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What's So Important About Customer Service?

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A recent U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs study revealed that 96 percent of unhappy customers do not complain to the persons who provided the goods or service, but they do tell at least 10 other people about their problems. Those few who do complain will remain customers only if their problem is resolved. This article explains the importance and benefits of applying customer satisfaction and service techniques to Corps recreation and natural resource management activities. The second article in this issue describes how NRRP and NRTS are involved in evaluating and improving customer service.

Increased customer satisfaction can be achieved at Corps projects by successfully applying proven customer service techniques to recreation and natural resources management activities. Benefits will result from improving the

- Project economic impact.
- Quality of visitors' outdoor recreation experiences.
- Efficiency of O&M expenditures via better targeting and delivery of services.

The "Age of Service"

Firms in the private sector have recognized the benefits of successfully providing customer service techniques long before the Federal Government's interest. As a result of the private sector's efforts in addressing customer service, the U.S. economy has entered an Age of Service. In fact, the transition of the U.S. economy, formerly based on manufacturing, to one based on service is one of the most important trends in American life, and certainly in the modern business world. More than three quarters of all jobs in the United States during the last decades have

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been in service industries, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that the trend will continue about that pace for some time. Similarly, virtually all of the other post-industrial nations are experiencing this same shift toward a service economy, in differing degrees and at differing stages (Albrecht 1988).

What is a customer?

A customer is the recipient or beneficiary of the outputs of one's work efforts and is the purchaser of the product or service. While customers may be either external or internal to the organization, the customer must be the recipient that is *satisfied* with your output (Hunt 1993). A unique aspect of the customer service process is the emphasis on continually identifying customers. Corps customers represent both external and internal groups and are quite varied and dynamic. Customers include the following groups, among others.

Campers	Cost-sharing sponsors
Boaters	Anglers
Other government agencies	Environmental organizations
NRRP/NRTS users	Fellow Corps employees
Concessionaires	Sightseers
Day users	Local municipalities
Schools	Taxpayers
Future generations	

Today's customers are more discriminating than ever, and are expecting and demanding much more in terms of product and service quality. Unfortunately, studies across different industries show that customers are still not receiving the quality of products and service they expect (Zemke and Schaaf 1989).

A recent study by the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs reports that only about 4 percent of dissatisfied customers complain to the

persons who provided the goods and services. Those who do complain will remain customers only if their problem is resolved (Cannie and Caplin 1991).

What is customer satisfaction?

Increased customer satisfaction is the result of a successful customer service effort. The word *satisfaction* is derived from the Latin *satis* (enough) and *facere* (to do or make). A related word is *satiation*, which loosely means *enough or enough to excess*. These terms illustrate the point that satisfaction implies a filling or fulfillment. Thus, customer satisfaction can be viewed as the consumer's fulfillment response (Oliver 1993). Satisfaction can also be described as a process, in which satisfaction is viewed as largely based on meeting or exceeding expectations (Erevelles and Leavitt 1992).

Recent interpretations in the consumer domain, however, allow for a greater range of response than mere fulfillment. Fulfillment implies that a satiation level is known, as in basic needs of water, food, and shelter. Observers of human behavior, however, understand that each of these needs can be (and frequently is) exceeded in various ways. Thus, consumer researchers have moved away from the literal meaning of fulfillment or satisfaction and now pursue this concept as the individual consumer experiences and describes it (Rust and Oliver 1994).

The value of customer service: shifting demand outward

Simply put, improving service satisfies customers and increases demand. When there is an increase in demand for a product such as outdoor recreation, the value of that product increases. This is why customer service efforts are valuable to firms and government agencies. Assuming quality is a function of quantity, this value is reflected by the Economic Law of Demand, which states that price is inversely related to quantity. Thus, people are willing to pay more for high-quality services. Successfully improving customer service for project visitors will shift demand outward, resulting in customers willing to pay more for the same product (Figure 1). In terms of outdoor recreation, this means that visitor experiences will have greater value when measured as an increase in consumer surplus (Walsh 1986).

Firms continually seek ways to reduce costs and improve production techniques to improve profits. Usually, successful firms are already very efficient and cannot significantly reduce costs. Therefore, an alternative for firms is to *produce an outward shift in demand* by successfully providing quality service. This shift in demand will result in greater impact on profits while reducing costs.

Failure to continually improve product and service quality will make it difficult for businesses and organizations to retain existing customers and attract new ones (Revzan 1986). This in turn will have a negative impact on earnings/funding and public support, which will further reduce the organizations' ability to meet

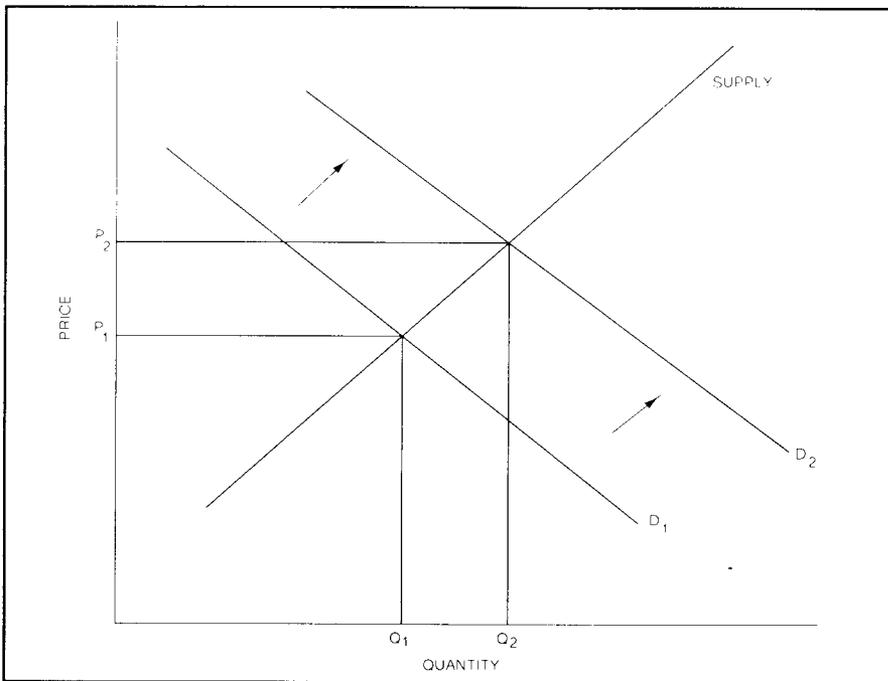


Figure 1. Improving service satisfies customers and increases demand. Consumer demand is not static and will shift up or down because of changes, tastes, and preferences, incomes, price of other goods, number of customers in the market, or expectations about prices. Providing improved customer service will produce an outward shift in demand (D_1 to D_2), resulting in a higher price (P_1 to P_2) and increased quantity (Q_1 to Q_2)

the quality expectations of ever more sophisticated and discerning customers. As a result, these organizations will have an image of poor quality and unresponsiveness (Mead 1985).

Continuing customer research shows that many service firms are paying a terribly high price in the "opportunity cost" of lost business due to mediocre service. Many of the problems of poor or mediocre service originate in systems, procedures, policies, rules and regulations, and organizational craziness. Too often, the frontline people are blamed for poor service, when the real problem is systems that do not work or make sense. If managers are unwilling to rethink systems, they are asking employees to run the race with only one shoe (Albrecht 1988).

Customer service: a proactive process

Outdoor recreation demand is too dynamic and large for agencies such as the Corps to completely control and manage. Rather, successfully implementing customer service techniques is a continual process that allows managers to become proactive instead of reactive with customers. That is, rather than responding to customer problems, this process allows managers to prevent customers' problems (usually in a more economical and controllable manner). The U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs reported in 1986 that it costs five times as much to attract a new customer as it costs to keep an old one.

Customer service should be considered and treated as a management process and responsibility. A "gold mine" awaits those

Customer service definitions

Bad: Anything the consumption of which decreases human happiness (Byrns 1992).

Customer service management: A total organizational approach that makes quality of service, as perceived by the customer, the number one driving force for the operation of the business (Albrecht 1988).

Goods and services: Anything that satisfies a human want and, in doing so, increases human happiness (Byrns 1992). Goods provide satisfaction, and in doing so, produce and have an economic value. It is interesting to note that terms such as satisfaction, product, utility, use, wants, and needs are interrelated and are very similar terms when describing the role of goods and services.

These terms are considered by economists to be the same. The only difference is when the term is applied to producers or consumers of goods and services. For example, a producer views goods and services as a *product* of her efforts and thus receives *satisfaction* in the form of a sale and resulting profit. However, a consumer *wants* or *needs* to obtain a good or service because he gets *utility* or *satisfaction* when these are consumed. No doubt, the current drive for customer *satisfaction* has its roots in demand for goods and services.

Moment of truth: Any episode in which the customer comes into contact with any aspect of the organization and gets an impression of the quality of service (Albrecht 1988).

Service excellence: A level of service or quality, compared to one's competitors, that is high enough in the eyes of the customer to enable one to charge a higher price for the service or product, gain an unnaturally large market share, or enjoy a higher profit margin than one's competitors (Erevelles and Leavitt 1992).

Service management: A total organization approach that makes quality service, as perceived by the customer, the number one driving force for the operation of the business (Albrecht 1988).

Total customer value: The combination of the tangible and the intangible experienced by the customer at the various "moments of truth" that becomes his or her perception of doing business with an organization (Albrecht 1992).

organizations that are willing to move quality from an abstract concept to a practical management discipline (Butterfield 1987). It is a process that creates a conducive environment (system), providing the necessary support and tools and motivating individuals to realize the achievement of quality goals. Even though continuous improvement is a responsibility shared by all employees throughout the organization, ultimate responsibility falls not to the customer contact staff (Park Rangers and Technicians) but rather to the top and middle managers (Salton 1988).

Federal Government customer service

In September 1993, President Clinton signed an Executive Order that set customer service standards for the Federal Government (Office of the Federal Register 1993). This Executive Order, which is a significant part of Vice President Gore's efforts to reinvent government, established and implemented customer service standards to guide executive branch operations. Two main points of this executive order are summarized below.

Establishing customer service standards: The Federal Government must be customer driven. The standard of quality for services provided to the public shall be *customer service equal to the best in business*. All executive departments and agencies that provide services to the public shall provide those services in a manner that seeks to meet identified customer service standards.

Developing customer service plans: Each agency sub-

ject to this order shall publish a customer service plan that can be readily understood by its customers. The plan should include standards and describe future plans for customer surveys. It shall also identify the private and public standards that the agency can use to benchmark its performance against the best in the business. In connection with the plan, each agency is encouraged to provide training resources for programs needed by employees who directly serve customers and by managers making use of customer survey information, to promote the principles and objects contained herein.

Corps of Engineers customer service

Within the Corps of Engineers, Dr. John Zirschky, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), has provided the following policy direction (Customer Service Letter, October 5, 1994):

The overall goal is to provide better customer service, remembering that our customers include both local sponsors and taxpayers...a commitment to our customers, sponsors, and taxpayers, to provide good service. All levels have a stake in providing such a service.

Corps customer service was recognized by LTG Arthur E. Williams, Chief of Engineers, when he challenged participants at the 1994 Senior Leadership Conference (Williams 1994) to

Share our successes, both internally and externally. Talk about our success stories with each other and with our customers/partners/stakeholders/

members of Congress/and others in your respective areas.

Expand our partnering and customer service actions beyond our current status. We can't rest on our past accomplishments. Push to new standards of excellence.

In closing, LTG Williams told conference participants:

I also reminded the Corps' leadership that there are some things we must never lose sight of. The first is mission execution, and the second is customer service. They are why we exist! They are also our best marketing tools! We must continue to focus on continuous improvements and enhancements in both of these areas. A third area we must never lose sight of is caring for our people. It is extremely important. We must enhance our training, coaching, nurturing, rewarding and, of course, encouraging and celebrating our diversity. Finally, have some fun along the way!

Customer service and satisfaction: a hypothetical example

Innovative customer satisfaction techniques used by the private sector can be successfully applied to recreation and natural resource management activities at Corps projects. For example, a project can apply customer satisfaction analysis techniques to learn about customer reactions to the services it provides. As a result, a project may learn that 80 percent of visitors do not want or use the solid waste collection services that are provided by the

project. Rather, it is revealed that visitors feel comfortable in bagging out their trash and properly disposing it elsewhere.

As a result of this information, further analysis reveals that if solid waste services are cancelled, it is possible for the project to effectively *manage* the reactions of the remaining 20 percent of visitors. The project determines that management activities (such as providing interpretative information and free trash bags at fee booths) may be needed to support initial and long-term visitor reactions to this decision. Based on this analysis, the project decides to cancel its solid waste service and implement a plan to manage visitor response to this decision.

Meanwhile, the project's customer satisfaction analysis also revealed a strong need for wildlife viewing platforms. Presently, these platforms are not being provided at the project. A decision is made to construct these platforms and use O&M funds to maintain the platforms which are now available as a result of eliminating project solid waste expenditures. Therefore, these two management decisions have resulted in a win-win situation. An O&M activity that was not strongly needed by visitors was redirected to a greater need. As a result, consumer demand has shifted upward, and O&M expenditures have become more efficient. In addition, with increased customer satisfaction, the project will also produce a greater economic gain because of increased visitor demand.

Summary

The customer service process is an emerging art in which new techniques are always being

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developed and modified. Like personal computer technology, today's customer service technology will be outdated by tomorrow. However, the entire customer service concept centers on a continual process of successfully collecting, analyzing, and using information that accurately reflects customer needs (demand). The customer service process will not replace managers, as they will still have to make decisions. While the customer service process can benefit Corps recreation and natural resources management activities, it is important to note that good decisions are based on good information and experience. Manpower, budgets, policy, regulations, and other variables that affect Corps project operations must be considered when making customer service decisions.

The customer service process is not a cookbook whose recipes can be applied Corps-wide. For many reasons, what works well at one project may not work well at other projects. Also, Corps outdoor recreation customers and their needs are not static but are dynamic and ever-changing.

In closing, what is so important about customer service? It is simply improving project management by adding value to our visitors' outdoor recreation experience. To quote Karl Albrecht (1992):

The quality issue and service issue are no longer two separate issues—they are now one and the same issue. Once we leave behind the archaic distinction between product and services, we begin to understand that the only thing that really matters is delivering customer value, which is always a combination of tangibles and intangibles...Quality is not the objective. Service is not the object. Customer value is the objective...We are learning to understand what goes on in the minds of our customers, and not to substitute our own arrogant hypotheses about what customers presumably want. And we're learning that all quality improvement efforts in our organizations must be focused on adding value for customers, either external or internal. Just running around the organization measuring and counting things won't do it.

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Five-minute customer care "report card"

by

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James J. Vogel, Clemson University

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With expressions like "total quality management," "performance measures," "business approach," "customer care," "continuous improvement," and "a government that works better and costs less" buzzing around a manager's head these days, how does one make sense of it all?

*Service quality** for customers first hit the business community about 10 years ago and is now finding its way into government. Although the transition is not as smooth as expected, many

lessons can be applied to lake management for a better understanding of our customers.

Amidst all the buzzwords, the questions for managers become, How can we measure the quality of services to our customers, and how can we use that information to make better decisions? A working group was formed, led by Ms. Susan Whittington, South Atlantic Division, as the research proponent to the Natural Resources Research Program (NRRP) work unit on the subject.

The Natural Resources Technical Support Program is also sponsoring an effort, described in this article, to produce a *customer services plan* that managers can implement within 1 year with little outside help. The NRRP work unit is performing a larger effort, over the next 3 years, that will fine-tune these materials to meet the needs of major market segments for camping, boating, day-use, and other activities.

* For additional information on the italicized terms, please contact the authors.

Five-minute evaluation

A one-page report card was developed to be self-administered or conducted as a face-to-face interview.* It takes less than 5 minutes to complete. The report card is divided into three parts, as shown in Figure 1. Each part builds on the previous layer until all aspects of total quality experiences are addressed.

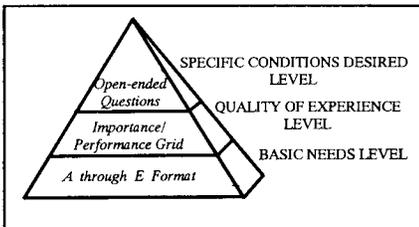


Figure 1. Service quality levels

Basic needs level (A through E format)

Protecting the resource, providing for safety and security, maintaining adequate facilities, and interacting with the public are basic to the job of lake management. These functions are measured in the survey using an A-B-C-D-E format (where A = excellent, E = poor). This provides a quick check on services provided by the government or their contractors.

For example, a manager might be interested in the comparative performance of two campgrounds for one or more of the basic services. However, once a manager meets the basic needs, the customers may still be dissatisfied. This brings us to the next level of service.

Quality of experience level

People visit the outdoors to fulfill personal needs to experience things not found in everyday life. As expected, people place importance on different needs. The *importance/performance grid* is well suited to evaluate what service attributes people care most about, beyond the basic needs level, and whether services are meeting their needs. In contrast to the "basic" services, these are items that may not be important to all visitors at all sites. Yet they may be the key to improving customer satisfaction. Services evaluated at this level include

- Basic information about the site, interpretation, and water safety.
- Places to enjoy selected activities away from conflicting activities.
- Helpfulness/friendliness of staff.
- Paying a fair price to use the area.
- Where appropriate, privacy of campsites.

An action grid creates four quadrants, as shown in Figure 2, to

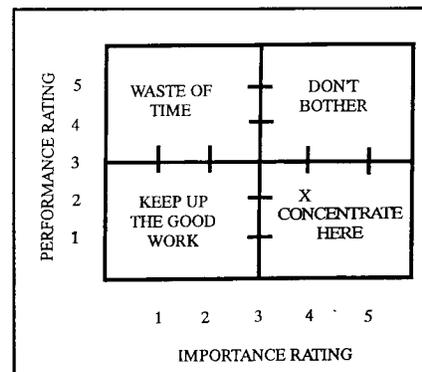


Figure 2. Importance/performance grid

help managers apply this information. For example, if it was **very important** (importance rating 4) for visitors to find information about water safety and they also indicated that they were **some-what dissatisfied** (performance rating 2) with water safety information, an "X" would fall in quadrant 3, "Concentrate Here." This alerts managers to evaluate whether the water safety message is being received.

Specific conditions desired level

After evaluating whether basic services are adequately provided and individual needs are addressed, managers need to know more about the conditions that users desire, expressed in the users' own words. No survey can ever capture all the categories that people value. One approach is to simply ask the users what changes they have noticed at the area visited and how they would compare the area with other sites.

In previous recreational carrying capacity studies, managers have been most excited about such open-ended responses. They have allowed managers to prepare objectives for *place-specific conditions*. For example, if some people are seeking a low-density, family swimming experience at a beach location and others are seeking a high-density, music and action opportunity at another location, managers can decide on maintaining the current conditions or changing them. (For controversial situations, a more intense data collection and survey preparation may be necessary. The one-page survey helps managers

* Clearance from the Office of Management and Budget, through appropriate Corps channels, is required for any public surveys.

to pinpoint situations for action in cases where limited information is available.)

Proposed development plans (for example, campground rehabilitation, additional marina slips, day-use area design changes) can now be evaluated in the context of current and future conditions with information gathered from the public.

Other products and resources

As part of the *Customer Care Kit* being developed, managers will be provided a user-friendly data entry and analysis disk that prepares tables and charts. A second computer disk will provide a 10-page report format to help managers with interpreting the results. This will facilitate presentations and other uses of the data, such as budget justification. These final products will be completed during the fall of 1995.

A very good book on this subject for managers who want to know more is *The Only Thing That Matters: Bringing the Power of the Customer Into the Center of Your Business*, by Karl Albrecht (1992, Harper Collins Publishers, New York). Albrecht provides many examples which illustrate that "you seldom improve quality by cutting costs, but you can often cut costs by improving quality."

Little burden on the user and the manager

Results from this quick report card can reduce management

costs and create an information-based *Decision Support System*. This meets the improvement goal of performance measurement and data management guided by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993.

Experiences have shown that visitors are more than happy to talk

about the places they visit, especially if they plan on returning. The short survey and simple analysis encourage the use of information with limited resources. The result of this initiative will move our organization closer toward a government that works better and costs less!

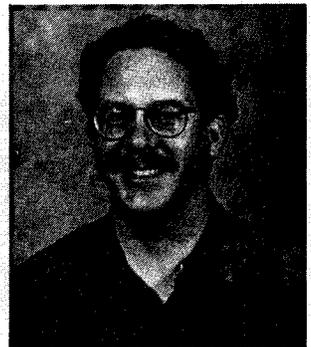
John Titre has been associated with the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station (WES) for 12 years. His prior experience includes assignments in the western states with the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. John spent 3 years in South America under the Smithsonian/Peace Corps program establishing national parks and reserves. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from Southern Illinois University and a Master's degree in Recreation Resource Development from Texas A&M University. John is working toward a Ph.D. from Clemson University dealing with the topic of the nonmonetary value of wetlands.



James Vogel has been associated with WES for the past 3 years. During that time he has been involved in carrying capacity and management information studies at Corps projects around the country. His prior experience includes participation in outdoor recreation research on the Ozark National Scenic Riverways in Missouri and at TVA's Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky. He holds Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Forestry from Southern Illinois University.



Robert Burns is currently pursuing Ph.D. studies at Pennsylvania State University, with emphasis on customer satisfaction. His previous work experience has been in active military duty at Fort Belvoir, VA, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD, and Fort Irwin, CA. He has held positions as Company Commander, Division Chief, and Battalion Executive Officer with responsibilities for training, communication, and Total Army Quality.



Ronald G. Rains receives Recreation Coalition citation

Ron Rains, chief of the Natural Resources Management Branch, Operations, Construction, and Readiness Division of the Corps' Nashville District, was recently recognized by the American Recreation Coalition for his outstanding efforts to enhance outdoor recreation experiences on Corps lands and water. The award was made at the annual Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award Dinner in Washington, DC, on May 9, 1995.

Rains is responsible for the development and operation of recreational facilities and land management activities for 10 multipurpose water resource development projects in Tennessee and Kentucky, with a combined annual visitation of 50 million and an impact to the local economies of \$517 million.

Because of Rains' personal vision and guidance in implementing

many pioneer programs, significant contributions have been made in creating quality outdoor recreation opportunities for the public. These programs include comprehensive shoreline management plans, visitor assistance programs, park ranger career training, campground reservation systems, credit card programs for fee collection, and a volunteer services program.

Rains is an active member of the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association (TRPA), the National Recreation and Parks Association, and the Tennessee Conservation League. He received the TRPA Resource Management Award for Excellence in 1983 and the Tennessee Conservation League's Land and Soil Conservationist of the Year Award in 1978. He is also the recipient of the Superior Civilian Service Award and is a



member of the Federal Managers Association.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Ron is also active in his community, serving on the Old Hickory Utility District Board of Directors, the Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Greenways Commission, and the Old Hickory Village Historical Society.

Harrington honored as employee of the year

Park Ranger Jude T. Harrington of the Corps' Baltimore District was named as 1995 Natural Resources Management Employee of the Year. The award was presented in June at the 220th Annual Corps



of Engineers Awards Day Ceremony in Washington, DC.

Harrington is the Supervisory Park Ranger at the Raystown Lake Project, a Corps of Engineers civil works project in south-central Pennsylvania. He has responsibility for the lake's Natural Resources Management and Recreation Programs.

Under Harrington's leadership, the Raystown project initiated programs and innovative management operations, maintained and upgraded project facilities and programs, created a forum for public involvement in lake operations, and increased the overall quality of public service and recreational op-

portunities. His management and stewardship of public lands produced and advanced numerous habitat development plans to benefit wildlife and protect unique natural areas. Partnerships cultivated with other Federal, state, and local organizations, including volunteers, have enhanced operations involving wildlife and fisheries management, recreation management, and visitor services at the lake project as well as at the Baltimore District.

Harrington has also worked at John Martin Reservoir in the Albuquerque District and Wappapello Lake in the St. Louis District.

Paintsville Lake, Huntington District, named project of the year

Paintsville Lake, managed by the Corps' Huntington District, has been named this year's Natural Resources Management Project of the Year. Located in the Appalachian foothills of eastern Kentucky, the lake annually serves over 766,000 visitors, providing recreational, aesthetic, and historic experiences for all.

According to LTG Arthur W. Williams, who presented the award at a June 28 ceremony in Washington, the project was honored for its "exceptional achievement in natural resources management, efficiency in the use of financial and personnel resources, success in interagency programs, initiative in public involvement, and effectiveness in visitor safety."

The project's most notable accomplishment by far is the "Mountain Homeplace," a partnership between the Corps of Engineers and local community leaders. In

an effort to restore a historic element of the Lake's cultural legacy, three historic buildings—the McKenzie Cabin, the Fishtrap Church, and an old one-room schoolhouse—became the focus of a \$1.5-million cooperative venture.

Initially funded by a local hotel, motel, and restaurant tax base, this restoration project was accomplished with limited resources and a predominantly volunteer workforce. To determine the current status of the buildings and the work necessary to restore them, the project committee developed an Interpretive Prospectus as well as two historic structure studies for the 19th century buildings. Officials of the newly formed Paintsville Lake Historical Association and repre-



Mountain Homeplace. Work in progress on McKenzie House (schoolhouse in background)

sentatives of the National Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and the Huntington District signed a three-party agreement to ensure the development and maintenance of the area as a historic site, bringing to reality the project developers' dreams.

At their own expense, the Paintsville Lake Historical Association moved the cabin, church, and schoolhouse to the site, where restoration of the buildings continues. Rustic fencing and a series of trails and utilities have been completed, and a welcome center for the Mountain Homeplace is under construction. Other structures may be added to the historic area in the future.

Paintsville Lake and its administrators have found success in a foundation of teamwork and partnerships—with the community and volunteers, with the Huntington District Office, the Big Sandy Area Office, and the staff at the project. Keeping in mind the invaluable perspective of the historic structures at the dam site, this project has nonetheless set its sights on the future.



Paintsville Lake staff: (left to right) Bob Fraley, Karen Cantrell, Bonnie Howell, Bob Beverley, and David Jackson

NRRP research to address field problems

Do you have a natural resources or recreation planning, operational, or management problem that requires a new look, perhaps using short- or long-term research to find a solution? If so, let us know so that the resources of the Natural Resources Research Program can be targeted toward real problems—your problems. Explain the situation or problem in writing (no more than 2 pages) and send it, along with your name, address, and telephone number, to:

USAE Waterways Experiment Station
ATTN: CEWES-EP-L/Tillman
3909 Halls Ferry Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199
[Telephone: (601) 634-4201]
[Facsimile: (601) 634-3528]

All submissions will be entered into a process that allows them to be considered as NRRP research work units. If your submission qualifies as a potential NRRP work unit, it will be evaluated by the NRRP Field Review Group at the Program Review

that is held each spring. After the Program Review, an annual program containing existing and proposed NRRP work units is recommended to the Directorate of Research and Development for funding.

When should you submit research ideas? Any time. But do it now, while the idea is fresh in your mind!

Natural Resources Technical Notes series announced

A new publication is now available from the Natural Resources Technical Support Program (NRTS) in the form of Natural Resources Technical Notes. The technical notes are short (5 to 10 pages), looseleaf documents that describe certain facets of natural resources and recreation management and are designed to rapidly relay research findings to Natural Resources Research Program (NRRP) and NRTS users.

Categorized in five areas, the notes provide interim products, methodologies, and guidance to NRRP users when normal distribution of results, in the form of a formal and more detailed techni-

cal report, would not occur until much later.

With the advent of these technical notes, NRTS hopes to bring its ideas and findings to users in both a timely and informative fashion. Topics to be addressed in upcoming issues include the following:

- Effects of reservoir operations on fisheries.
- Guide to the NRRP.
- Application of the Regional Recreation Demand Model to Clearwater Lake, Arkansas.
- Campground Receipt Study Software 1994.

Initial distribution will include Corps division, district, and project offices. Each division and district library, operations, and planning office will receive the Natural Resources Technical Notes. If *you* would like to be placed on the mailing list to receive the technical notes, please contact

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Ethnicity workshop held in Dallas

A workshop designed to identify research priorities for the NRRP work unit "Ethnic Culture and Recreation Use" was held June 13-14 in Dallas, Texas. The workshop was organized by Jim Henderson, Resource Analysis Branch, WES, the principal investigator for the work unit. Workshop participants, from across the United States, included Corps project rangers and managers and District and Division personnel, other agency researchers in ethnic diversity and recreation demographics, and academics interested in the area of ethnicity and recreation.

As Henderson explains, the need for the Ethnic Culture and Recreation Use work unit resulted from interest in two major factors: the changing demographic makeup of the population and the Corps' goal to better serve its visitors by understanding their recreation needs and expectations. Both of these factors necessitated learning more about the visiting population's background, activity preferences and, most importantly, likes and dislikes.

Based on the project experiences and National Performance Review Initiatives, the work unit was established to accomplish the following objectives:



- Provide information on recreation use by ethnic groups at Corps projects. The information is to include current recreation use, recreation preferences, and needs, for projecting or estimating future recreation use by ethnic groups at Corps projects.
- Identify project- and District-level operations and planning procedures to address the recreation needs and expectations of ethnic groups, as well as communication problems involved in the process of customizing facilities.

Workshop participants heard presentations from leading figures in recreation and ethnic diversity research and contributed to discussions aimed at defining and solving customer service problems experienced at ethnically diverse Corps projects. Among the presenters was Dr. Jim Gramann of Texas A&M University, who presented a literature review on ethnicity, race, and outdoor recreation, developed as part of the work unit.

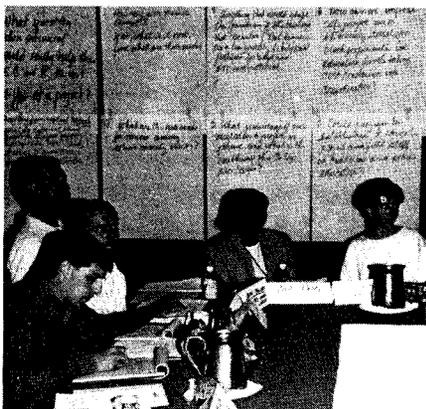
Based on discussions at the workshop it was recommended that the work unit provide a methodology for acquiring information about the recreation needs and

preferences of the ethnic groups using Corps projects. By so doing, it was decided that the method could be applied to different ethnic groups.

The workshop presentations emphasized that "one size does not fit all" in terms of surveying different ethnic groups. The response of particular groups to such things as uniforms of rangers or other authorities and difficulties with the English language were identified as barriers to data collection which must be considered and accommodated when developing a methodology and applying it to different ethnic groups.

A second need identified is the dissemination of available information about the recreation preferences, patterns, and values of different ethnic groups. A literature review shows that recreation patterns are better understood for some ethnic groups than others. Summaries of the available information would assist project personnel in their reactions with ethnic groups.

The research priorities and other input from the workshop will be used to develop a Plan of Study for the work unit. The draft plan will be completed in September 1995.



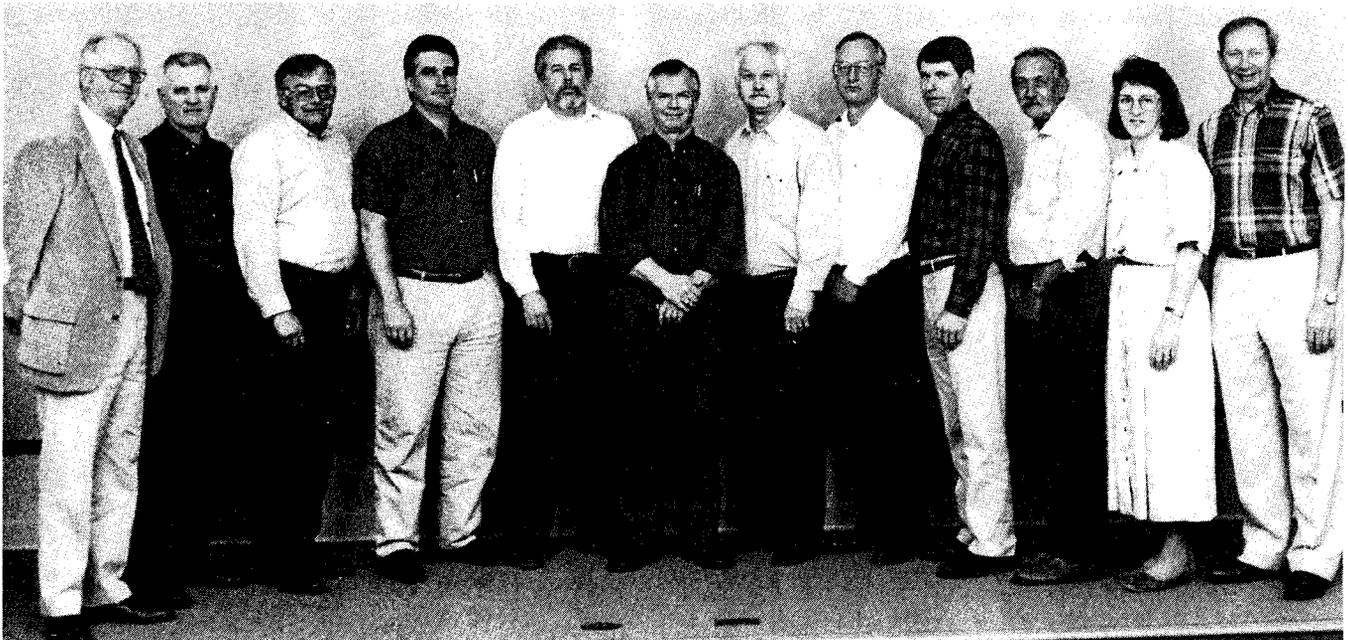
NRRP Field Review Group meeting held

Thirty-five participants from Corps Headquarters, Division, and District offices attended the Natural Resources Research Program Field Review Group (FRG) meeting that was held March 29-30, 1995, at the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station. Members of the FRG reviewed and evaluated the existing and proposed NRRP work units.



Program reviews for the Environmental Impact, Water Quality, and Wetlands Research Programs were held in conjunction with the NRRP FRG meeting. In addition, briefings were given on

the Aquatic Plant Control, Evaluation of Environmental Investments, Zebra Mussel, and Long-term Effects of Dredging Operations Programs.



NRRP Field Review Group members (left to right): Paul Peloquin, North Pacific Division; Robert Heald, New England District; John Tyger, North Pacific Division; Don Snyder, Baltimore District; Phil Turner, South Pacific Division; David Wahus, HQUSACE, Natural Resources Management Branch; Bill McCauley, Southwestern Division; Michael Loesch, North Central Division; Don Dunwoody, Missouri River Division; Gene Brown, Lower Mississippi Valley Division; Susan Whittington, South Atlantic Division; and Sherman Gee, Ohio River Division

NRRRP

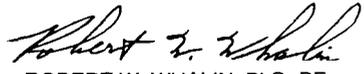
NATURAL RESOURCES RESEARCH PROGRAM

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NATURAL RESOURCES RESEARCH PROGRAM

This bulletin is published in accordance with AR 25-30. It has been prepared and distributed as one of the information dissemination functions of the Environmental Laboratory of the Waterways Experiment Station. It is primarily intended to be a forum whereby information pertaining to and resulting from the Corps of Engineers' nationwide Natural Resources Research Program can be rapidly and widely disseminated to Headquarters, and Division, District, and project offices as well as to other Federal agencies concerned with outdoor recreation. Local reproduction is authorized to satisfy additional requirements. Contributions of notes, news, reviews, or any other types of information are solicited from all sources and will be considered for publication so long as they are relevant to the theme of the Natural Resources Research Program, i.e., to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Corps in managing the natural resources while providing recreation opportunities at its water resources development projects. This bulletin will be issued on an irregular basis as dictated by the quantity and importance of information to be disseminated. The contents of this bulletin are not to be used for advertising, publication, or promotional purposes. Citation of trade names does not constitute an official endorsement or approval of the use of such commercial products. Communications are welcomed and should be addressed to the Environmental Laboratory, ATTN: J. L. Decell, U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station (CEWES-EP-L), 3909 Halls Ferry Road, Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199, or call AC (601) 634-3494.


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 Director

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HQUSACE Natural Resources Management Perspective

“Opportunity Knocking”

On June 14, 1995, a historic event occurred which I predict will significantly affect the way we do business in Natural Resources Management and Recreation Management. On that date, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Mobile District entered into a Challenge Cost Share agreement with the Blue Bluff River Festival. Our new partner agreed to provide \$13,000 in materials and supplies for the construction of a gazebo and boat dock extension at an existing Corps-administered recreation area. All work is being performed by volunteers. The only Corps costs are for preparation and coordination of the agreement, estimated at \$100. While the development will result in a very minor increase in O&M costs (\$400 annually), annual revenues are projected to increase by \$1,000.

This was the first Challenge Cost Share agreement that we know of in the Corps done under the authority Congress provided in the Water Resources Development Act of 1992. As I observed in a previous column, I have high expectations for this program. When I learned that the Forest Service generated almost \$50 million in contributions from partnerships for recreation and wildlife, I became convinced that the Corps—with the bulk of its lands in the East, where other Federal land management agencies have limited holdings *and* where the people are—can generate significant support for our natural resource and recreation programs. There just isn't the competition for corporate partnerships in a lot

of the states where we are located.

Dr. John Zirschky, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), shares this belief and has urged us to look for ways to use this authority to enhance our service to the public. Not only that, but he has been actively working to develop national partnerships to support our program. He has made significant progress in that area, which you'll hear more about when we can announce actual agreements. However, when we talked to the Forest Service about their success, they stressed that the bulk of their partnerships were generated by local Forest Service personnel working with organizations, individuals, and private sector firms. They identified tasks that needed doing where there were mutual interests and worked out a solution where everyone was a winner. What they looked for was a situation where an outside entity, the Forest Service, *and* the public would be winners. Agreements were put together, signing ceremonies were held, publicity was given, and the work was done. The private sector partners got public recognition for doing good things that benefit their current and potential customers. The user group partners got something that they wanted the Forest Service to provide for both themselves and the general public. And the public got additional benefits. A “Win, Win, Win” deal!

I am convinced that a major trend for programs such as recreation and natural resource management is toward greater self-sufficiency. Programs like Challenge Cost Share are tools to help us move that direction. A

related trend that I see already well under way is what I've labeled “Participatory Management.” Essentially, what I see happening is greater involvement in managing lands by all kinds of players, including the user groups, interest groups, economic stakeholders, and the private sector philanthropies. In these stakeholders we have help, significant help. All we have to do is identify the constructive ways to use it and make sure that our actions are in the best interests of the Nation's population.

That's where opportunity is knocking. You now have the authority. If you haven't seen it, look up Engineer Regulation 1130-2-426, dated 1 February 1995. That document should give you all the information you need to get started.

I encourage you to look for opportunities to leverage our existing funds with this new program. From my conversations with the Forest Service, corporations and interest groups are more than willing to pitch in to help a worthwhile cause. Another way to find financial support is to work with a local interest group that doesn't have the funds but is willing to knock on doors to find them.

At any rate, the opportunities are there, and I have faith in the Natural Resources Management family to find ways to use this new authority to improve the Corps public service. Good Luck!



DARRELL E. LEWIS
Chief, Natural Resources
Management Branch, HQUSACE