

INDIANA SILVER JACKETS NORTH BRANCH ELKHART RIVER WEST LAKES TASK TEAM



Overview Of Silver Jackets

Many Agencies, One Solution

Indiana Silver Jackets (ISJ) is a voluntary inter-agency natural hazard mitigation team of professional / technical staff working together to protect life, property, and resources.

In 2006, multiple Indiana State and Federal agencies began this voluntary cooperative effort. It was recognized the public often asked very broad multi-disciplined questions that no one agency had the ability to completely and independently answer. Cooperative sharing of the unique talents of our organizations' staff provided a way to begin addressing specific larger watershed /drainage basin and regional issues.

The genesis of this Silver Jacket concept is found in the National Response Plan issued in December 2004 by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. It provides the framework for collaboration between Federal, State, local and tribal agencies, in addition to nongovernmental organizations, private-sector and emergency management entities in order to prepare for, respond to, and recover from major disasters.

Past planning and implementation of preventive measures typically grew from the limited vision of individual agencies' knowledge base, processes and procedures. Often local steering groups seeking assistance approached multiple agencies one after another, causing the same issues to be revisited time after time. Even though some agencies and local governments have been successful in maintaining strong partnerships, overall nationwide interagency collaboration for pre-disaster activities has been intermittent.

Because flooding is the nation's leading natural disaster, as a starting point, an interagency pilot program with focus on flood mitigation was implemented. The pilot program was named Silver Jackets. Silver Jackets team efforts have begun in many other states.

The ISJ team was formed to bring staff from Federal, State, regional agencies, and universities together to serve the citizens of Indiana.

The ISJ governance is provided through a multi-agency task team (a sub group of the larger ISJ team). The team's vision follows.

ISJ VISION STATEMENT BE A CATALYST IN DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO NATURAL HAZARD ISSUES,

SEEKING TO PROTECT LIFE, PROPERTY, AND RESOURCES

The member agencies of ISJ are committed to the mission of mitigating risk of natural hazards through:

- Enabling the effective and efficient sharing of information
- Fostering the leveraging of available agency resources
- Providing improved service to our mutual customers, and
- Promoting wise stewardship of the taxpayers' investment.

Member agencies of the ISJ include:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Indiana Department of Homeland Security
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Indiana Department of Transportation
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Indiana National Guard
- Indiana University
- Indiana University Purdue University – Indianapolis / Polis Center
- Maumee River Basin Commission
- National Weather Service
- Purdue University
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Geological Survey

The ISJ has undertaken several initiatives, some of which are completed and some of which are ongoing. Initiatives are developed through consensus in answer to Statewide or regional problems related to natural hazards. One of these ISJ initiatives – formation of the North Branch Elkhart River, West Lakes Task Team – is the subject of this report.

On all projects to date, team agencies have provided non-monetary resources including personnel time, travel costs, and/or data sets. No funding for implementation of future local considerations or project construction funding is promised or implied by involvement of the team agencies.

One question often asked is why the name Silver Jackets. We have all seen the colorful logos and jackets worn by many individual organizations and teams. Some organizations or teams wear red jackets, some wear blue, black, or brown. Silver Jackets was chosen as a color that could represent a valuable combination of a multi-agency, multi-disciplined team effort.