

**USACE FY20 CALL FOR INTERAGENCY
NONSTRUCTURAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PR
Moderator: Tyson Vaughan
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Tyson Vaughan: We have been approved for one hour of continuing education credit for certified floodplain managers from the Association of State Floodplain Managers.

So, if you qualify for that and you attend the entire Webinar, send an email to me after the session with your request. I will post my email address in the chat box so you can see it and just click on that. [earl.t.vaughan@usace.army.mil]

And that's it for me. Ellen Berggren, the deputy National Silver Jackets Program Manager, will introduce today's topic and presenters. So, thanks, Ellen, and I'll turn it over to you.

Ellen Berggren: All right. Good afternoon. Can you hear me okay?

Tyson Vaughan: Yes we can.

Ellen Berggren: Okay, wonderful. Good afternoon to everybody, and good morning, anybody that's West of the mountain time zone. Thank you for joining us today to learn

about the Army Corps of Engineers Floodplain Management Services Program and our request for fiscal year '20 interagency non-structural flood risk management proposals.

Silver Jackets teams have leveraged this funding opportunity to initiate more than 400 interagency efforts since 2011. This is not a grant program. The interagency work promotes participation by Army Corps staff and small efforts undertaken with our other partners to achieve flood risk management benefits that cannot be achieved by anyone party alone.

The fiscal year '20 call for proposals invites submittals from the Army Corps Districts, prepared in collaboration with their partners, and provides an opportunity for the Corps to offer its engineering expertise to assist local communities and states with nonstructural approaches to manage and reduce flood risk.

Sharing information about this within the proposal submittal timeline, as well as their experiences identifying and developing interagency flood risk management opportunities are Lisa Bourget, a water resources engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Manuela Johnson, a state disaster relief fund administrator in the response and recovery division of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the state's Silver Jackets team lead for the Indiana team.

And Stacey Underwood, a water resources planner in civil engineering in the planning division of the Baltimore District for the Army Corps of Engineers and the Corps' Silver Jackets lead for Maryland, Pennsylvania and District of Columbia teams.

So, Lisa, Manuela and Stacey, thank you for participating today and we look forward to hearing more about the program.

Lisa Bourget: Thank you very much, Ellen, and I wanted just to thank everyone for joining. We look forward to walking through this with you and building to your questions at the end.

So, we wanted just to start off with why this Webinar. And during this Webinar we're going to be providing some information on a particular Corps of Engineers program.

But we are doing this primarily with an external audience in mind. So what we're hoping to do is to give the folks on the line a sense of what the program is, why you might care, what it can do for you and why you can work with your District to take advantage of the opportunities that it offers if it is of interest to you.

And then we're also going to provide some advice and multiple perspectives from others who've been through this all before. We'll cover the process and timeline and we will answer questions.

Well, I would like to start first by talking about the Floodplain Management Services Program, or FPMS, generally. So through this program, the Corps of Engineers can provide information on flood hazards to help guide the development of floodplains.

And that program addresses the needs of people who live and work in the floodplains and helps them to know about flood hazards, the actions they can take to reduce damages or prevent loss of life caused by flooding.

The program seeks to foster public understanding of options for dealing with floods and it can give you a full range of technical services and planning guidance to support effective floodplain management.

Services can encompass floodplains along rivers or in coastal areas and make it cover any phase of the flood risk management lifecycle preparing, responding, recovering, mitigating.

Ellen mentioned it, but I'll emphasize again, this is not a grant. It's the ability for the Corps to provide its technical services. Those services are available at full federal costs to state regional or local governments.

And also to other nonfederal public agencies and Indian tribes within program funding limits. And there're provisions for others to also receive services but those may be on a cost recovery basis, so that would be a little different.

The program does allow for the scope of an effort to be expanded through additional voluntary contributions. And over on the side is a fact sheet and a Web link if you're looking for a little bit more detail on the program itself.

I'm going to turn next to the interagency non-structural special studies. And that's one part of the overall FPMS program.

The Corps has set aside funding under FPMS that is apportioned specifically to interagency nonstructural work. And that has two parts – interagency and then non-structural.

So, it does need to be interagency. We are looking for at least two governmental partners beyond the Corps of Engineers.

And it also needs to be nonstructural. In other words, it needs to have a primary purpose of seeking to reduce flood risk, to reducing consequences as opposed to altering the nature or extent of the flood hazard.

So, just upfront, if your primary interest is in, you know, building a channelization project, this is not the program to do it.

Goals under this set aside, including having the Corps work collaboratively with other partners to promote more integrated solutions. And those integrated solutions often can't happen, in fact, without working with partners.

And it's also looking to achieve outcomes that better manage or reduce the flood risk. So, the partners bring their authorities and resources to the table. And when I say resources, I'm including, you know, particular skillsets and other work in kind.

And then the Corps brings its technical and planning expertise to the table. And the idea is that, together, we can accomplish more than anyone could separately and that we can take advantage of a particular skillset advantages of each to achieve a greater whole.

So, the chart at the right in red lists some possible activities and products. Again, this program is pretty wide-ranging in what it can offer. Unusual for the interagency set aside is that funds are allocated internally through a proposal process.

And the Corps of Engineers District offices coordinate with their various flood risk management partners in preparing and submitting those proposals.

Stacey Underwood: And, Lisa, this is Stacey. I'm just going to chime in. Just so folks know, we're going to tag team this. I'm with the Baltimore District.

Just for anyone on the phone that's not familiar with this FPMS or Floodplain Management Services Program, as Lisa mentioned, we're talking today, we're focusing on these nonstructural interagency calls for proposals.

But as she had mentioned, each District actually gets some funding through FPMS each year, so communities, states can still come to their Corps District to find out about this program and work with us on a study or a project that's not necessarily nonstructural or interagency, just something that's flood risk related. So, I just wanted to point that out to folks.

Lisa Bourget: Perfect. Thank you.

Manuela Johnson: And this is Manuela. And we're moved on to the next slide which says, what can this program do for me? And that's typically a question that a lot of us ask when we first were introduced to the program.

And it allows us to address an unknown number. Our team typically looks at about one to three different priorities on an annual basis and just tries to set up an idea of where the funding stream might be able to be identified as within the requirements of the FPMS.

But what it also does is it allows us to look outside of the mainstream. So, frequently, a number of us are focused specifically on, well, we can only do X activities because all the funding comes from the Corps.

And this program, in particular, strongly encourages the collaboration from all of us within the Silver Jackets team, not just looking at predominately Crops input.

Some of the possibilities of this project can include the usual list of suspects that you saw on the last slide. But also it's an opportunity to look at something new and interesting.

It does allow us to take a few items from maybe an unusual list to push our envelope or our comfort levels ever so slightly. And, for instance, this — the image to the right here — is actually a combination of a couple of the usual suspects.

Planning effort for flood risk planning but also integrating that with the flood inundation mapping and creating a resiliency plan for the community to better identify areas of impact, but also to allow them to start taking action in a proactive manner so that they can develop good evacuation routes and community members can be aware of better places to site facilities, infrastructure facilities, shelters.

As you can see on this one, they have a couple of shelters in the upper right there in the green zone but they also have some areas that are not in such great shape.

So, it really allows us to push the envelope and encourage innovation in how we look at the projects that we're doing. Another unusual one is what we call the non-levy embankment identification, looking at structures that act like levies but not just identifying them remotely but linking it with how the community is going to use this knowledge to improve the flood preparedness planning.

And making people aware that these non-levy structures that may look like levies and may sometimes act like levies, are not going to provide the same level of protection as what is anticipated from the standard levy structure.

So, we can really go very broad but it may need to be narrowed down when we're being innovative. And we need to look at how that cooperative and collaborative venture can go beyond the plan.

We have a number of examples that I've brought up just now and the world is really wide open as far as what you can do with this grant process.

Lisa Bourget: Or, not a grant process.

Manuela Johnson: Well, yes, you're right. It's not a grant process. And we like to call it that but it's the Silver Jackets FPMS funding allocation.

Stacey, how about some examples from you?

Stacey Underwood: Okay, there we go. There's the next slide. Okay. Yes, so I just have a few here that Baltimore District has been involved in. On the left there is a photo. This was a Maryland coastal workshop that we had a few years ago.

It was a two-day workshop and the one day we had folks from the National Hurricane Center come up and give us a training on hurricanes and the models and forecasting and so forth to help local officials understand how those models work.

And then the second day was very interactive, talking about floodplain management, flood insurance, various things. So, that was one of our projects.

There, in the middle, we recently — actually New York Silver Jackets team did this first, and then Pennsylvania just had one in December. We had free ice jam training for government officials that are involved in areas where there're ice jams along the rivers that can lead to flooding.

We just, this past December, we had a site visit up top in Oil City, Pennsylvania and a three hour training session just to educate local officials on ice jam characteristics, how they form, how to report on possible ice jams and then how to mitigate them and reduce the flood risk.

The Corps actually has a Cold Regions Lab where we have experts that can assist with this and we talked about how they can provide some technical assistance.

And then lastly, on the bottom right, is a report that we did for Lycoming County, Pennsylvania where we conducted a nonstructural flood proofing assessment, which we do quite often for buildings.

We give examples of how they could be flood-proofed or elevated or so forth. But this one, we went a little further.

And in addition to doing some assessments, we actually did some economic analysis and looked at how doing those flood-proofing measures, how they could reduce flood damages but also how they could potentially reduce flood insurance.

And we did a whole analysis looking at different timeframes. So, those are just some of the unique ones that I've been involved in. Next.

Lisa Bourget: And I'm going to tail on with just a couple others, actually. One is an effort where the part that was provided with the Corps and the partners working together under this program was part of a much larger whole.

And the larger whole was to take a look at areas where floodplains maybe overlapped with areas of habitat for salmon and what advantages did that have.

So, again, you know, broader objective, broader set of goals, broader set of partners. And the piece that was worked in that mix was more flood focused. Another one would be — there've been a number of efforts recently that focus on the flood-fire nexus.

Again, making folks aware of the impact that can occur after a fire, what that means for flooding. And then another one, certainly Silver Jackets teams are a primary means of submitting proposals and sometimes teams work with tribes.

We have seen, on behalf of tribes, as opposed to on behalf of a state or community. So, again, the list of partners, non-federal partners. So those are a few other examples.

Wanted just to draw folks' attention to this Web link. On the Silver Jackets Web site, there's a tab that lists interagency projects previously conducted.

And it has a searchable screen so that we've got "resiliency" typed in here and we'll pull up previous projects and then you'll have a chance to see what partners were involved and brief project descriptions.

And then, as well, and circled in red, is a list of poster summaries. So a large number, over 100 posters were posted during a workshop in May 2018. This is one example to the right, of a summary poster.

They're in similar formats. But if you're looking for ideas, need a quick sense through here, want to see what some other folks have done, by all means, this would be a good place to look for ideas.

Stacey Underwood: All right. We wanted to talk just a bit about how some of our teams have identified potential projects. I know some of my state teams, you know, kind of each year were, like, you know, where do we start?

We often look at requests from communities. I mean, some communities come to the Corps asking for assistance, come to various state agencies asking for assistance. So we usually start there.

See what requests we've gotten during the year. We often also look at our hazard mitigation plans that need to be updated every so often. We look at the actions in there and projects that have been specified.

And then also, in the past, we also have looked at some other grant programs specifically like state grant programs for FEMA grant programs that folks have maybe submitted proposals and they weren't funded through those avenues. That's another place to look for potential projects for this program.

Manuela Johnson: And also in cases, we've done a lot of brainstorming at Silver Jackets team meetings where we've maybe set goals in the past and have not been able to fulfill them.

Or other USACE staff have brought to us, some wonderful ideas and enabled us to make a springboard basically from those thoughts.

And lastly, but by only not least, are priorities set within our own states. Frequently you'll have leadership that will have priorities set forth in this is a great way to blend those priorities into a project that will have a great positive outcome for the community and the state as a whole.

Stacey Underwood: And I also just wanted to mention, typically what our teams are brainstorming, you know, we come up with sometimes a list of projects and we only this moving, you know, a couple for this program.

But, and we also do look at all the programs at the same time such as the Corps as the Planning Assistance for States. Again, we have the FPMS that's, you know, kind of separately in these nonstructural interagency.

And then we also have our Continuing Authorities Program which is a program where we, you know, can lead to design and construction of smaller projects. But then there are plenty of other federal, state programs out there – FEMA's mitigation grant programs, HUD, EPA, NOAA. So sometimes it doesn't look like it's a fit, we at least try to consider that.

It does look like there's someone in the chat. I just want to clarify the hazard mitigation plan, somebody was asking about that. So, yes, typically that HMP, hazard mitigation plan — the state lists a bunch of projects that they want to do or local plans list actions. So that something that does fits these — for this proposal, it's nonstructural. It's interagency. It reduces flood risk.

It is certainly something that we could do as part of this project, this program. So, let's see. So next we also just wanted to talk about other considerations.

Obviously when you're developing these proposals, you really need to be thinking about, you know, the workload, both for the Corps, who's asking for the funds to do this, but also the other major partners that are going to be doing various tasks also.

So you just want to be cognizant of how much work you have. You don't want put into many proposals if you can get it done. Also, the Corps doesn't have to necessarily take a leading role.

We usually do manage the project and do a significant, like, technical task but it doesn't have to be. Other agencies can be doing larger technical tasks and the Corps could have a smaller role in the project.

Again, schedule-wise, you have to be considering that you, that that has to be completed in 12 to 18 months. So again, when you're looking at the workloads, personnel, schedule, just make sure you don't, you know, select the project it's going to take you three years. It has to be something within the 12 to 18 months timeframe.

And then also along with that is obviously technical capability in-house. The money that we are requesting, again, is for Corps technical expertise so make sure that it's something that the Corps can do.

And it doesn't necessarily have to be your own District. Other Districts can help with the work. But, again, I know Lisa will talk about this later, but you're not supposed to be contracting out unless it's a special exception. So again, needs to be something that the Corps, your District or other Districts, can do.

Manuela Johnson: With this process, of course, you're going to come up probably with more ideas than you actually have capability to address in any one funding cycle.

So, it's going to be important for the team to review the list of projects and options and make a decision whether that's through brainstorming, whether that's through work/life balance issues, partner availability for the funding cycle.

Those are all going to be important reasons to decide on one project over another. And remember that those that don't get funded this year, you can always reapply in the following funding cycle if you want just by updating your proposal and maybe looking at why it didn't get funded this time around.

So always an option on that. How many we submit really depends on our capacities at the local and at the Corps level. You don't want to submit so many that your team is going to be stretched and stressed out.

These projects are meant to help build teams and help give the teams success and ability to move forward in a positive direction and possibly build on the foundation.

We've actually taken prior projects and build upon them and it makes for really great outcomes when you're able to bring multiple projects together and use the foundation of those to create something new and different.

Stacey Underwood: All right, so as far as putting together a proposal, typically the Corps District does take the lead and kind of just leading the effort and writing of the proposal but obviously with a lot of support from the team.

And it does have to be submitted out through the Corps District. Some of the considerations, just wanted to mention, but they really should clearly decide obviously the purpose of the project with the scope and the roles and responsibilities because they're going to be various agencies that are going to have different responsibilities.

You want it to be the expectation clearly defined early on and if you're familiar with this, so we're not — a template is short. It's just the front page, back page. It doesn't have a whole lot of room to have a lot of detail.

So that might be okay for more simple, straightforward project, ones that are a lot more details, we've actually written, you know, entire scopes of work that clearly lays out everybody's roles, responsibilities, estimated cost and time frames and so forth.

So I do find that that helps to really come up with a good proposal. Also, one thing I've noticed is, I would just recommend being realistic with the schedule and the funding over the fiscal years.

I know I asked were how much for the first fiscal year in the second fiscal year. Any can be difficult if you haven't laid out a detailed schedule for the project which you typically have it when you're putting together proposals.

So, I know I personally have put in too much in the first year and less in the second and that's a family to work on. But just try to think about how long, you know, when you'll actually kick it off and when you can do in the 12 months and the 18 months.

Obviously, you'll want to coordinate approval and commitment from all the partnering agencies. There is a place on the template that - for you to put who, from the agency, you coordinated with and they approved it.

Also, you know, there's a criteria that's in the call for proposals. You want to just, you know, make sure you review it when you're preparing the proposal.

And I know typically we're all running around at the end, putting these together at the last minute. We do continue to work earlier and earlier, at least on our teams, because we know this takes time. It's not something you can throw together in a day or two.

You really want to start, you know, weeks and months, if possible, starting to prepare these, coordinating with the partners. You have to request your letter of support. There's a template for that but you could also just get an email. But as much as you can do early, it's just going to be beneficial to everybody.

Manuela Johnson: And remember, if you're blazing a trail on something totally new, it may take a little bit more effort to demonstrate the viability of the project to the evaluation team.

So you're going to really want to work in advance to make sure you've got a solid scope of work: very clear to the reviewers what you're planning on doing.

Lisa Bourget: So, Stacey mentioned, you know, getting documentation from support from partners. There is a template for doing that. It's showing over on the right. We're looking for that kind of documentation from at least one non-federal governmental partner.

So if the proposal's from a Silver Jackets team, then that documentation should be from the teams state lead. If a proposal if not from a Silver Jackets team, and I think I mentioned a tribe earlier. We've seen that.

Then it should have documented support from the special study partner. And really, the point of this slide is we provide a form. It is optional. The format is not a big deal.

So by all means, use the form if it's helpful. If you find it easier not use the form, there are really three things that reviewers are looking for. That's how does the proposal help achieve a partner's goals?

What is the partner's role in conducting the proposed efforts because this is meant to be a collaborative effort in carrying out? And then, you know, what is the partner's commitment to long-term outcomes? So the template offers three places to put that. Again, the template is optional.

So what happens after the proposal is submitted? It is reviewed within the Corps by an interdisciplinary committee. It's reviewed using selection criteria that are specified in advance. They're listed here.

They include directly protecting life safety, reducing or preventing increases in flood risk and/or increasing resiliency. So that one is definitely key. And these criteria are actually reference on the template two slides earlier, the proposal templates, so that you can see where those come into play.

Another one is for promoting shared responsibility for flood risk management, specifically by prompting action by others in support of risk reduction and including by communicating flood risk.

A third one is, you know, does this address a priority at a state or local hazard mitigation plan? Leveraging partner resources - again, they can be resources. It can also be work in kind with an emphasis on collaborative execution in carrying out the effort itself.

And then, in addition to of flood risk management focus, proposal the judged more favorably if they improve environmental function or result in some non-monitored social benefits, so some ancillary benefits in addition to the flood risk management focus.

So, a little bit of detail on that. Definitely, the proposals are looking for, you know, what's the impact? An emphasis on the outcomes that the effort is going to achieve.

So one is, again, back to criterion one, on, you know, reducing flood risk, what is the effect on flood risk? Perhaps there is more of an information, and awareness effort.

But if that's true, is it possible for that to go a step further? You know, what your target audience? Is it possible that there might be flood risk action prompted and that the actions that are taken possibly would have a direct effect on reducing or managing this flood risk?

So, often those impacts are best achieved beyond what the Corps can do on its own. You know, sometimes it's the local government where the rubber meets the road and they're the ones that can then have the largest impact on the ground.

The other impacts mentioned earlier, again, that to criterion five, for (non) monetary social benefits and improved environmental function. And for these

proposals, we're looking for, you know, as much as possible given that many of these are planning efforts.

You know, what will result and how much are - do you know about that? A second emphasis is on collaborative execution. Again, this relates back (both) to promoting shared responsibility by prompting action by others, criterion two, as well as criterion four which is, you know, working with your partners on collaborative execution, leveraging resources.

So, this is an example of how you might put partners together. And there are so many variations on this possible theme. But perhaps, you know, FEMA has developed a certain model.

The Corps is going to be updating the model, maybe surveying and a select bridge site. The USGS has a role. NOAA has a role. The state is going to work with the community and conduct public outreach.

The community is planning to update its local hazard mitigation plan. You might choose to pull in academia. You might be able to work with a nonprofit that would add value perhaps to the community.

Maybe the local neighborhood association is interested and best place to do some of the door-to-door that might be necessary on a particular very localized flood hazard area.

Because these are Corps of Engineers dollars for providing Corps of Engineers services, the benefits really need to be flowing toward a nonfederal governmental partner.

It raises questions when we would be looking to provide benefits to a federal partner or private, mostly because then it raises questions of getting back to cost reimbursement.

But that doesn't mean you can't work with those folks in providing those governmental benefits. So, just wanted to talk a little bit about that.

So there are some — I guess, there are bounds to the edges of what can and cannot be accomplished under Floodplain Management Services Program and really the best place to navigate those for the interest that you might have particularly would be through your District.

Having said that, I didn't want to raise sort of two primary cautions, and Stacey's already mentioned one. And it has to do with contracting. The program is allowing us to provide Corps of Engineers services within funding limits.

So typically, amine services and typically that doesn't mean contracting. It's not completely beyond the pale to have contracting and perhaps an unusual circumstance.

But it really is meant to support work by in-house personnel and so the contracting is certainly discouraged unless they cannot be accomplished in-house.

And then the second one is with respect to data collections. So, again, there's a focus on using available data whenever that's practical and from all sources were there might be available.

It's okay to have some small ancillary data collection in support of appropriate Corps of Engineers services. But when the proposal, you know, becomes primarily data collection, then that also raises flags.

So just as one example, if the Corps of Engineers is developing hydrologic and hydraulic models, absolutely it's fine to collect a survey at the bridge to supplement the development of that model.

But if it's wholesale surveys and that's really the primary portion of what the Corps of Engineers is providing, that's going to be more problematic. And again, bottom line, you know, work with the District on these because they know the program and they work with it.

So, in terms of the timeline, the initial call for proposals came out in December internally within the Corps asking for folks to work with their partners with the March deadline.

Then once submitted proposals will be reviewed with notifications, probably about mid-summer, July, and then I think Manuela mentioned that, you know, if proposals aren't funded, they can be resubmitted the following year.

But I also want to, I guess, probably state the obvious that this proposal timeline is being reconsidered in light of the partial government shutdown. So we're looking to move that due date forward. That's likely going to be about three weeks period, but that's subject to not being in yet another shutdown situation come February 15. So we'll firm that up but that's how things are looking at the moment.

So, if you're interested in this and you want to see what maybe can be done, by all means, reach out to your Corps District. That would be your best place.

So you can do that through your Corps of Engineers Silver Jacket state team contact.

There's a Web link. When you click on the map, you select the state. You select the state team contact information and you go from there. I've also put on the right, a more generic avenue for reaching within the Corps at the District level.

And you might just choose the path for the FPMS contact that the place under which this program resides and every District office does have an FPMS contact. And certainly within the Corps, there is coordination between the Silver Jackets teams and the FPMS folks who would be involved in this. So...

Manuela Johnson: And definitely, now is the time to get started on planning your project that you'd like to potentially pursue.

Lisa Bourget: Great. So, I'll just – Manuela or Stacey, anything to add, or should we turn it over to questions by others?

Stacey Underwood: Questions.

Manuela Johnson: Questions.

END