

LEVEE VEGETATION POLICY

For several years now, the Committee has heard from non-federal sponsors concerned that the Corps' policy on vegetation on levees is overly proscriptive and inflexible and does not adequately take into account on-the-ground conditions. Some sponsors have highlighted requirements from the Corps that potentially conflict with requirements under the Endangered Species Act and under tribal treaty obligations. Some in the agricultural community have highlighted differing standards on the width of buffer zones between row crops and the base of a levee.

The Committee notes the Corps' efforts to further understanding of the complex issues of vegetation on levees and levee safety more generally. These efforts include publication of a literature review in 2010, release of a four-volume research document in 2011, issuance of the System-wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) policy in 2011, and continued work to develop a policy guidance letter (Variance from Vegetation Standards for Levees and Floodwalls). The Committee encourages the Corps to maximize collaboration with non-federal interests, including project sponsors and the agricultural community, and to give serious consideration to their concerns and proposals regarding flexibility, regional considerations, financial impacts, and decision criteria.

PLANNING MODERNIZATION

In February 2013, the Assistant Secretary testified that the Corps is taking steps to modernize its planning process through an initiative called SMART Planning (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Risk-Informed and Timely) and expects full implementation in fiscal year 2014. The goal of this initiative (commonly referred to as "3x3x3") is to complete most feasibility studies within 3 years, for \$3,000,000 or less, and with the decision document coordinated by three levels of the organization (headquarters, division, and district offices). The Committee strongly supports efforts to reduce the length of time and the funding required to complete studies while maintaining quality analysis and an appropriate level of information for congressional authorization and funding decisions.

As a precursor to this initiative, the Corps sorted all initiated studies into active status—those that would be continued under the new 3x3x3 goal—and inactive status—those that would be discontinued for reasons as varied as finding no alternative in the federal interest to lack of a non-federal sponsor. The Committee is aware that there are numerous active status studies with capability for fiscal year 2014 that were not included in the budget request, even while ten new start studies were proposed. Some of these studies—such as the Western Lake Erie Basin, Blanchard River, Ohio, study—likely will not be funded under the fiscal year 2013 operating plan, possibly due to being ineligible by not receiving funding in fiscal year 2012. It will be very difficult to meet the goal of completing studies within three years if no funding is requested for one or more of those years. The Committee encourages the Corps to keep its 3x3x3 goal in mind when determining the mix of active status and new start studies to propose for funding in future budget requests.

COOPS OF ENGINEERS - INVESTIGATIONS
(AMOUNTS IN THOUSANDS)

	BUDGET REQUEST			HOUSE RECOMMENDED		
	RECON	FEASIBILITY	PED	RECON	FEASIBILITY	PED
TEXAS						
BRAZOS ISLAND HARBOR, BROWNSVILLE CHANNEL, TX	---	385	---	---	385	---
COASTAL TEXAS PROTECTION AND RESTORATION STUDY, TX	100	---	---	---	---	---
DALLAS FLOODWAY, UPPER TRIMITY RIVER BASIN, TX	---	850	---	---	850	---
FRESHOE HARBOR, TX	---	---	1,200	---	---	1,200
GUADALUPE AND SAN ANTONIO RIVER BASINS, TX	---	488	---	---	488	---
HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL, TX	100	---	---	---	---	---
NUCES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES, TX	---	650	---	---	650	---
SABINE PASS TO GALVESTON BAY, TX	---	400	---	---	400	---
VIRGINIA						
NORFOLK HARBOR AND CHANNELS, VA (DEEPENING)	---	800	---	---	800	---
WASHINGTON						
GRAYS HARBOR, WA	---	400	---	---	400	---
FUGET SOUND NEARSHORE MARINE HABITAT RESTORATION, WA	---	200	---	---	200	---
SEATTLE HARBOR, WA	100	---	---	---	---	---
SKOKOMISH RIVER BASIN, WA	---	650	---	---	650	---
SUBTOTAL, PROJECTS LISTED UNDER STATES	1,150	32,028	6,119	---	11,528	4,839
REMAINING ITEMS						
ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR ONGOING WORK	---	---	---	---	3,930	---
FLOOD AND STORM DAMAGE REDUCTION OR NAVIGATION	---	---	---	---	---	---
COORDINATION STUDIES WITH OTHER AGENCIES	---	---	---	---	---	---
ACCESS TO WATER DATA	---	750	---	---	750	---
COMMITTEE ON MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS	---	100	---	---	100	---
OTHER COORDINATION PROGRAMS	---	---	---	---	---	---
CALFED	---	100	---	---	100	---
CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM	---	75	---	---	75	---
COORDINATION WITH OTHER WATER RESOURCE AGENCIES	---	500	---	---	500	---
GULF OF MEXICO	---	100	---	---	100	---
INTERAGENCY AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT	---	500	---	---	500	---
INTERAGENCY WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	---	955	---	---	955	---
INVENTORY OF DAMS	---	400	---	---	400	---
LAKE TAHOE	---	100	---	---	100	---
PACIFIC NW FOREST CASE	---	10	---	---	10	---
SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS	---	1,350	---	---	1,350	---
FERC LICENSING	---	200	---	---	200	---
PLANNING ASSISTANCE TO STATES	---	4,000	---	---	4,000	---
COLLECTION AND STUDY OF BASIC DATA:	---	---	---	---	---	---
AUTOMATED INFORMATION SYSTEMS SUPPORT TRH-CADD	---	350	---	---	350	---
COASTAL FLOOD DAMAGE REDUCTION	---	1,000	---	---	1,000	---
ENVIRONMENTAL DATA STUDIES	---	75	---	---	75	---
FLOOD DAMAGE DATA	---	220	---	---	220	---
FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES	---	9,500	---	---	9,500	---
HYDROLOGIC STUDIES	---	250	---	---	250	---
INTERNATIONAL WATER STUDIES	---	200	---	---	200	---
PRECIPITATION STUDIES	---	225	---	---	225	---
REMOTE SENSING/GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT	---	75	---	---	75	---
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTERS	---	50	---	---	50	---
STREAM GAGING	---	550	---	---	550	---
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS	---	950	---	---	950	---
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	---	16,243	---	---	16,243	---
OTHER - MISCELLANEOUS	---	---	---	---	---	---
INDEPENDENT PIER REVIEW	---	300	---	---	300	---
NATIONAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	---	5,000	---	---	5,000	---
NATIONAL SHORELINE	---	875	---	---	875	---
PLANNING SUPPORT PROGRAM	---	4,000	---	---	4,000	---
TRIAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM	---	1,000	---	---	1,000	---
WATER RESOURCES PRIORITIES STUDY	---	1,000	---	---	---	---
SUBTOTAL, REMAINING ITEMS	---	50,703	---	---	52,633	---
TOTAL, INVESTIGATIONS	1,150	82,731	6,119	---	64,161	4,839

Updated capability.—Following the submission of the budget request, the Committee received from the Corps updated information regarding the amount of work that could be accomplished in fiscal year 2014; the Committee adjusted project-specific allocations downward accordingly. If the Committee receives further capability updates, the Committee will consider further allocation updates, as appropriate. In the Investigations account, the South San Francisco Shoreline, California, allocation was adjusted.

Savannah Harbor Expansion, Georgia.—The Committee notes that funding for Savannah Harbor Expansion, GA, is provided in the Construction account, as in previous years.

Research and Development.—The Committee supports the Corps' efforts to significantly improve the safety, efficiency, reliability and cost of performing inspections of critical and aging infrastructure and is aware that innovative and technically advanced methods of inspection that would assist in performing this vital mission are being developed collaboratively by the Corps and the private sector, such as non-destructive testing (NDT) and non-destructive evaluation (NDE) techniques for the inspection of trunnion rods on dams. In order to accelerate the delivery and deployment of innovative technologies for infrastructure inspection, the Committee urges the Corps to continue to prioritize funding for the validation of proven, high-payoff, innovative practices and technologies at the national level.

Water Resources Priorities Study.—No funding is included for this new item.

Additional Funding for Ongoing Work.—The fiscal year 2014 budget request does not reflect the extent of need for project studies funding. The Corps has numerous studies initiated that will be suspended or slowed under the limits of the budget request. These studies could lead to projects with significant economic benefits, particularly by increasing national competitiveness through marine transportation improvements and by avoiding damages caused by flooding and coastal storms. The Committee includes additional funding for ongoing navigation and flood and storm damage reduction studies. While this additional funding is shown in the feasibility column, the Corps should use these funds in recon, feasibility, and PED, as applicable. The intent of these funds is for ongoing work that either was not included in the Administration's request or was inadequately budgeted. A study shall be eligible for this funding if: (1) it has received funding, other than through a reprogramming, in at least one of the previous three fiscal years; or (2) it was previously funded and could reach a significant milestone or produce significant outputs in fiscal year 2014. In no case shall funds be used to initiate new studies within this account or for any item where funding was specifically denied. Further, none of these funds may be used to alter any existing cost-share requirements.

As discussed earlier in this report, the Corps shall develop a ratings system and evaluate ongoing studies under this system prior to allocating these additional funds. The Corps shall consider developing a ratings system that gives priority to completing or accelerating ongoing studies that will enhance the nation's economic development, job growth, and international competitiveness, or are

for projects located in areas that have suffered recent natural disasters. Not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act, the Corps shall provide to the Committee a work plan: (1) detailing the ratings system developed and used to evaluate studies; (2) delineating how these funds are to be distributed; (3) including a summary of the work to be accomplished with each allocation; and (4) a list and description of each discrepancy between the results of the study evaluations and the allocations made. No funds shall be obligated for any project under this program which has not been justified in such a report.

Budgeting for small population areas.—The Committee recognizes that a small city, less than 50,000 in population, is at a disadvantage in comparison with its large urban counterparts under the Army Corps of Engineers utilization of high benefit-cost ratios in its budgeting process. The Committee directs the Army Corps of Engineers to consider the impact of flood risk on a small city's economic viability in determining budget priorities.

CONSTRUCTION

Appropriation, 2013 *	\$1,674,000,000
Budget estimate, 2014	1,350,000,000
Recommended, 2014	1,343,000,000
Comparison:	
Appropriation, 2013	- 331,000,000
Budget estimate, 2014	- 7,000,000

*FY13 enacted level does not include the 251A sequester or the Sec. 3004 OMB ATB.

This appropriation funds construction, major rehabilitation, and related activities for water resource projects whose principal purpose is to provide commercial navigation, flood and storm damage reduction, or aquatic ecosystem restoration benefits to the nation. Portions of this account are funded from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and the Inland Waterways Trust Fund.

The Committee recommends an appropriation of \$1,343,000,000, \$331,000,000 below fiscal year 2013 and \$7,000,000 below the budget request.

The budget request for this account and the approved Committee allowance are shown on the following table: