

Operating Guidelines Committee Meeting Summary
September 2, 2004

Attendees: Bill Bailey, Will Berson, Judy Jennings, Larry Keegan, Teri Leffek, Morgan Rees (via phone), Chris Schuberth

Teri distributed the latest version of the draft summary from the last meeting. She now has input from all committee members and requested committee members respond with any additions/changes/deletions by tomorrow morning so the summary may be finalized and posted.

Chris noted the limited responses/feedback for the Operating Guidelines information exchange page. Larry wondered if maybe the suggestions on the page may or may not meet the challenge before us which is how to improve communication. Hope noted that timing is a concern as to which topics are covered at SEG meetings especially if we rotate through a set series of topics several at a time. Also, the cost of moving from bi-monthly to monthly SEG issues is a concern.

Teri raised the issue of newcomers later on in the process when mitigation alternatives are discussed and decisions made. She doesn't want to "close" the meetings/SEG process but does want to make sure newcomers do their "homework" and the SEG does not waste time covering concerns/questions already raised and addressed. Will noted there is difference between giving input on study results and input on the structure/design of a study, the latter a phase the SEG is completing. Larry observed that maybe a shift in emphasis at the meetings is occurring, shifting from report/briefing and then reaction to a discussion of topics published for review.

Chris wondered that if the SEG just focused on an in-depth discussion of one or two topics, could we end up with the same situation as occurred with the model. Where could this go wrong? Larry noted the risk of "where could this go wrong" is reduced because of where we are in the process – far enough along that most topics are being addressed. Open items include the aquifer, economics and the series of modules in the marsh succession module.

Doug Plachy (USACE) is working on revising the schedule, partially due to new software and partially to look at ways to complete tasks on parallel tracks to recover time lost in the schedule to the change in models.

Will suggested a compromise solution: An official "Big" SEG meeting would be held (usual time, date and place) with a facilitator and court recorder on a bi-monthly basis. During the interim month, a smaller planning meeting would be held to discuss "where are we" in the project and determine what documents, topics, etc would be timely for discussion at the next "Big" SEG meeting.

The question was raised as to how to encourage strong attendance from the federal agencies if the SEG goes to a monthly schedule. Federal agency attendance has decreased at SEG meetings largely due to budget cuts and workload. Federal agencies are certainly not required to attend SEG meetings since they have a separate relationship with USACE and are not to be held accountable for their comments/opinions expressed at SEG meetings. Chris wondered what would happen if the SEG just "went away". Judy responded a typical NEPA process would take over; however, the valuable and more timely input/feedback from the SEG process would be lost.

next SEG meeting and any feedback given during the meeting while reviewing documents/results. This meeting would be scheduled in the month between SEG meetings on the first Tuesday at 1:00 PM at the offices of Lockwood Greene.

- Committee chairs are strongly encouraged to attend the first interim meeting. Also, anyone interested in attending the meeting on a regular basis is requested to submit their email address to the chair of the Operating Guidelines committee as an email reminder will be sent one week prior to each meeting.

Larry requested feedback on the design of the website. The group agreed the “recent postings” at the top of the site is helpful. They also asked for a “homework” site so that SEG members know what documents to read to intelligently participate in the discussions at the upcoming meeting.

The group also asked Larry to post the Work Breakdown chart. Larry will come up with a color code for the tasks on the chart so that it is relatively easy to determine the status of that task. He will use the OGC information exchange page to solicit thoughts from committee members as to what to include.