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**FINAL**

# Interagency Recovery Task Force Management Plan Mississippi River Floods 2011

October 20, 2011



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

**1.1 HISTORY.** Throughout the history of human civilization there are numerous epic natural disasters that have caused widespread destruction and loss of life. The Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) flood risk management system was borne from one of these disasters, the Great Mississippi River Flood of 1927. In 1927, the Mississippi River broke out of its levee system in 145 places and flooded 27,000 square miles. The flood affected Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas. By May 1927, the Mississippi River below Memphis, Tennessee, reached a width of 80 miles. Many areas were inundated up to a depth of 30 feet. The flood caused over \$400 million in damages and killed 246 people in seven states. The MR&T project was designed to function as a system of levees, floodwalls, floodways, and reservoirs that function as a single system to prevent similar devastation and loss of life in the unlikely event that such an epic event should ever reoccur. Such a flood event occurred; setting new gage records at most locations from Cape Girardeau, MO to the Gulf of Mexico. On 1 May 2011, while flood waters were rising, MG Michael Walsh directed the activation of Operation Watershed which not only looked at current and near future planning and execution during the flood event, but also looked down the road at repair and recovery of the watershed.

**1.2 PURPOSE.** This Interagency Recovery Task Force (IRTF) Management Plan identifies those participating states, agencies, and USACE organizations that will be involved in the restoration of the Mississippi Valley watershed. The purpose of this task force management plan is to set the stage for common purpose with a collaborative and holistic watershed approach to rehabilitation of flood damage reduction and floodplain management systems damaged by the 2011 Mississippi River floods, integrating solutions whenever possible that lead to long-term flood risk reduction. This plan identifies the Task Force member agencies and resource support agencies that should be involved in the determination of the appropriate restoration/repair measures to flood damage reduction projects and floodplain management systems, and the processes by which they accomplish those determinations. In addition to the measures, the determination will identify the appropriate agency and subsequent authority for restoration of flood damage reduction systems, or alternative to restoration of the damaged structure. Further, this plan recognizes that there will be ongoing short-term fixes that must be addressed to restore and maintain appropriate levels of protection for the balance of the flood season, and that those measures must be implemented as expeditiously as possible. It is anticipated that there will be opportunity for participating agencies and stakeholders to identify potential long-term initiatives and actions to further reduce risk of flood damage in the future, thus leading to community sustainability.

This watershed approach will require the coordination and participation of seven states and nine federal agencies. The participating states include Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Coordinating agencies include the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Weather Service (NWS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Maritime Administration (MARAD), as well as, USACE Major Subordinate Commands. Those USACE commands are the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), Great Lakes and Ohio River Division

(LRD), Northwestern Division (NWD), and support from Southwest Division (SWD) and South Atlantic Division (SAD).

This plan is not intended to usurp any authorities and programs currently assigned to its member states and agencies, nor deny any applying party access to existing programs for repairs and associated restoration and/or other impediments.

**1.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.** This plan supports the intent of the team to restore impacted flood risk management systems and the watershed. The primary goals of this plan are to:

- Implement a consistent approach across regional and state boundaries in order to prioritize restoration projects and resources across agencies and authorities;
- Share responsibility for all flood plain management restoration initiatives, programs, and projects in order to reduce flood risks long term;
- Pursue all potential funding methods from federal and state resources;
- Ensure continuous pre- and post-disaster collaboration;
- Give consideration to all structural and non-structural alternatives in repair and restoration;
- Learn about programs, identifying limitations and opportunities, and combine programs to create integrated, comprehensive and sustainable solutions while minimizing duplication of efforts and ensuring consistency;
- Create a multi-agency technical resource for state and local agencies;
- Improve flood risk outreach by presenting a unified interagency message to better educate and advise mutual customers as a result of gaining familiarity with each agency's missions, processes and programs;
- Improve internal and external risk communication, including increased awareness of residual risk;
- Catalog and share information on past and future projects and initiatives while prioritizing current initiatives.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

As a result of the 1993 Midwest Floods and the California Floods of 1996/1997, the Office of Management and Budget and the Council on Environmental Quality issued a joint memorandum dated February 18, 1997 directing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to develop a comprehensive approach to levee rehabilitation that includes providing analysis of both structural repairs and non-structural alternatives. This comprehensive approach, implemented under the provisions of Public Law 84-99, includes a

formal interagency process located at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Joint Field Office (JFO) to address the needs of the local sponsors and/or levee owners seeking Federal assistance. The formal interagency process was first implemented in 1997 and refined following the Midwest Floods of June 2008 to ensure that agencies quickly and efficiently considered relevant non-structural measures during evaluation and review of levee repair and reconstruction projects. Now, with the 2011 floods, this comprehensive approach has grown to cover the Mississippi River watershed and will involve more than the critical evaluation of levees, but also structures, floodways, and navigation. USACE and their Task Force members have acquired significant experience developing and implementing the process required for an interagency approach to assist state and local entities. Previous floods have provided opportunities for agencies to forecast both short and long-term strategies.

### **3.0 SCOPE OF WORK**

This Interagency Recovery Task Force Management Plan (IRTFMP) covers the scope of the short-term efforts required for recovery from the **Mississippi River Basin Flood Event, Spring 2011**, which began with the following declaration: At 0900 hours Wednesday 20-APR-2011 the river gauge at Cairo IL went above the Memphis Districts trigger point for Phase I floodfight activation stage of 49' with a reading of 49.02'. National Weather Service forecast on 20-APR-2011 shows a sustained rise with a projected crest of 52.0 (Phase II activation level) on 30-APR-2011. This information activated to an emergency declaration and began the flood fight for the Mississippi River Valley Watershed. Therefore, the Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, USACE has been designated the Lead Corps Official (LCO) for this Task Force. The operational boundary and the duration of this Task Force are further defined by the Commander, Mississippi Valley Division in his request to activate the Task Force. This IRTFMP will remain in effect for the duration of the Task Force, as agreed to by its member agencies.

**4.0 EXECUTION STRATEGY.** This plan will use the following broad strategies.

**4.1 Direction and Control.** In accordance with the OMB and CEQ guidance<sup>1</sup> this Task Force works under the leadership of the USACE, specifically the Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, who is identified as the Task Force Chairperson<sup>2</sup>. The Charter (see appendix A) further serves as the authority to form the Task Force to meet and act on flood risk management and other matters assigned to it.

**4.2 Task Force Membership.** Establishment of a Regional Interagency Recovery Task Force made up of the following participants with the USACE, Mississippi Valley Division, as the lead element:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Management and Budget/Council of Environmental Quality (OMB/CEQ) memorandum, dated February 18, 1997, Subject: Floodplain Management and Procedures for Evaluation and Review of Levee and Associated Restoration Projects

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineering Regulation ER 500-1-1, Civil Emergency Management Program, dated 30 September 2001

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwest Division  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
Department of Agriculture (Natural Resources Conservation Service)  
Department of Interior (U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)  
U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)  
Maritime Administration (MARAD)  
National Weather Service (NWS)  
State Emergency Management Agencies  
State Departments of Natural Resources  
As the Task Force matures, there may be opportunities for additional members to join from other states, agencies, stakeholders, and other non-governmental organizations.

**4.3 Review process and comment.** The Task Force members will have the opportunity to review and comment on policy, process, regulations, and/or guidance to improve the recovery process, mitigation considerations and future flood preparedness. Members will also review the damage assessment prioritization lists and system performance evaluation report, as well as other relevant documents provided by Task Force members for group consideration or action.

## **5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5.1 Administration.**

5.1.1 The Task Force Chairman, through the Task Force Staff Chief or Program Manager, is responsible for announcing meeting, setting agenda, and preparing a summary of each meeting.

5.1.2 The Task Force Chairman or Staff Chief will conduct each meeting in a manner designed to promote active participation and open dialog among all members or their representatives.

5.1.3 Resolution of issues that impact national floodplain management policy or cut across agency lines may be identified by the Task Force and will be addressed through the Headquarters, USACE, to OMB/CEQ.

5.1.4 Monthly updates will be prepared by the Task Force Chairman, through the Task Force Staff Chief or Program Manager. Each Task Force member will receive copies of the monthly report for its use, and may include it in any agency reports. The report will inform on the damage assessment teams and damage assessment reports, inform on the system performance evaluation team status, provide comments for consideration relative to any future comprehensive long-term studies, and highlight policy and guidance that present challenges to desired rehabilitation alternatives.

### **5.2 Procedural Responsibilities.**

5.2.1 The Task Force will meet on a regular basis through a combination of face-to-face meetings or by conference call to conduct business. The nature and timing of future meetings will be set by the Task Force Chairman. Business meetings will be used to review action items, share status of projects, discuss problem, issues and concerns, bring new ideas to the table, and overall coordination and collaboration efforts for short and long-term goals towards watershed recovery.

## **6.0 FUNDING**

**6.1 USACE Activities.** USACE participation in the Task Force activities will be funded under appropriate Mississippi Rivers and Tributaries and R&T and Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE) appropriated funds.

**6.2 Other Member Activities.** Other member agencies and states will fund their participation in Task Force activities through their existing authorities, programs, and budgets.

## **7.0 COMMUNICATIONS**

The Task Force will communicate transparently with other state and federal agencies and external and internal audiences about their processes and decisions. The goal is to ensure that all Task Force members and stakeholders, including our common public, have a comprehensive understanding of the Task Force mission and the processes used to achieve that mission.

**7.1 Communication Goals.** Communication goals to help achieve Task Force goals are as follows.

- Foster learning by the Task Force membership through dialogue about mission requirements and relationships between agencies.
- Build relationships with all federal, state, and local agencies, and other flood management systems stakeholders to assure effective information sharing and a collaborative approach to restoring damaged flood management systems.
- Leverage public affairs staff and processes in all agencies to inform leaders, decision makers, employees, stakeholders and private citizens on initiatives and actions associated with the Task Force.
- Communicate the metrics that will evaluate performance of restoring flood damage reduction projects and flood management systems to build internal accountability and promote public confidence and support.
- Conduct internal and external information forums to gather, evaluate and share lessons learned regarding applied principles and implementation processes.
- Ensure that all public and private stakeholders understand what the Task Force partnership is doing, why they are doing it, and what the processes are that will bring success.

**7.2 Communication Strategy.** To build awareness, the overall external communication strategy is to speak as a cohesive organization conveying accurate and timely watershed recovery information to the public and private stakeholders and customers. This will be accomplished, in part, by developing communication materials such as newsletters, event calendars, recovery status reports, success stories, etc., and a public website/social networking page in which to post them.

## **8.0 PROGRAM SUCCESS**

Program success will be achieved when there is successful restoration of flood management systems to original level of protection, along with an appropriate long-term strategy for flood risk reduction through sound floodplain management. This will be accomplished through:

- Excellent coordination and input, including meetings and reviews and discussions with all public and private stakeholders.
- Recognizing the great response and recovery efforts being applied by all member states and agencies, and understanding authorities and programs available through each.
- Educating customers about the goals, priorities and evaluation of those projects and other related activities impacting levee integrity.
- Recognizing the importance of protecting important environmental and natural resources.
- Monitoring and tracking the latest DHS/FEMA and other Federal agency activities impacting the successful accomplishment of flood management system restoration.
- Development of future regional strategies for short-term and long-term flood risk management, and assisting the states with implementation of their mitigation plans.
- Incorporating lessons learned from this flood event into flood mitigation plans for the impacted areas, and prioritizing healthy floodplain management activities for greatest impact to flood risk reduction.



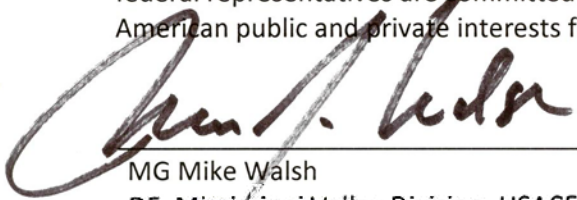
## **APPENDIX A**

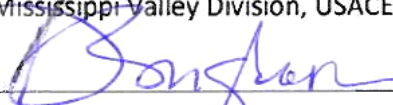
### **INTERAGENCY RECOVERY TASK FORCE CHARTER**

# Interagency Recovery Task Force


*Together...restoring the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest watershed in the world!*


The Interagency Recovery Task Force (IRTF) was established to create a highly communicative and collaborative forum of state and federal agencies with common interests and authorities to affect the repair, recovery and evaluation necessitated by the historic 2011 Mississippi River flood event. The signatory state and federal agencies will consider a wide range of traditional and innovative options to develop meaningful solutions for short and long-term restoration efforts. The following state and federal representatives are committed to working together to effectively and efficiently serve the American public and private interests for the protection of human life/safety and economic prosperity:

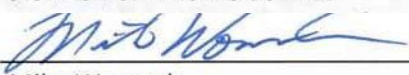
  
MG Mike Walsh  
DE, Mississippi Valley Division, USACE

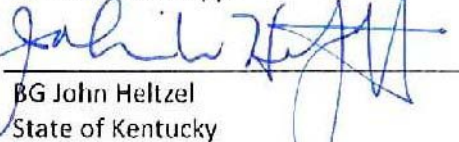
  
Deborah Ingram  
Federal Emergency Management Agency

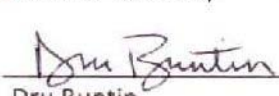
  
Thomas Christensen  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

  
Steve Hadley  
U.S. Coast Guard


  
Cynthia K. Dohner  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

  
Mike Womack  
State of Mississippi

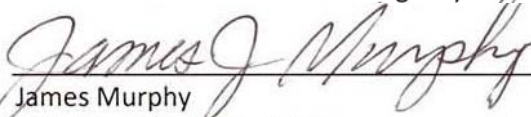
  
BG John Heltzel  
State of Kentucky

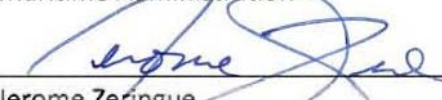
  
Dru Buntin  
State of Missouri


  
Ben Weiger  
National Weather Service

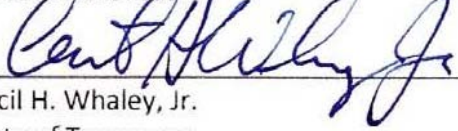
  
William Werkheiser  
U.S. Geological Survey

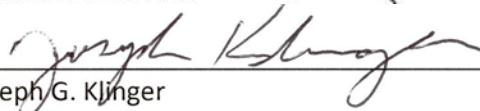
Doug Mundrick  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

  
James J. Murphy  
Maritime Administration

  
Jerome Zeringue  
State of Louisiana

  
David Maxwell  
State of Arkansas

  
Cecil H. Whaley, Jr.  
State of Tennessee

  
Joseph G. Kljinger  
State of Illinois



## Interagency Recovery Task Force Charter

This charter establishes and formalizes the expectations for implementation of the Interagency Recovery Task Force Team for the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Illinois, and the following agencies: National Weather Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and Maritime Administration. A review of this charter will be conducted annually, or at any time, with the consent of the core member agencies.

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions will be used:

Repareffort will strive to provide the rapid development and installation of initial interim measures designed to provide a basic level of protection and functionality before the next flood season. Reset projects will directly address system functionality with respect to floodways, dredging for navigation, and levee degradation.

Restore effort will strive to provide for the development and installation of permanent measures designed to return the navigation and MR&T structures to the full level protection and functionality. Restore projects will be designed to return the system to full pre-flood functionality necessary to ensure safety and security from future catastrophic flooding.

Mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters.

Risk is defined as the product of the probability of a flooding event and the consequences of the flooding event.

Life-cycle denotes all phases of the flooding emergency: preparation, response, recovery and mitigation. The intent is to integrate mitigation into all phases.

### **Vision Statement:**

*Establish and strengthen a mutual and holistic method of rehabilitating our flood risk management systems damaged by recent flood events, by collaborating and combining solutions for short and long-term restoration efforts.*

### **Mission Statement:**

Through an intergovernmental team of State and Federal agencies a collaborative process will:

- A multi-agency forum does not currently exist to solve the many regional issues and challenges that will be presented in the recovery from this historic flood event.

- Provide Safety and Security for Citizens Lives and Livelihoods
- Create strong regional effort to inspect, review, reset and restore our flood risk management system
- Pursue all potential funding methods from federal and state sources.
- Give consideration to traditional and non-traditional alternatives in repair and restoration.
- Implement a collaborative and communicative approach across regional and state boundaries to prioritize our efforts and resources during the challenging recovery process
- Facilitate strategic, integrated life-cycle mitigation actions to reduce the threat, vulnerability and consequences of flooding in the Mississippi River Valley;
- Create or supplement a mechanism to collaboratively solve issues and implement or recommend solutions;
- Increase and improve flood risk communication and outreach,

### **Goals:**

1. Implement a consistent approach across region and state boundaries in order to prioritize agencies, authorities, and resources in the rehabilitation process.
2. Create a strong team to inspect, review, repair and restore our flood risk management system and adjacent project.
3. Create an IRTF management plan
4. Share responsibility for all flood plain management restoration initiatives, programs, and projects in order to reduce flood risks long term.
5. Supply an effective outreach program to communicate short and long term to the public, as well as, educate on the agencies' responsibilities, programs and authorities.
6. Pursue all potential funding methods from federal and state resources
7. Ensure continuous pre- and post-disaster collaboration.
8. Give consideration to all structural and non-structural alternatives in repair and restoration.
9. Learn about programs, identifying limitations and opportunities, and combine programs to create integrated, comprehensive and sustainable solutions.
10. Create a multi-agency technical resource for state and local agencies.
11. Improve flood risk outreach by presenting a unified interagency message to better educate and advise mutual customers as a result of gaining familiarity with each agency's missions, processes and programs.
12. Improve internal and external risk communication, including increased awareness of residual risk.
13. Identify and facilitate improvements to existing programs, policies and processes.
14. Identify other collaboration opportunities to combine resources and identify gaps; minimize duplication of effort and ensure consistency.
15. Catalog and share information on past and future projects and initiatives.
16. Prioritize current and future initiatives individually and collectively.

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

The team will be intergovernmental and multiple state in nature. Membership will vary based on available resources and team focus; however, the core member agencies involved at all times will include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA),

the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Weather Service (NWS), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Maritime Administration (MARAD), the State of Louisiana, the State of Mississippi, the State of Arkansas, the State of Tennessee, the State of Kentucky, the State of Missouri, and the State of Illinois. Representatives may be from the regional and state levels of the organizations. As the intergovernmental team evolves, other State, Federal, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and local agencies may choose to participate in this initiative. All participating agencies will contribute experience and information to all team efforts.

Initially, the lead agency will be USACE. The USACE representative will maintain and distribute a contact sheet. With the support of a team consensus, the leadership role may rotate among the core members. With the support of all team members, the agency assuming the leadership role is responsible for organizing, coordinating and facilitating team meetings, as well as recording and maintaining final meeting minutes. The representative of the lead agency may request assistance in performing any of these responsibilities.

#### **Meetings:**

At a minimum, meetings will be conducted on a quarterly basis. Coordination between meetings may occur through email and teleconferencing. Meeting agendas shall be published at least one week prior to a meeting. Draft minutes shall be distributed via email for comment. Final minutes shall be distributed to all members and posted on a public website.

#### **Decision Making:**

Decisions will be accomplished through team consensus after discussion. The core member agencies that should be involved in all major decisions are USACE and FEMA.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **TASK FORCE ACTIVATION MEMO**



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

CECW-HS

13 May 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR

COMMANDER, MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION  
COMMANDER, NORTHWESTERN DIVISION  
COMMANDER, GREAT LAKES AND OHIO RIVER DIVISION  
COMMANDER, SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

SUBJECT: Guidance for Establishing an Interagency Recovery Task Force (IRTF)

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance for establishing an IRTF that ensures common purpose and drives effective collaboration across agencies and organizations during recovery from the Mississippi River Basin flood event of 2011.
2. We have an outstanding example of the Regional Interagency Levee Task Force established for the Midwest Floods of June 2008. To address the current situations caused by the Spring Floods 2011, the MVD commander will establish an IRTF that effects short and long term recovery of damaged flood risk management systems in the Mississippi River Basin. This will require representation from appropriate Federal agencies and from the States of Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana. NWD, LRD, and SWD will support MVD in establishing and engaging the IRTF. An IRTF Management Plan will be developed in the coming weeks to codify scope, intent, purpose, goals, strategy, operations, governance, quality assurance, and strategic communications.
3. The IRTF will establish a collaborative and holistic approach to recovering and rehabilitating flood risk management and floodplain management systems damaged by the Mississippi River Basin flooding of 2011 while also integrating solutions for long-term flood risk management.
4. Detailed policy guidance for the inspection, review, repair, and rehabilitation of projects damaged during the Mississippi River Basin flooding of 2011 will follow under separate correspondence.
5. Point of contact for this guidance is Mr. Alex Dornstaeder at (202) 761-4714.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

KAREN DURHAM-AGUILERA, P.E., SES  
Director of Contingency Operations  
and Homeland Security

## **APPENDIX C**

### **AGENCY AUTHORITIES FOR RESTORATION**



## APPENDIX C - AGENCY AUTHORITIES FOR RESTORATION OF FLOOD MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

AGENCY	AUTHORITY	DESCRIPTION
USACE	YES	PL 84-99, amended by WRDA 96, authorizing when requested by the public sponsor, to implement non-structural alternatives (NSA's) to the rehabilitation, repair, or restoration of flood control works damaged by floods or coastal storms.
USACE	YES	MR&T – Flood Control Act's 1928, Sec 1 & 3; 1936, Sec 3, 8, 12; 1938, Sec 4; 1941, Sec 3; 1944, Sec 4; 1946, Sec 10; 1950, Sec 204; 1954, Sec 203; 1962, Sec 207; 1965, Sec 201, 204; 1968, Sec 213; River Basin Monetary Authorization Act of 1971, PL 92-222, Sec 7; WRDA 92, Sec 103 (c)(2); WRDA 00, Sec 508
FEMA	YES	Authority for Non-Structural alternatives may be applicable through the Hazard Mitigation Program. Other authorities exist under the FEMA Public Assistance Program
USCG	NO	No existing authority.
EPA	NO	No existing authority.
DOA: NRCS	YES	Emergency Watershed Protection Program - Section 403- of Public Law 95-334. The provision of floodplain easement was added in 1996.  Wetlands Reserve Program - authorized under the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the 1990 and 1996 Farm Bills. It is a voluntary program to restore and protect wetlands on private property.
USFWS	YES	Authority declares the intent of Congress that fish and wildlife enhancement be given full consideration as purposes of Federal water development projects to those purposes. Also authorizes the use of Federal water project funds for land acquisition. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act as amended (16 U.S.C661-667e) Endangered Species Act as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 701 et seq.)
USGS	NO	No existing authority. Can assist other Federal agencies by providing technical services.
NWS	NO	No existing authority. Can assist other Federal agencies by providing technical services.