

Trip Report – Emerging Leaders Conference

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The Emerging Leaders Conference took place in conjunction with the Senior Leaders Conference from 3 August 2001 through 10 August 2001 in Chicago, Illinois. Thirty-six people from across the Corps were selected to join an elite group of people who had already completed the workshop, which began in 1991. This class consisted of Biologists, Public Affairs Specialists, Geographers, Engineers, Contract Specialists, Lock and Dam Operators, and many more. We were split up into teams of six, with a team leader who was an ELCer from the previous class. I was lucky enough to be placed into the “Orange Team” – GO ORANGE!

At the IceBreaker dinner on Friday, each team was given a box of stuff, and had to make something out of it. We didn’t know each other from Adam, and here we are, thrown into making a product. We looked at each other and said – I guess we have to do this, what can we come up with? So, after much deliberation, we made a “Dream Catcher”. When all the teams were done and we all saw what the Blue Team had done with the General Flowers Action Figure, we knew we had no shot of winning! But we had fun putting it together and the Orange Team really “clicked” as a team at that point.

Saturday and Sunday we were learning about ourselves, and why and how our personality styles and preferences influence the way we act and behave, both at work and at home. Thanks to this opportunity, I can now explain why I have such an affinity for numbers, why I am organized and analyze everything. I am not going to change who I am, but I understand myself more and how I interact with other people, and for that, I am truly grateful!

On Monday, we all found out why we were placed in the groups we were in. We were organized by personality and brain-dominance preference, except the Orange Team. The Orange Team was a compilation of all personality types, to make the most balanced, well-rounded group. We all felt that even though our group took a long time to come to consensus, we all contributed to the decisions and we made the best-informed decision we possibly could. These group exercises taught us that a diverse group of people (personality-wise), better, and more informed decisions would be made, regardless of the task at hand.

We were then immersed into the Senior Leader Conference, and given the opportunity to hear where the Corps is going and meet who is going to get it there. The Senior Leaders were open and honest and truly wanted to hear what we, as Emerging Leaders, had to say. I was really thankful for that opportunity. A few people I met stick out when I review my experience at the Conference. In particular, Charlie Hess and Pat Rivers were so interested in what I had to say and wanted to teach me about what they do. Charlie told me that as soon as I want to do a developmental assignment in Headquarters-Regulatory, I should give him a call. That connection is priceless.

I wanted to thank you, General Flowers, for making this program and experience available to me. My main NUGGET of learning for the conference is that you can lead from **any** position. I was nervous coming to work for the Corps from a comfortable job with New York State, but I know I’ve made the right decision! Thank you for making the Corps a great place to work!