



Maintaining Construction Capability *in the* Bureau of Reclamation

January 1997

Project Construction Engineers Work Group
and the
Engineers Work Group

*United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation*





United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Director, PN, MP, LC, UC, GP
Attention: PN-1000, MP-100, LC-1000, UC-100, GP-1000
Director, Reclamation Service Center
D-1000

From: Eluid L. Martinez
Commissioner

SGD ELUID L. MARTINEZ

Subject: Reclamation's Design and Construction Capabilities

By memorandum from Steve Magnussen dated September 18, 1996, the regions and the Reclamation Service Center (RSC) were asked to provide comments on two draft reports: Profile of Design Capability in the Bureau of Reclamation, and Recommendations for Sustainability, and Profile of Construction Capability in the Bureau of Reclamation. These reports were the culmination of a year-long effort to address the future of design and construction capability within Reclamation.

Responses have been favorable on the conclusions and recommendations contained in these documents, and reflect a belief in the vital role that a strong design and construction capability can continue to have in support of our many responsibilities. It is important that the momentum that has been generated by this process will continue as we move ahead to implement recommendations.

All the recommendations and supporting information can be obtained from the referenced reports, but I would like to emphasize a few of the more critical actions needing immediate attention.

1. **Establish Reclamation Design Coordination and Construction Coordination Teams (RDCT and RCCT):** I have asked each region and the Reclamation Service Center to nominate a representative for the RDCT and RCCT and to submit their names to Félix Cook, D-8000, by December 20, 1996. The individuals should be familiar with and have access to the processes used to distribute workload and fill design and construction positions for the region/office they represent. These groups will be assembled quickly after members are selected, and are expected to play a major role in implementing many of the recommendations pertaining to design and construction capability. After implementation of the recommendations has been

completed, the teams will assume permanent roles in the monitoring and coordination of our design and construction activities.

2. Pursue opportunities to stabilize and supplement the workload: Reclamation design and construction management organizations shall be the providers of choice for all Reclamation's program related work, provided the organizations can demonstrate quality, cost effectiveness, and customer service. To achieve this goal, I am asking that each Region use their RDCT and RCCT representatives and their Technical Service Center (TSC) contacts to jointly develop work plans each year when final information on budget and workload are known with certainty. This collaborative process will ensure that we utilize our engineering staff resources in the most effective manner. Our goal is to utilize our own staff resources as well as consultant resources in a balanced manner that fully enhances our own staff capability and meets our work load objectives in a timely and efficient manner. In addition to our own work, individual regions and the TSC are encouraged to evaluate opportunities to perform reimbursable work. Reimbursable work may provide opportunities to maintain capability when our own program activities are temporarily limited. Each Director, however, should establish management review processes to ensure that financial; liability, and other issues are appropriately addressed and that the work is consistent with our mission as a water resources management agency.

3. Develop processes in the regions that support the goal of maintaining capability: The mechanisms used in each region to determine who will perform design and construction management activities on individual projects should be evaluated to ensure that they adequately consider factors relative to maintaining and developing key capabilities. Personnel actions that further disperse technical expertise should be discouraged, and opportunities to consolidate design and construction organizations as the workload allows should be considered.

4. Establish a construction management focal point through the Technical Service Center: The TSC should begin immediately to assemble the necessary resources to provide training, policy development, and resource management services for corporate issues relating to construction management. This organization would also contain a construction management core capability that would be available to perform work within the regions and also serve the purpose of retaining key construction management personnel within Reclamation as the workload shifts between locations. The TSC is currently analyzing the most efficient methods of providing these services to create an organization that is fiscally responsive to the needs of Reclamation.

Implementing these actions and recommendations contained in the reports will have a positive affect on our ability as an agency to maintain a high standard of design and construction management capability. It will also provide more stability and job opportunities for the many Reclamation employees who have built their careers around these disciplines. It is incumbent upon all of the managers in Reclamation to facilitate the actions necessary to accomplish these activities, and to recognize and support the technical resources in our organizations that are so important to our future.

I have asked Bob Johnson, Regional Director for the Lower Colorado Region, and Felix Cook, Director of the Technical Service Center, to monitor this effort for the Policy Team, and to provide guidance to staff who are working on implementation.

I would like to express my thanks to the staff who worked on this review and developed the reports and recommendations. They have done an excellent job.

cc: Director, Technical Service Center

Attention: D-8000, 8100

Regional Director, PN

Attention: SRA-1000, GCP-1000, UCA-1000, LCA-1000, UCY-3100, BCO-3100, HH-3000, EPH-2000, CRCO-6113, SRA-6300; PN-3000, 3400

Regional Director, MP

Attention: K0-100, LO-100, NC-100, CC-100, SCC-100, CVO-100, WCO-100; MP-105, 110, 200, 400

Regional Director, LC

Attention: PXAO-1000, 2000, 2800; LCD-1000, C100, D10, P10; SCAO-1000, YAO-1000, LC-2000

Regional Director, UC

Attention: ALB-100, AFD-400, C-10, RG-600, RG-100, S-10, FCO-100, UC-600, GC-100, CCI-100, FG-100, PRO-100 (CDeAngelis, PSchumacher); UC-200, 205

Regional Director, GP

Attention: DK-100, EC-100, NK-RJG, OT-100, MT-100, WY-100; GP-2000, 2200

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**MAINTAINING CONSTRUCTION CAPABILITY
IN THE
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A strategy for addressing critical problems and needs in Reclamation's construction management (CM) organization and construction program is presented in this report. The strategy was developed and is recommended by the Project Construction Engineers/Engineering Work Group (PCE/EWG). This effort was undertaken in response to growing concern about losing Reclamation's construction capability to maintain its aging infrastructure, respond to emergencies, meet current construction needs, and address environmental restoration and other programs and initiatives associated with Reclamation's mission.

PROBLEMS AND NEEDS

The PCE/EWG found that Reclamation's CM capability varies widely across the regions, driven by current workload and projected future program. Some regions utilize one centralized construction office while others establish a number of offices close to the various work locations. In some regions, the workload provides a relatively stable program where selective hiring is occurring, while other regions are impacted by a declining program requiring staff reductions and even the elimination of offices. Based on the data collected and in the opinion of the PCE/EWG members, the most critical concerns with maintaining construction capabilities in Reclamation are:

- An accelerating loss of highly experienced construction staff
- An acute decline in staff where the retention of capability is essential
- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff
- Shifting and declining work load volume and diversity
- A reduced ability to accurately predict the future workload
- A reduced ability to accurately predict staffing needs
- Barriers within Reclamation that inhibit matching staff to workload

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The PCE/EWG recommends that, in the immediate future, the Commissioner and the Policy Team approve the following strategy.

1. Organization. - Optimize Reclamation's flexibility to execute today's more dynamic construction program by striking a balance between improving the construction organizations within each Region and developing a construction focal point within the Technical Service Center (TSC) along with a core TSC group with CM capability.

Regional Component. - Regional management fine tune regional construction organizations and capabilities to best meet each region's construction needs.

TSC Component. - Establish a construction focal point for resource management, policies, and training in the TSC, including a core construction management staff.

2. Program. - Ensure that the volume and diversity of Reclamation's construction program is robust enough to sustain a highly experienced, expert construction staff by encouraging and supporting a plan of action and the recommended policies on internal and external work.

3. Oversight. - Maintain the PCE/EWG working group as a mechanism to ensure the continuity between design and construction management activities. The group would meet periodically to bring the design and construction communities together, evaluate the success of actions taken to maintain design and construction capability, and provide information and recommendations to the Policy Team as required.

PRINCIPLES

In order for the above strategies to be implemented and provide a strong Reclamation construction capability, the PCE/EWG recommends adoption of the following principles:

- Maintain program responsibility under the Regional Directors
- Determine staffing levels and deployment of resources based on the workload needs
- Share resources between construction offices and regions
- Maintain CM oversight of "pass-through" work
- Perform reimbursable work for other agencies
- Seek inducements to encourage construction management staff to be mobile
- Develop and promote Reclamation's CM capabilities to be the provider of choice