



**US Army Corps of Engineers**  
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## USACE 'reinvigorates' Environmental Operating Principles

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For 10 years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has lived by its Environmental Operating Principles.

The seven principles, often called the Corps of Engineers “Green Ethics,” have encouraged Corps employees to consider the environment in everything they do. They have served the Corps of Engineers well, setting the direction the Corps would take to achieve greater synergy between sustainability and the execution of its projects and programs.

But during these 10 years, the Nation’s resource challenges and priorities have evolved, focusing more on sustainability and the need to conserve water, electricity, fuel and other precious resources. The Corps of Engineers, as well as the Nation as a whole, has learned more about the impacts of global factors such as climate and sea level change.

With those challenges and priorities in mind, the Corps of Engineers have “reinvigorated” the Environmental Operating Principles, which Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick unveiled Aug. 8 at the USACE Strategic Leader Conference in Little Rock, Ark.

The “reinvigorated” principles are more concise, have a clearer format and include an increased emphasis on the proactive nature of each principle.

“The Corps of Engineers level of environmental commitment must expand and intensify,” Bostick said. “As with other Corps guidance and principles, it was necessary to revise the EOPs periodically to reinforce their value to how the Corps operates.

“The reinvigorated principles provide direction on how the Corps protects and restores natural systems and the environment while encouraging productive, sustainable economic development that improve the quality of life for everyone,” he said.

The reinvigorated principles are:

### Photos



From left: Dr. James E. Kundell, Chair of the Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board, and Commanding General and Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick at the public release of the Army Corps of Engineers reinvigorated Environmental Operating Principles. (Photo by Lynn Whelan)

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- Foster Sustainability as a way of life throughout the organization.
- Proactively consider environmental consequences of all Corps activities and act accordingly.
- Create mutually supporting economic and environmentally sustainable solutions.
- Continue to meet our corporate responsibility and accountability under the law for activities undertaken by the Corps, which may impact human and natural environments.
- Consider the environment in employing a risk management and systems approach throughout life cycles of projects and programs.
- Leverage scientific, economic and social knowledge to understand the environmental context and effects of Corps actions in a collaborative manner.
- Employ an open, transparent process that respects views of individuals and groups interested in Corps activities.

When the principles were first introduced in 2002, “we were one of the first federal agencies with Environmental Operating Principles,” said Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh, Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations. “They opened the door for us to think about other criteria to measure projects against beyond just the economic cost benefit ratio, to look at other perspectives.”

Throughout the years, though, many Corps employees became a bit complacent when it came to the principles,” Walsh said. “The mindset became ‘OK, we took care of that’ and then they moved on,” he said.

“It was time to take another look, to reinvigorate them and remind everyone of their importance and applicability. Besides, it’s something that people expect us to be doing.”

Helping to reinvigorate the principles were members of the Chief of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board, who took on the project last winter. “We need to thank the EAB for its help with this,” Walsh said. “It only took about six months to redo the principles, which is very good.”

As part of the reinvigoration process, plans are under way to ensure that Corps training courses include a small module on the principles, metrics that include long-term goals and indicators of success are being developed, and the principles are being included in any new or revises Engineer Regulations, Engineer Pamphlets, Engineer Manuals and other guidance.