



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

CECC-ZA

24 April 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL USACE LEGAL SERVICES MEMBERS

SUBJECT: Establishment of USACE Legal Services Practice Groups

1. One of my five strategic goals is to promote the exchange of ideas and information among all members of our USACE legal services community. I know that I have benefited from my professional interaction with colleagues, and I am sure that each of you has done the same. Through dialog with our peers, we can build our expertise, achieve deeper awareness of our individual responsibilities and our contributions to the entire Corps of Engineers organization, as well as build upon what has already been accomplished.
2. Towards this end, and to instill our spirit of learning, I have approved a pilot program of "Practice Groups" that will provide a virtual "meeting place" where members can share ideas, information, knowledge and experiences on the challenges they face in their respective practice area(s). Practice groups build upon the information-sharing that already occurs within "informal" networks by expanding the contributing community, capturing the intellectual wealth of discussions, and serving as a reference resource for future discussions and problem resolution. Practice Groups provide a venue for all members to learn and grow and do not harbor restrictions sometimes imposed by geographic, organizational or societal boundaries.
3. Initially, we will be piloting groups in four practice areas: Procurement (Planning through Disputes), Environmental Restoration and Compliance, Real Estate, and Ethics/Professional Responsibility. The essence of each practice group is its members. Membership will always be voluntary, and all members of our legal community are welcome to join any group or groups they desire. Each practice group will be self-organized, self-policed, and will work independently setting their own goals. A practice group facilitator will be initially identified for each group to promote membership and organize the collaborative work environment. Because of the numerous demands on everyone's time, I want to make it as easy as possible for everyone to participate and contribute. These groups will not be static or structured entities but will be dynamic and ever-evolving.
4. I envision that practice groups will represent the heart of our legal community, and will provide a forum for sharing best practices and celebrating successes, as well as troubleshooting problem areas. I invite each of you to think about your work practices and expertise and consider what you can contribute and learn from your colleagues in this endeavor.
5. Those having an interest in participating in one (or more) of our pilot practice groups should e-mail Jan Manwiller by May 17th. I plan to have these first four groups up and running before the Worldwide USACE Legal Services Conference in July at West Point. Additional practice groups will likely be established soon. If you would like to know more about this initiative, please contact Jan Manwiller, CECC-ZB, Craig R. Schmauder, CEHNC-OC, or Ann Wright, HTRW-CX, 402-697-2466.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert M. Andersen".

ROBERT M. ANDERSEN
Chief Counsel