

Interagency Levee Task Force



RAISING THE STANDARD

April 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ill. Long Term Recovery	2
The Silver Jackets Program	3
March ILTF Meeting photos	4
Calendar of Events	5

Interagency Levee Work Group Team Leads

Iowa

Jerry A. Skalak (309) 912-5153
jerry.a.skalak@usace.army.mil

Illinois

Hank DeHaan (309) 794-5853
henry.c.dehaan@usace.army.mil

Indiana

Roger Setters (502) 315-6891
roger.d.setters@usace.army.mil

Wisconsin

Dick Otto (507) 895-6341
richard.j.otto@usace.army.mil

Missouri

Matthew Hunn (314) 346-9563
matthew.j.hunn@usace.army.mil

Raising the Standard

is published electronically by the
Interagency Levee Task Force.
 It is a collaborative effort of the
 US Army Corps of Engineers
 Federal Emergency Management Agency
 Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Small Business Administration
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 and other federal, state and local agencies.

Submit articles to:

Karen Buehler at karen.buehler@usace.army.mil

Regional Interagency Levee Task Force drafts new policies, procedures for future flood working groups

The Regional Interagency Levee Task Force (ILTF), comprised of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other federal and state agencies held a productive meeting on March 24, at the Goodfellow Federal Building, St. Louis. The meeting established a number of policy recommendations that could change the way working groups help communities recover following a devastating flood.

In addition to drafting new policies for post-flood studies and recommendations that will help communities prepare for future floods, Task Force Chairman Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh said the task force had accomplished the following since its formation in July 2008.

“We’ve improved communication and created new partnerships and relationships between various federal and state agencies working floods and flood-recovery,” Brig. Gen. Walsh said.

“And we’ve realized that some of the federal agencies’ authorities and programs, such as PL 84-99, need to be analyzed and revised to ensure that the agencies can get needed services to those affected by the floods more efficiently and effectively,” he added.

“Finally, we are moving toward creating a permanent multi-agency flood risk management group that would look at flood risk management in a holistic fashion, including steps to promote non-structural alternatives, while also promoting increased flood risk management education.”

Presentations at the meeting included an overview of the National Levee Safety Program, a group discussion of the future Organizational Charter for the next Interagency Flood Risk Management Task Force, the Silver Jackets Program, discussion of the Flood Hazard Mitigation White Paper, and number of other talks from the USGS, NWS as well as State flood risk agency representatives. The meeting concluded with due outs that recommended course of action for the ILTF to consider for its next meeting in Rock Island, Illinois, on May 5.

The overall purpose of the ILTF is to establish a collaborative regional inter-agency approach to long-term restoration of floodplain management systems damaged by the Midwest Floods of June 2008. The task force had a one-year charter, which will conclude in July 2009. The group’s fundamental and founding concept is that flood risk management is a shared responsibility, and preparing and responding to floods should be a collaborative partnership among federal, state and local government agencies, local authorities and private landowners.

More information about the task force is available at www.iwr.usace.army.mil/ILTF/. Additional information about FEMA is available at www.fema.gov and the Corps of Engineers is available at www.usace.army.mil.



Illinois Long Term Recovery Council studies challenges

In preparation for submitting a report to Governor Pat Quinn, the Illinois Long Term Recovery Council hosted listening sessions this winter in four key regions of the state hit hard by the last year's flooding. Meetings with local officials and residents were held in Casey, Collinsville, Quincy and Rock Island and all aspects of flood recovery efforts were discussed.

The Illinois Long Term Recovery Council was created by the Governor's Office to develop and assist in implementation of a comprehensive strategy to help Illinois communities recover and thrive following last year's damaging floods in western, northern and southeastern Illinois. The Council's findings will be incorporated into the report that will be submitted to the Governor in late summer or early fall of 2009, which will address future recovery planning and long-term recovery needs.

"With the 2008 floods behind us, it's more important than ever to develop a comprehensive strategy to help communities recover and thrive after significant disasters," said Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Acting Director Warren Ribley. "For the strategy to be effective, it must include voices of those on the front lines of the recovery efforts. We are thankful to the people in all four regions who gave their time and feedback."

Key Council recommendations include:

- State agency representatives should embrace local knowledge and work collectively on response efforts

by improving coordination and communication between state and local officials, including those in communities surrounding hard-hit areas. Getting a command center structure in place in order to effectively respond to all types of disasters also was underscored.

- Highlight best practices for disaster management and offer specialized training (mentoring programs) and certifications for emergency managers and personnel responding to catastrophic events. Understand the need for increased investments in reverse 911 systems and the creation of sound evacuation plans.
- Higher levels of investment should be dedicated to flood prevention, including building human capacity to manage disaster situations at the local level and educating of residents on improving preparedness when disasters strike local communities.
- In addition to raising the levees, session participants stressed the need for prevention in terms of watershed and land-use planning – using both urban and rural conservation practices – to help local communities create flood easement areas.
- The state should do everything possible to increase response times from state agencies.
- Information flow between agencies should be improved and streamlined, especially as it relates to the claims process.
- Recognize contribution of agriculture to local economies and develop long-term recovery strategy accordingly.
- Work to get disaster mitigation plans in place since utilization of the National Flood Insurance Program was one of the most critical issues facing individuals, businesses, and communities.

- Manage interstate relationships, as actions and decisions happening in neighboring states could affect recovery and prevention efforts in Illinois.

The Council includes experts from state and federal agencies, volunteer organizations, private-sector companies, mayors, county board members, economic development experts from the flood-affected areas. The Long Term Recovery Council co-chairs are: Jim Bohnsack, Chairman, Rock Island County Board; Terry Bruce, Chief Executive Officer of Illinois Eastern Community Colleges; Alan Dunstan, President, Madison County Board; and John Spring, Mayor of Quincy. Each session was facilitated by DCEO in coordination with the Office of Sustainability at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and University of Illinois Extension.

The Council focused on recovery related issues such as agriculture; housing; critical infrastructure; levees, locks and dams; social and human services, economic and community recovery; and future recovery planning and long-term policy reforms needed to reduce the damage of future floods.

In its final report to Governor Quinn, the Council will determine long-term recovery needs, identify critical recovery projects and estimate and advocate for the resources necessary to ensure full economic recovery. The Council's recommendations will not only help communities recover from this flood incident but will also enhance the state's ability to recover from future natural disasters.

The Silver Jackets Program



**Many Agencies ...
One Solution ...
Reducing Risk...**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is collaborating with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies to create interagency teams that engage with a state to develop and implement solutions to a state's natural disaster priorities.

The primary goals of the Silver Jackets program, created in April 2005, are to leverage information and resources, identify gaps between agency programs, improve public flood risk communication through a united effort with coordinated interagency messages, and to create a mechanism to collaboratively solve issues and implement initiatives.

The Silver Jackets approach, which so far has focused on flood mitigation programs, is built on not duplicating existing similar efforts but rather on supplementing, strengthening and establishing relationships where they don't exist. Each state team is expected to be different.

To date, Silver Jackets has initiated pilot programs in Ohio, Indiana and California. These teams have succeeded not only in improving communication, but also in leveraging resources and programs between federal agencies.

No single agency has the 100 percent solution -- each has one or more pieces, similar to squares in a patchwork quilt. The Silver Jackets program can be viewed as a quilting bee, the place where all the agencies and the state come together to put their squares together.

For example, coordination through the Ohio team has enabled the community of Marietta to acquire detailed mapping of its community at nominal cost by tapping into an ongoing regional watershed study. Through the same Silver Jackets team, an opportunity was discovered to integrate two different programs by using the USACE Planning Assistance to States program to provide resources and FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance program to outline the requirements -- resulting in the town gaining eligibility for FEMA flood mitigation funds.

Plans are to establish a Silver Jackets team in at least one state in every Corps division across the United States in the next fiscal year. The program is continuing team development on a state-by-state basis, ultimately establishing an interagency team in every state.

A brochure about the Silver Jackets program is available at:

http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/nfrmp/docs/Silver_Jackets_Tri-fold_1-9-09.pdf

Interagency Levee Task Force Meeting, St. Louis, Missouri — March 24, 2009
Photos by Alan Dooley, St. Louis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Calendar of Events

▶ April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Levee prep.	3	4
5	6	7 Ill. ILWG	8	9 Iowa ILWG	10	11
12	13	14	15 MFSMA	16 MFSMA	17 MFSMA	18
19	20 WI Flood Symposium	21 Ill. ILWG	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 Iowa ILWG		

April Events and Points of Contacts

April 2, Levee Preparation / Response Meeting, Jacksonville, IL.

April 7 & 21, at 1 p.m.—Illinois Interagency Levee Work Group meeting via conference call. Call-in number: 888-959-1793, Passcode: 541342# Point of Contact: Hank DeHaan, 309-912-4532 Focus of the Ill. ILWG includes Policy Modification White Papers and Silver Jacket Development.

April 9 & 30, at 1 p.m.—Interagency Levee Work Group meeting at the JFO, Urbandale, Iowa . Call-in number: 800-320-4330, Passcode: 000156# Point of Contact: Jerry A. Skalak, 309-912-5153

April 15 - 17, Missouri Floodplain & Stormwater Managers Association (MFSMA) Conference at Lake of the Ozarks, MO. For further info: <http://sema.dps.mo.gov/Floodplain/2009%20MFSMA%20Conf%20Brochure.pdf>

April 20, Wisconsin 2008 Floods Symposium—For more information: <http://www.lafollette.wisc.edu/publicservice/floods/index.html>