Integrated Planning: Building on Opportunities
Breakout Session 4: Risk Communication

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Levee Sponsor Risk Communication Workshops

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LOS ANGELES DISTRICT LEVEES

- ~120 levee systems
- 20 Local Sponsors
- Environmental Challenges
- Arid climate
- ~2.5 million people at risk
GNARLY COLLABORATION CHALLENGE

SPL’s Proposal
1. Sponsor Interviews/stakeholder assessments
2. Risk Communication Plan Development
3. Sponsor Risk Communication Workshops

Received technical assistance and contract support from the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (Udall Foundation) and The Participation Company.
SPONSOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Is there any specific help or information you need from the Corps that you’re not getting? How can the USACE Levee Safety Program help what you’re doing?
- How are you organized to communicate with the people in your community? Who (or what types of staff) is responsible for that?
- How much does your community know about their levees? Are they aware that they exist and their purpose?
- Do people worry about flooding? How concerned do you think they should be?
- Do people know the benefits of the levees?
- How do you typically communicate with the public?
- What, if anything, have you specifically said about potential risks associated with levees?
- What, if anything, have you told people to do about those risks? What do you want them to do?
- How has local media covered the levees (or anything related to the levees)? What have they reported?
- What is the biggest challenge in getting people to take actions?
- What kind of experience or specific training do you have in communicating risk? (If training, what was it and was it helpful?)
- What information would you like to have included in these workshops that would help you in your risk communication efforts?
WORKSHOP AGENDA

Part 1: Overview of the Corps’ Levee Safety Risk Communication Effort

Part 2: Risk Communication 101

Part 3: Showcase of Communication Efforts

Part 4: Communication Planning
PART 1: OVERVIEW OF THE CORPS’ LEVEE SAFETY PROGRAM

- Historical flooding in the region
- USACE Levee Safety Program Mission
- How USACE defines levee risk, Risk Management Framework
- What USACE is asking of the Sponsors
- Congressional Authorization
- Risk Communication Goals
- FEMA vs USACE
- USACE’s plan for communicating risk
- Levee System Summary
  ➢ What it is
  ➢ Development
  ➢ Timeline

Levee System Summary

Needing “S” Street

- Need for the levee system
- Development
- Timeline

Risk Characterization: The Corps completed a risk assessment of the Needles “S” Street Levee System in 2017. Although the levee has performed well since it was built in 1974, very few data on the levee’s condition and performance are available for review. The levee is an engineered structure that could be damaged, with potential for levee failure due to structural failure or breaching of the floodwall. The levee is subject to failure due to the force of floodwaters, which can cause significant property damage if the levee fails.

Risk Management: The Corps plans to implement risk management strategies to reduce the risk of levee failure. This includes the development of an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) that outlines emergency response procedures and evacuation instructions for the levee system. The EPP is designed to minimize the risk of injury and property damage during a flood event.

Risk Communication: The Corps plans to communicate risk information to the public through various channels, including social media, public meetings, and community workshops. The Corps will also work with local authorities and emergency management agencies to ensure that information is disseminated effectively.

Site Restoration: The Corps plans to conduct site restoration activities to repair and maintain the levee system. This includes the installation of new levee walls, repair of levee breaches, and the replacement of damaged levee structures. The Corps will work with local authorities to ensure that these activities are completed in a timely and effective manner.
PART 2: RISK COMMUNICATION 101

- Risk Communication vs Risk Assessment
- Experts respond to hazard, public responds to emotion/fear
- 4 Types of Risk Communication Strategies:
  - Precaution Advocacy
  - Outrage Management
  - Crisis Communication
  - Public Relations (no hazard, no outrage)
- Public Trust in Government
- Speaking in tongues
- How to get messages to stick
- Message Development
PART 3: SHOWCASE OF COMMUNICATION EFFORTS (SPONSOR PRESENTATIONS)

- City of San Diego FY20 Prioritization Process
  - Evaluated 187 waterways and channels
  - Field visits by crews and technical consultant
  - Technical consultant analysis
  - **Public input**
  - Management team review
  - Council Environment Committee review
PART 3: SHOWCASE OF COMMUNICATION EFFORTS (SPONSOR PRESENTATIONS)

- Maricopa County Public Affairs
  - “Integrated Marketing Communications”
  - Youtube
  - Local News Partnerships
  - Photo Contests
  - Facebook Live
  - Interactive Models
PART 4: COMMUNICATION PLANNING BREAKOUT SESSION

- Sponsor Risk Communication Plan Development
  - Who do we need to reach?
  - What do we need to say?
  - When do we want to say it?
  - How will we deliver the message?
  - Who is responsible and by when?
CHALLENGES OVERCOME / CONTINUING CHALLENGES

• Scheduling and getting the right people to attend the workshops
• Getting buy-in from Sponsors on why risk communication is so important
• Explaining the Levee System Summaries to the Sponsors

FLOOD RISK REDUCTION OUTCOMES

• Increased flood risk awareness to community officials
• Provided training on how to better communicate with their affected publics
• Improved Sponsor understanding of the Levee System Summary, which can be a tool for levee risk communication.
• Prompted the flood risk action of going out and communicating risk to the publics living behind levees
• The importance of communicating flood risk was stressed and emphasized as a key risk reduction action.
• Improved Sponsor relationships with USACE
SUCCESSES / BEST PRACTICES

• Sponsor interviews were integral for workshop development
• Allow for Sponsors to have a voice
• Town Manager released a video within 1 week of workshop with on-point flood risk messaging (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxVxTk0okfQ)