

PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES OF THE CORPS REFORM NETWORK

- A. General Mission.** The Corps Reform Network works to advocate changes in the policies and practices of the Army Corps of Engineers so that the agency ceases promoting projects and issuing permits that result in wasting taxpayers dollars, destroying and degrading America's water resources. Instead, the Corps should assist in the protection, restoration and recovery of damaged habitat. The Network seeks to assist and support member organizations in understanding and dealing with Corps regulations, activities and projects that affect local water resources. The Network seeks to improve the effectiveness of organizations working to reform the Army Corps of Engineers by providing technical, legal and other support, and by providing timely information to assist groups participating in federal policy decision-making.
- B. Statement of Principles. A reformed Army Corps of Engineers would:**
- **Act Only In The Public Interest.** The Army Corps of Engineers must not propose or construct project unless they provide benefits to the general public that clearly outweigh any environmental and economic costs, and meet all the additional principles set forth below. The Corps of Engineers must not construct or maintain projects that primarily provide economic benefits to only a limited number of private businesses or interests. Congress should ensure that beneficiaries of civil works projects contribute an appropriate and fair share toward project construction, maintenance costs and mitigation.
 - **Protect And Restore The Environment.** The Army Corps of Engineers and Congress must make environmental protection and restoration a primary purpose in the planning, design, construction, and operation of each Corps of Engineers civil works project. Once a civil works project is approved for construction, the Corps of Engineers must monitor the environmental impacts of the project, and modify project operations where necessary to protect the environment and restore ecosystems harmed by Corps of Engineers activities. A commitment to conduct such monitoring, however, must not be used as justification for project approval or construction, or as support for a finding of compliance with environmental laws. The Corps of Engineers must fully use all authorities to recognize and protect the full values and benefits of floodplains and to restore rivers, streams, wetlands and uplands harmed by Corps activities.
 - **Take All Steps Possible To Avoid Harming The Environment.** The Army Corps of Engineers must take all steps possible to avoid adverse impacts to natural systems, including adverse impacts to wetlands, uplands, floodplains, the natural hydrologic patterns of aquatic ecosystems, the value and native diversity of aquatic ecosystems, and water quality and quantity. The Corps of Engineers must not recommend, construct, or issue a permit for any project that causes unacceptable ecological harm. Congress also must ensure that no civil works project is authorized or funded that causes unacceptable ecological harm.
 - **Ensure The Concurrent Implementation Of Full And Ecologically Sound Mitigation.** The Army Corps of Engineers must require, and ensure implementation of, full and ecologically sound mitigation for all environmental impacts, including adverse hydrologic impacts, caused by the construction, operation, and maintenance of civil works projects or by activities permitted under the Clean Water Act Section 404 regulatory program. Mitigation that fully compensates, as defined by acres and functions, for all such impacts must be implemented prior to, or concurrently with, project construction. The Corps of Engineers must use the best available standards and techniques in planning, designing, and implementing wetlands, riverine and upland mitigation; design all such projects in consultation with the appropriate resource agencies; and monitor such mitigation to ensure ecological success. The Corps o

Engineers must track the implementation of promised mitigation, evaluate the ecological success of implemented mitigation through long term monitoring, and require (in the case of permitted activities) or implement (in the case of civil works projects) additional mitigation if ecological success is not obtained. The Corps must be willing to modify, adapt or remove projects based on information that shows that a project has outlived its usefulness, no longer makes economic sense, or where continued operation creates unacceptable ecological harm that cannot be effectively mitigated.

- **Comply Fully With The Letter And Spirit Of The Law.** The Army Corps of Engineers must comply fully with the letter and spirit of all laws and regulations designed to protect the environment or justify a project or permit. To demonstrate compliance, the Corps must fully explain in writing how its projects and permits comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Act, including particularly, the 404(b)(1) Guidelines; the Endangered Species Act; the National Environmental Policy Act; and any other applicable laws.
 - **Allocate The Resources Necessary To Properly Administer Its Wetlands Regulatory Responsibilities.** The Army Corps of Engineers must request, budget, and utilize the resources and staff necessary to properly administer the Clean Water Act Section 404 regulatory program, and to ensure full compliance with the letter and spirit of the Clean Water Act.
 - **Coordinate Closely With Resource Agencies.** The Army Corps of Engineers must give full consideration to the comments, concerns, and analyses of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and state resource agencies. The Corps should work in equal partnership with the agencies and consult, utilize and incorporate the environmental and ecological expertise of the agencies throughout all stages of project planning and construction.
 - **Use The Best Available Scientific And Economic Analyses.** The Army Corps of Engineers must use the best available environmental, scientific, and economic analyses in the review, planning, design, construction, and operation of civil works projects, and in the analysis and issuance of regulator permits. This includes evaluating proposed projects in the context of regional and national navigation needs to ensure that projects are necessary and economically justifiable.
 - **Subject All Costly Or Controversial Projects To Independent Peer Review.** The Army Corps of Engineers and Congress must require that all costly or controversial civil works projects be subjected to independent peer review to ensure that the project is in the public interest and is based on the best available environmental, scientific, and economic analyses.
 - **Fully Disclose Civil Works and Regulatory Information To The Public.** The Army Corps of Engineers must make all data and information considered in the planning of civil works projects readily available to the public, preferably via the Internet, and must establish a publicly accessible system to track promised and implemented mitigation, both for its civil works and Clean Water Act Section 404 regulatory programs.
 - **Be Accountable To The Public.** Officials at all levels of the Corps of Engineers must be accountable to the public for permitting, project study, project planning, and project implementation decisions.
- C. **Legislative Reform.** The Network supports legislative changes that result in, promote, and support a reformed Army Corps of Engineers, as described in the aforementioned principles.