



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announces the availability of the collaborative Federal Support Toolbox for Integrated Water Resources Management website

WASHINGTON (February 28, 2013) – The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) today announced the availability of a unique on-line Federal Support Toolbox to provide Integrated Water Resources Management information across the nation and internationally.

The Federal Support Toolbox is a centralized Web portal that will allow federal agencies, states, interstate organizations, Tribes, non-governmental agencies and international entities to access and share water resources information for their planning and management. The capabilities that result from sharing information and forming partnerships for joint initiatives have the potential to consolidate and conserve resources, and connect the world for a better water future.

The Federal Support Toolbox is one of the validated outcomes of the USACE “*Building Strong Collaborative Relationships for a Sustainable Water Resources Future*” initiative which assessed national water resource needs from 2008 to 2009. (For more information visit www.building-collaboration-for-water.org.) The initiative involved research and conferences with federal agencies, states, river basin commissions, Tribes and non-governmental agencies. Regional and national conferences validated the need for a nationwide “one-stop-shop” for water resources information to improve the nation's water resources management and to build capacity among water agencies nationally and internationally through information sharing and alignment of programs.

“The effective management and conservation of our nation’s water resources are among the most critical challenges facing the nation,” said Mr. Steven L. Stockton, the USACE Director of Civil Works. “These finite resources are subject to ever-increasing demands and are vitally important to America’s quality of life, economy and the environment today and into the future.

“There is a collective need to be able to access and share water resources information quickly and smartly. We are excited about the opportunity to host the Federal Support Toolbox as a way to bring agencies at all levels together to share research and other information to enhance management of our precious resources,” continued Stockton. “The toolbox will make a great wealth of existing information, research and innovative ideas concerning water management centrally accessible to everyone.”

The Federal Support Toolbox, available at www.watertoolbox.us, will serve as a single point of entry to comprehensive information about water resources programs, initiatives, legislation, policies, regulations, collaborations, partnerships, databases, tools, models, data, research and development, education, and leadership that is housed on a participating agency's or organization's own server. Participating organizations are signing partnering agreements with USACE in support of this initiative and for quality control of information. Agencies and other organizations that own the water resources data will collaborate with USACE to keep their data and information current.

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The Federal Support Toolbox will also provide agencies with a forum to communicate with one another on water and related topics, and to post news and events of interest. Such learning and linking can foster partnerships, enhance capabilities and support critical water needs nationwide and internationally.

Participation is voluntary. The ability to post or update information will be restricted to designated individuals within partner organizations. The general public will be able to read all posted information but will not be able to enter or edit data.

“It is our hope that all 50 states, federal resource management agencies, river basin commissions, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, academia, and ultimately international entities and private industry with water management interests will choose to be partners in this revolutionary and strategic approach to linking the world to water management and information sharing,” added Stockton. “Finding sustainable solutions for the nation’s water resources challenges is a bigger mission than any single agency can handle in an era of constrained resources.

“The toolbox will enable agencies to capitalize on existing knowledge and technology without the need to reinvent the wheel and to bring their resources together to find solutions that might not be achieved otherwise,” Mr. Stockton concluded. “We believe that the Federal Support Toolbox is a new business model for governmental and non-governmental inter-organizational cooperation.”

For additional information on the Federal Support Toolbox for IWRM, contact Ms. Ada Benavides at Ada.benavides@usace.army.mil.