

CHAPTER 4 - INTERPRETIVE SERVICES AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

4-1. Purpose. This chapter establishes the policy for the operation of the USACE Interpretive Services and Outreach Program (ISOP) at civil works water resource projects.

4-2. Policy. It is the policy of the Corps of Engineers that:

a. An Interpretive Services and Outreach Program (ISOP) shall be implemented at each Corps-operated project. The type and magnitude of this program shall be determined by the District Commander and shall be commensurate with the type and size of the project, project visitation, funding, and personnel resources. In addition, all ISOP efforts shall provide for universal accessibility where practical. All activities under this program shall be designed to accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- (1) Achieve management objectives using interpretive techniques.
- (2) Provide environmental education to foster voluntary stewardship of natural, cultural, and created resources.
- (3) Incorporate Corps civil works and military missions and accomplishments into interpretive programming.
- (4) Improve visitor and employee safety using interpretive techniques.
- (5) Use outreach to accomplish ISOP goals, including interpreting Corps missions, promoting stewardship, saving lives, and solving management problems. The interpretive process should also encourage interest in math and science, including career interest.
- (6) Enhance the visitors' experience and enjoyment by anticipating their needs and providing interpretive resources to meet those needs.

b. Districts shall be responsible for the administration and management of the Interpretive Services and Outreach Program. Project offices shall be responsible for implementation of the ISOP program. Each MSC and district office shall designate an ISOP coordinator. The district coordinator shall act as a liaison among all district team members involved with interpretation and outreach, and field projects. The primary responsibility of the coordinator shall be to assure that implementation of the ISOP is consistent with this regulation. Additional guidance is located in EP 1130-2-550, and EP 1130-2-434, Volumes 1-5, JS (Job Standards), DI (Database Instructions), FS (Chittenden Award Fact Sheet).

c. Each project shall designate a point of contact (POC) whose function is to implement the ISOP at the local level. Each field project shall develop an interpretive prospectus for inclusion in the Operational Management Plan to be used as a planning document in implementation of the ISOP.

d. Projects are encouraged to use a variety of staffing sources in conducting the ISOP. This includes permanent and temporary rangers, support staff, summer aids, volunteers (see Chapter 10 of ER 1130-2-500), contractors, cooperating associations (see Chapter 9 of ER 1130-2-500), and others. See also Chapter 4 of this regulation for additional guidance on the

implementation of the ISOP at Corps visitor centers.

e. Projects shall be encouraged to make use of static communication techniques such as interpretive signs, publications, and self-guided tours where personal communication is not possible or practical.

f. Quality training in interpretation shall be made available to rangers, managers, district and division office team members, and others who have job responsibilities related to the interpretive program. All personnel with interpretive duties, including permanent, temporary, and seasonal employees as well as volunteers, should receive appropriate training. Key training and career development issues related to this topic are addressed in EP 690-2-2, Career Development Guide for Civil Works Natural Resources Management Team Members. In addition, eligible personnel shall be encouraged to investigate the applicability of the following methods of training to their individual work requirements:

(1) Formal interpretive services training. This includes Proponent Sponsored Engineers Corps Training (PROSPECT) courses, college courses and other courses as appropriate. Functional training is available through other related PROSPECT courses developed by Public Affairs, Information Management and others.

(2) Training by professional organizations. Professional organizations offer a variety of training opportunities in interpretation and environmental education.

(3) Local training. Local training may be carried out in a variety of ways. It may be implemented by offering periodical refresher courses/training sessions on topics of interest to sharpen skills, exchange and/or update information, or by entering into training partnerships with other agencies. These forms of training are especially recommended when, for reasons of cost-effectiveness, it is not feasible to procure more costly formal training.

g. The efforts of exemplary interpreters shall be recognized through the Chief of Engineers Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.

h. Each project shall evaluate its ISOP on an annual basis to assure consistency with this regulation.

i. Limited upward reporting will be included in the Natural Resource Management System (NRMS).