

United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Washington, DC



United States Department of the Army  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Washington, DC 20314

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**MEMORANDUM TO THE FIELD**

**SUBJECT: Update on the NRCS/USACE Partnership**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) leadership recently met to review the status of the NRCS/USACE Partnership and direct future collaboration activities. Both agencies' leaders agreed that we should remind our District and State personnel of this Partnership and bring you up-to-date on current Partnership activities and those planned for the future through this jointly issued memorandum.

As two leading Federal water resource agencies, our mutual support and coordination will allow each of us to achieve our agency missions more efficiently and effectively. The NRCS/USACE Partnership offers an excellent vehicle to make this support and coordination a reality. We, as agency leaders, support the Partnership but understand that Partnership benefits are realized in the field with each coordinated project, technology exchange, or improved or streamlined business process. With this in mind, it is important for you to not only be aware of Partnership activities and resulting products, but to share your ideas for additional collaborative opportunities and needs.

Highlights of recent accomplishments include:

- Coordination on Development of the Regional Supplements to the 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual and the National List of Vascular Plants update;
- Jointly sponsored Wetland Restoration Courses; Incorporation of agricultural damages in the Flood Damage Assessment model (HEC-FDA);
- HEC-RAS technical support to NRCS;
- Appointment of Verlon Barnes as NRCS' Missouri River Basin Coordinator located at the USACE Omaha District;
- Participation in the Interagency Flood Risk Management Committee;
- Participation in developing and supporting Silver Jackets teams for many States including Ohio, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Hawaii, West Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia, and participation in the Regional Flood Risk Management Team in the Upper Midwest; and

- Development of a prototype floodplain management assessment tool in Iowa with State and non-governmental organization partners.

In 2010 a major effort will be researching and writing a **NRCS/USACE Partnership Handbook, or a *Field Guide to Working Together Towards Shared Goals***. This document will include sections on Ecosystem Restoration, Flood Risk Management, Natural Disaster Recovery, Section 404 Permitting, and Integrated Water Resources Management. The Handbook will include details on:

- relevant NRCS programs and authorities, relevant USACE programs and authorities;
- the role of non-Federal partners;
- how to synchronize the timing and/or deal with agencies moving at different speeds
- how to handle different forms of land ownership/rights—from private ownership to easements to government fee simple ownership;
- how to handle different styles of funding, i.e., direct funding vs. reimbursement;
- the intersection between the USACE Regulatory Program and NRCS programs; and
- case studies, examples, and other resources.

The partnership Core Team, Anne Cann and Jeannette Baker of USACE, and Keith Admire and Tony Stevenson of NRCS, will be working on the Handbook throughout this summer. Please make your staff aware of this effort, and if they have any experiences or information that seems relevant, ask them to contact a member of the Core Team.

Another initiative this year will be an updating of the Partnership Agreement, which was signed 5 years ago in July 2005. We hope to sign a new agreement this fall.



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