



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION
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CEMVD PDS

21 OCT 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION.

SUBJECT: Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), Engineering with Nature (EWN) Proving Ground

1. Reference Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020, H.R.7575, Sections 113, 114, 115, 123, 124, 116th Cong. (2020)
2. Purpose: Articulate Command Support of MVD as an EWN Proving Ground.
3. Applicability: This Command Support statement applies to all MVD Civil Works projects and project delivery teams.
4. Discussion: Integrating natural processes and systems into infrastructure design and management provides enhanced economic, environmental, and social benefits and increases project resilience. Increasingly, non-federal interests working in partnership with USACE request integration of natural or nature-based solutions in Civil Works projects and programs. Recent advances in policy and quantitative methodologies can capture the wide-range of benefits that nature-based solutions can provide. In essence, engineering with nature offers a comprehensive strategy for safeguarding the Mississippi River Valley's future by balancing human needs with ecological integrity.
 - a. EWN is the intentional alignment of natural and engineering processes to deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits efficiently and sustainably through collaboration. The USACE EWN Program works to better integrate traditional and nature-based infrastructure approaches by aligning engineering and natural processes for greater benefit. Incorporating natural and nature-based solutions into project scoping, planning, design, construction, and operations, from a foundation of inclusive and collaborative engagement, creates a broad array of opportunities to meaningfully strengthen community resilience into the future.
 - b. The benefits of employing natural and nature-based solutions are broadly recognized and specifically required by reference 1, which further directs USACE to consider their inclusion in project development. In addition to the requirements in WRDA, LTG Scott A. Spellmon, 55th Chief of Engineers, and Commanding General U.S. Army Corps of Engineers voiced his commitment in June 2021 to the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, Water Resources & Environment

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Subcommittee that: *“We absolutely want to do more engineering with nature everywhere we work across the Corps, you have my commitment.”*

Additionally, on Earth Day 2024, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, the Honorable Michael Connor, provided guidance and direction for USACE to continue to incorporate “nature-based” solutions where appropriate stating: *“Nature-based solutions should be incorporated as much as possible in developing our resilient infrastructure as they can produce significant benefits, including enhancing natural habitats, removing carbon from the atmosphere, making ecosystems more resilient, and lowering climate change risks for people.”*

c. MVD is committed to integrating EWN into our guidance and processes to facilitate the meaningful evaluation and inclusion of natural and nature-based solutions into our projects and procedures. This commitment not only includes new studies, but also incorporates EWN concepts into existing civil works projects, USACE managed recreational areas, and emphasizes the public interest benefits of EWN for the Regulatory Program.

(1) MVD has a long history of aligning natural and engineering processes to deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits efficiently and sustainably through collaboration. For example, MVD has been a leader in environmental river engineering through the design and construction of innovative river training structures and through the execution of beneficial use of dredge material projects from the coast to Minneapolis. MVD houses programs that currently incorporate EWN principles including the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR), Program and Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). Through the Mississippi Rivers and Tributaries Geomorphology and Potamology Program, MVD is leading the science in the implementation of EWN projects on large navigable rivers and tributaries.

(2) To support the MVD EWN proving ground, MVD will evaluate resources and personnel with EWN expertise within the Division with the purpose of developing a regional interdisciplinary cadre to expand consideration and implementation of Nature-Based Solutions. The desired outcome is to include EWN in planning and design efforts to increase resiliency in communities and allow for future adaptation.

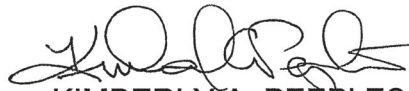
(3) I ask that you join me in advancing MVD as an EWN Proving Ground. I cannot underscore enough the importance of seeking every opportunity to apply EWN across our Civil Works Program.

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4. My point of contact is Andy Ashley at (601) 634-5916 or jonathan.a.ashley@usace.army.mil.

Building Strong-Together!



KIMBERLY A. PEEPLES
Major General, USA
Commanding

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EWN Program Managers