7-1. Purpose. This chapter establishes guidance for the administration and management of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Stewardship Support Program (SSP).

7-2. Background. The Stewardship Support Program was initiated in FY 2002. The SSP is funded by the Operations and Maintenance General appropriation and encompasses activities previously conducted by the Natural Resources Management Initiative Task Force, as well as other support activities as appropriate. The SSP consists of the following three elements: the Stewardship Advisory Team (SAT), the Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (HQUSACE), and the U.S. Army Engineer Research Development Center (ERDC). Temporary task forces, field working groups, or other elements may be created to assist in the development and/or implementation of policy as needed.

7-3. SSP Mission and Goal.

a. Implementation of the Stewardship Support Program will be consistent with the Natural Resources Stewardship Mission Statement as specified in Chapter 2 of ER 1130-2-540.

b. The SSP will support the goal of the Environment-Stewardship Business Program which is to manage, protect and restore the nation's water and related resources within ecosystem, watershed, regional, river basin, and coastal zone management frameworks and principles.

7-4. SSP Purpose. The purpose of the SSP is to provide broad support to the natural resources management function at operating projects by assisting in the identification of national program needs, the development of new national program activities, strategic program planning, the identification and prioritization of research needs, and the recommendation of national program funding priorities.

7-5. SSP Organizational Focus. The SSP will address natural resources stewardship issues or develop and support initiatives that have a broad applicability to multiple USACE Civil Works projects. This support is conducted through recommendation and development of management actions, policy and research that assist in accomplishing the Environment-Stewardship Business Program goals.

a. Management Actions. Management actions are any activities to implement a course of action or practice within field office activities, a region, or nationwide. Examples of management actions might include developing/ assembling an array of management practices for establishing riparian habitat, or creating a forum to share common experiences, build teams, and disseminate information.

b. Policy. Policy is any activity relating to development and/or implementation of guidance. Examples of policy actions might include recommending and formulating policy guidance to facilitate cooperative agreements with stewardship non-governmental organizations, or amending the annual Budget Engineer Circular to provide emphasis on conducting inventories of regionally or nationally significant resources.

c. Research. Research is any activity necessary to determine new information of regional or national significance. Examples of research might include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Toxicology Lab research on Avian Vacuolar Myelinopathy, riparian corridors research conducted by ERDC, or assembling studies on the management of threatened and endangered species.

7-6. Stewardship Advisory Team (SAT).

a. A Stewardship Advisory Team (SAT) provides oversight of the Stewardship Support Program. The SAT evaluates all proposals within the SSP and recommends priorities to HQUSACE, Natural Resources Management Branch (CECW-ON). The SAT also supports the strategic planning for the USACE Environment-Stewardship Business Program and serves in an active advisory role to the Chief, CECW-ON. The ERDC member of the SAT provides support for execution of approved SSP activities.

b. The Stewardship Advisory Team will consist of eighteen members. Each Division Office will be represented on the SAT. In addition, four District Offices will be represented and four Project Offices will be represented. The SAT will have 16 voting members, two from each Division. Two additional non-voting members of the SAT will include an ERDC representative and a HQUSACE representative. (Exception: The HQUSACE representative will cast the deciding vote in the case of a tie vote among the voting SAT members.) Every two years, one member of the SAT will be selected to serve as Chairperson. The Chairperson will facilitate the SAT meetings, may participate in the annual HQUSACE briefings associated with the Stewardship Support Program, and oversee the voting associated with the SAT decision-making process.

c. Division Office members will serve indefinite terms on the SAT. Division Office members will be those individuals who have regional natural resources program management/ environmental stewardship job responsibilities. District and Project Office members of the SAT will normally serve four-year terms. Terms for the initial District/ Project Office members of the SAT will be staggered with some serving two, three, or four years respectively in order to establish a continuous rotational membership. Two new District/ Project Office members will rotate onto the SAT each year. Nominations for SAT membership will be submitted to CECW-ON, as needed.

d. SAT members are expected to attend and participate in all SAT meetings. Substitute representation will not be permitted on any actions requiring a vote by the SAT. Centralized funding for salary, travel and per diem will not normally be provided for SAT members.

e. On any and all issues requiring a vote by the SAT, a simple majority vote is necessary to carry a decision.

7-7. Responsibilities.

a. Stewardship Advisory Team. The SAT activities and functions include the following:

- (1) Serves as an ad-hoc advisory body to HQUSACE on issues of national significance.
- (2) Provides input and makes recommendations to the strategic planning vision for the USACE overall Environment-Stewardship Business Program.
- (3) Evaluates and provides recommendations on national priorities and needs (such as management actions, policy and research) for the USACE stewardship program.
- (4) Identifies management actions necessary to address national priorities.
- (5) Develops, reviews and recommends annual and long range work plans to include funding.
- (6) Establishes proponency for approved work.
- (7) Monitors on-going work.
- (8) Members serve as regional points-of-contact for the SSP.
- (9) SAT Chairperson participates in annual HQUSACE briefings on the SSP, as necessary.

b. The HQUSACE representative on the SAT is responsible for the following:

- (1) Serves as a non-voting member on the SAT (except in case of a tie vote).
- (2) Coordinates and schedules SAT meetings.
- (3) Facilitates communications between the SAT, ERDC, HQUSACE and other relevant organizations.
- (4) Transmits identified research needs to appropriate research program managers and provides feedback to the SAT from ongoing research activities.

(5) Prepares annual Environment-Stewardship Business Program report for presentation at the fall SAT meeting.

(6) Provides funds management and program approvals for HQUSACE.

(7) Participates in annual HQUSACE briefings, meetings, working groups, etc. having relevance to the goals of the SSP.

(8) Provides final approval for all activities to be initiated.

c. ERDC. The ERDC representative is responsible for providing support to the overall execution of SSP as approved by HQUSACE. Functions of the ERDC representative include the following:

(1) Serves as a non-voting member on the SAT.

(2) Prepares annual stewardship trends report.

(3) Develops proposed work plans in conjunction with a proponent.

(4) Presents work plans to the SAT.

(5) Prepares consolidation of annual and long-range work plans.

(6) Participates in annual HQUSACE briefings, meetings, working groups, etc. having relevance to the goals of the SSP.

(7) Provides general administrative support to the SSP.

d. Proponent. The proponent is responsible for working with the assigned staff to develop work efforts (e.g., management actions, policy or research) that are responsive to identified needs. The proponent will:

(1) Develop statements of need.

(2) Work with assigned staff during the development of the work plan.

(3) Present the statement of need to the SAT and support assigned staff in presenting the work plan.

(4) Interact with assigned staff throughout the implementation of the work plan.

7-8. Program Meetings. The SAT will meet semi-annually each fiscal year, preferably during the spring and fall. The SAT will meet separately and independently of the Recreation Management Support Program (RMSP)/ Recreation Leadership Advisory

Team. Meetings may include activities such as educational events and/or field trips designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Stewardship Support Program in supporting the mission and goals of the Environment-Stewardship Business Program.

a. Fall SAT Meeting. Fall meetings will serve as strategic planning sessions to identify high priority issues and establish SSP priorities. The following input will be provided to the SAT during the fall meeting:

(1) Annual Stewardship Trends Report prepared by ERDC. This report will present trends, as well as emerging issues, that may impact the USACE Environment-Stewardship Business Program.

(2) Annual Environment-Stewardship Business Program Report provided by HQUSACE. This report will present emerging natural resources stewardship issues from a national policy perspective to include a discussion of new legal requirements and initiatives.

(3) Topics from SAT Members. SAT members will be responsible for obtaining input from their division, districts and project offices, and stakeholders, as appropriate. SAT members will be responsible for presenting potential topics and leading discussions regarding issues that may be addressed through management actions, policy development, and research.

(4) Status of Ongoing SSP Activities. HQUSACE, ERDC, or others responsible for ongoing SSP activities, will provide a status report.

(5) Status of Overall SSP. The HQUSACE and ERDC members will provide an overview of the funding status for the previous and upcoming fiscal years.

b. The fall SAT meeting will produce the following outputs:

(1) The identification of high priority topics recommended to be addressed by HQUSACE.

(2) The identification of high priority topics to be further developed for consideration during the spring SAT meeting.

(3) The recommendation of a proponent for each high priority topic. The proponent will develop a statement of need for presentation at the spring SAT meeting.

(4) The tasking of appropriate staff (assigned staff), as recommended by the SAT, to work with each proponent in the development of a proposed work plan for consideration during the spring SAT meeting.

(5) Feedback to HQUSACE on adjustments to ongoing work plans.

c. **Spring SAT Meeting.** The primary purpose of the spring SAT meeting will be to review statements of need/ proposed work plans and to develop recommendations for new topics for the upcoming fiscal year. The following input will be provided to the SAT during the spring meeting:

(1) **Statement of Need/ Proposed Work Plan Presentations.** The proponent and assigned staff will jointly present topics.

(2) **New High Priority Topics from SAT Members.** Each SAT member will have the opportunity to submit new high priority topics that were not identified during the fall SAT meeting. Only those issues considered to be extremely urgent will be considered during the spring SAT meeting.

(3) **Status of Overall SSP.** The HQUSACE and ERDC members will provide an overview of the funding status for the current and upcoming fiscal years.

d. The spring SAT meeting will produce the following outputs:

(1) **Recommendations to HQUSACE for activities to be initiated in the upcoming fiscal year.**

(2) **Feedback to HQUSACE for adjustments to ongoing work plans and statements of need.**

7-9. **Final Approval.** HQUSACE will provide final approval for all activities to be initiated.

7-10. **Definitions.**

a. **Statement of Need.** A clearly defined statement of need is the first step in developing an approach to a problem or issue. A statement of need should be concise (three to five pages) and provide the following information:

(1) **Current Situation.**

(2) **Problem Statement.**

(3) **Problem Extent, Frequency, and Impact.**

(4) **Proposed Solution (may include any one or a combination of management actions, policy and research).**

(5) **Desired End-State.**

(6) Other Relevant Information.

b. Proponent. Normally a proponent will be recommended from among the SAT membership to develop each high priority topic into a statement of need. The assignment of a proponent not on the SAT will be coordinated with HQUSACE prior to asking such an individual to serve in this capacity. The proponent will then be assigned the responsibility for developing the statement of need and working with the assigned staff.

c. Proposed Work Plans. A proposed work plan will be developed by assigned staff working in conjunction with a proponent, and in response to a statement of need. The work plan is a critical document that provides the SAT with detailed information on the scope, approach, resources required, and return on investment. A work plan will usually be 20 pages or less in length and provide the following information:

- (1) Problem Statement Elaboration.
- (2) Review Activities, Programs and Studies.
- (3) Objectives.
- (4) Approach and Procedures.
- (5) Products and Target Audiences.
- (6) Technology Transfer.
- (7) Cost Estimate.
- (8) Deliverable Schedule.