

West Virginia Silver Jackets Community of Practice (CoP)

Representatives from West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (WVDHSEM), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) attended the 2014 Interagency Flood Risk Management Workshop held in Southbridge, Massachusetts the week of August 18th. With the personnel change from Kurt Buchanan as the WV Silver Jackets Coordinator to myself (Joe Trimboli), I decided to leverage the national meeting as the vehicle to develop a more comprehensive method of organizing the State's Silver Jackets Team. Silver Jackets is a national effort focused on collaboratively identifying, prioritizing, and addressing flood risk management issues and implementing solutions within a given State. After four days of discussion, it was determined that a process should be developed to not only address reporting requirements necessitated by Corps Headquarters, but also allow for prioritization of flood risk management needs within the State. As a result of numerous discussions, the following vision was developed:

The Huntington District Corps of Engineers (LRH) will receive calls/emails from local, State, and Federal entities (i.e. Mayors, Floodplain Managers, Planning Councils, FEMA, US Geological Survey (USGS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), etc.) regarding flood risk management needs throughout the State. Calls and emails will be submitted through Huntington District's outreach toll free number and team email address. The individual placing the call/submitting the email will be assigned as the designated "Champion" for the specific need identified. The WV Silver Jackets Coordinator will contact the Champion and collect a description of the need, perceived benefits of the solution, and any other related details for record. Through this collection process, needs will be identified and evaluated by the State liaison for prioritization and coordination with the West Virginia Silver Jackets Community of Practice (CoP). In this manner, a CoP will be established that focuses on flood risk management for the State of West Virginia. This community will be responsible for identifying major flood risk management issues. This process will also allow for an upward method of reporting that aligns itself with national goals.

Rather than conducting monthly calls, the lead agency representatives will meet on a quarterly basis for review and prioritization of needs. In addition to maintaining a list of needs, the West Virginia Silver Jackets CoP will solicit opportunities in the same manner. Under both needs and opportunities, resources will be leveraged across multiple agencies in order to effectively and efficiently address problems and implement sustainable solutions. Overall, the list of needs and opportunities will allow for identifying overlapping agency interests and actively aligning goals, resources, and technical expertise.

Although all details have not been worked out, this plan represents the near term goals of the West Virginia Silver Jackets CoP. The CoP web portal, <http://www.nfrmp.us/state/factWestVirginia.cfm>, will be changed to reflect this new direction and will be used as the main communication effort for the CoP. More details will follow, but feel free to use this more user friendly name to access the official web portal: <http://wvsj.us>. Should you have any suggestions for improvement, please feel free to contact me directly. Also, for future reference and submittal of needs and opportunities, please call 866-401-3980 or email fpms-lrh@usace.army.mil and become a "Champion".