



Many Agencies ... One Solution ... Reducing Risk The Silver Jackets Program

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