

**Bios for Public Involvement in Flood Risk Management (PIFRM) Results Webinar June 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**(in speaking order)**

**PIFRM Pilot Program Staff**



Maria Lantz  
Collaboration Specialist  
Conflict Resolution & Public Participation Center of Expertise  
Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
7701 Telegraph Rd, Alexandria VA 22315  
E: [Maria.T.Lantz@usace.army.mil](mailto:Maria.T.Lantz@usace.army.mil)  
P: 703-428-6242

<http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/About/TechnicalCenters/CPCXConflictResolutionPublicParticipation.aspx>

Maria Lantz is an advisor and in-house specialist in collaboration and community outreach at the Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center of Expertise, Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She focuses on the development of this new center and provides technical support to USACE headquarters and field districts in the areas of conflict resolution and public participation. Types of support Maria provides include public involvement mechanisms and strategies, training, coaching, situation assessments, process design, facilitation, and mediation. She is knowledgeable of various federal agencies' conflict resolution and public participation programs, as well as the laws and regulations related to engaging in these types of efforts. Maria Lantz joined the Army Corps as a Presidential Management Fellow in 2008. Maria currently serves as a mediator on the Department of Defense Roster of Neutrals and is a member of the Association for Conflict Resolution Environment and Public Policy section. She received her Master's degree in 2008 from The Fletcher School at Tufts University in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution and Water Resource Policy. Her master's thesis focused on the role of collaborative models in resolving water conflicts. She lives and works in Alexandria, VA.

**Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project**

Bruce Laclergue  
Flood Control Program Manager  
County of Santa Cruz  
(831) 454-2807

Bruce.Laclergue@santacruzcounty.us

Bruce Laclergue is the Flood Control Program Manager for the County of Santa Cruz Department of Public Works. He has 35 years of experience in hydrology, water management, and flood conveyance planning throughout the Monterey Bay area in California. He has worked in all aspects of water resources management for Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, and is a former General Manager of the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency. He is proud to have been the first formal staff Hydrologist for both Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. He graduated from Humboldt State University with an individually designed advanced level program in Watershed Management and Geology, approved by the School of Natural Resources, Department of Resource Planning and Interpretation.



Joél Benegar  
Senior Project Planner  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
1455 Market Street  
San Francisco CA 94103  
(w) 415.503.6848  
[joel.r.benegar@usace.army.mil](mailto:joel.r.benegar@usace.army.mil)

Joél Benegar works as a Senior Project Planner in the Plan Formulation section of the San Francisco District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She has been with the Corps for almost twelve years and specializes in ecosystem restoration and flood risk management planning projects. Joél has acquired experience in public involvement through facilitating stakeholder workshops, supporting public involvement meetings, and preparing print and web materials for public review. Her primary planning project, the Pajaro flood risk management project, was selected by the Institute for Water Resources (IWR) for the national Public Involvement in Flood Risk Management Pilot Program. Through this program, Joél worked closely with IWR on public involvement activities for this controversial project where local agricultural interests are deeply frustrated in the lack of Federal interest in providing flood risk reduction to agricultural lands. The objectives of this effort included improving the Corps' capacity to engage the public and agency partners, enhancing two-way communication, collaborative problem solving, and increasing public acceptance of the future study recommendation. When not at work, Joél enjoys being outdoors on trails and rivers as much as possible.

### **Big Blue and Kansas Rivers' Confluence Actions for Flood Risk Management**

Chad Bunger, AICP, CFM  
Senior Planner  
Community Development

City of Manhattan, Kansas  
785-587-2412  
[www.cityofmhk.com](http://www.cityofmhk.com)  
[www.knowyourfloodriskMHK.com](http://www.knowyourfloodriskMHK.com)

Chad Bunger is a Senior Planner for the City of Manhattan focused on current planning and zoning administration activities. Chad earned his Masters in Regional and Community Planning program at Kansas State University and a Masters Certificate in Geographical Information Systems. Chad became certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) in June, 2009 and a Certified Flood Plain Manager in September, 2009. Chad's primary roles is as the staff liaison to the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board and the City's Floodplain Administrator. As the City's Floodplain Administrator, he worked on numerous floodplain related projects, including the 2010 & 2011 Wildcat Creek flood responses, the Wildcat Creek Floodplain Management Plan, the Big Blue River Floodplain Management, Future Conditions Modeling and Higher Standard Floodplain Regulations for the City.

### **Whittier Narrows Dam Safety Modification Study**



Quana Higgins, EIT  
Lead Planner, District Tribal Liaison  
Water Resources Planning Section C  
Los Angeles District, USACE  
Office: (602) 230-6905

Quana Higgins is the Tribal Liaison and Lead Planner for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, located in Phoenix, Arizona and is an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Ms. Higgins started at USACE in 2009 as a Department of the Army Intern after graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. She has worked as a Lead Planner since 2011 on Civil Works projects addressing flood risk management, environmental restoration, and dam safety modification studies. With a strong sense of service to the tribal community, Ms. Higgins became the Los Angeles District Tribal Liaison in 2014 and continues to advocate for and build relationships with tribes through the Tribal Partnership Program.

## PIFRM Pilot Program Staff



Eileen K. Takata, RLA  
Watershed Program Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District  
Conflict Resolution & Public Participation Center of Expertise (CPCX)  
(951) 898-6174 Office  
[Eileen.K.Takata@usace.army.mil](mailto:Eileen.K.Takata@usace.army.mil)

**Eileen Takata** is the Watershed Program Manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Los Angeles District. In this capacity she develops District strategies for integrated water resource projects, facilitates collaborative partnerships with stakeholders, and represents the Corps in integrated regional watershed planning efforts. She is the Lead Planner for the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study and supports the Prado Basin Multi-Purpose Feasibility Study. She provides project management support for the \$2 billion Santa Ana River Mainstem flood risk management construction project. Following a 6 month detail at the USACE Institute for Water Resources (IWR) in Fort Belvoir, Virginia in 2012-2013, she continues to support IWR to develop watershed-informed budgeting pilot program guidance on stakeholder engagement practices. As a Public Involvement Specialist with IWR's Conflict Resolution and Public Participation Center of Expertise, she manages a pilot aimed at improving two-way public involvement in flood risk communication, instructs the USACE "Public Involvement & Teaming" course, facilitates national planning charettes, and is expanding the Corps virtual learning and conference capabilities. Ms. Takata has both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona respectively. She grew up in the Washington, D.C. area and currently lives in Riverside, CA with her husband Rick Thomas, preschooler Seth, and the in-laws on 1.3 overgrown acres of orange trees and other gardener's delights.