

ETDM Annual Program Review Meeting Notes Northwest Florida Water Management District



Meeting Date and Location

December 16, 2004
Burns Building – OPP Conference Room

Meeting Attendees

Buddy Cunill - FDOT
Carl McMurray - FDOT
Ron Bartel – NFWFMD
George Hadley - FHWA
Terri Alexander – URS
Gary Phillips – URS
Jordan Smith – URS

ETDM Process Discussion

How is NFWFMD operating differently under ETDM process than it was prior to the implementation of ETDM? (e.g. number of staff, project reviewed, typical involvement)?

- Within the NFWFMD organization there are two main positions primarily handling ETDM reviews and program issues including Paul Thorpe, and Karen Kebart. NFWFMD currently has a multidisciplinary team approach consisting of a GIS, Water Resources, Environmental Planner and Hydraulics specialist that conduct reviews on projects.
- NFWFMD stated that without ETDM funding it would not have participated in early project reviews or continuing coordination. The NFWFMD Board is willing to allow staff participation based on ETDM funding availability.
- NFWFMD prioritizes their workload from year to year. They do not need additional FTE's, but use the funds as additional assignments given to in house staff as needed. NFWFMD suggested modifying their Funding Agreement to allow out sourcing of work to increase program flexibility and responsiveness.
- NFWFMD works with FDOT District Three on SB 1986 mitigation, and has principally been charging time only for projects reviewed using the Environmental Screening Tool (EST).
- NFWFMD stated they could and would provide technical assistance if requested. This can be done for projects within and outside the screening process. They are able to conduct technical studies or oversee studies in support of District Three, if needed.

In your opinion, how has your agency involvement influenced project quality and project delivery?

- NFWFMD indicated they have been working with projects prior to screening events. They identify upcoming FDOT and MPO projects by looking at MPO notices and other local publications. They would like to find out earlier about upcoming projects, something like a pre-notice before receiving the official e-mail prompt from the EST. This would maximize their review efficiency.

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Discussion of NFWFMD Reviews (Use of Environmental Screening Tool)

- EST is a great tool. In addition to the EST, NFWFMD uses their own GIS resource in conducting project evaluations.
- NFWFMD has new GIS layers that they will share with the FDOT Technology Resources Group and add to EST. This coordination issue will be brought to the attention of the FDOT Technology Resources Manager.
- District Three has several capacity projects that were not added into the EST. NFWFMD would prefer to have all capacity projects, regardless of funding, be loaded into EST for early review and analysis. According to the NFWFMD, several State funded capacity projects were not added into EST.

Has NFWFMD participated in interagency coordination and/or dispute resolution for any ETDM projects?

- NFWFMD stated that majority of consultation with District Three has been through the EST and by e-mail.
- NFWFMD reviewed ETDM #2862 (Pensacola Bay Bridge Alternative #4) in June 2004 and assigned a Potential Dispute degree of effect to the wetland issue. There has been no response or coordination with the MPO or District Three about their comment and red flag.
- NFWFMD currently attends quarterly permitting meetings with DEP and FDOT District Three Pensacola staff. They recommend that more permit agencies participate in this quarterly meeting such as ACOE that would result in better coordination by permit agencies on regional mitigation issues.

In your opinion, how have your comments been addressed in: Planning? Programming? Project Development? Permitting?

- NFWFMD indicated that District Three has not communicated with them about any comments since they were submitted during the Planning (fifteen projects) and Programming Screens (one project). See **Attachment A** for a list of projects reviewed using EST.

Has NFWFMD reviewed the Planning Summary Report completed by FDOT District Three?

- NFWFMD was not aware of planning summary reports or how to find them. They will go back and review other agency comments and the planning summary reports, as they are completed and posted by District Three.

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Contract Management Discussion

Current Funding Agreement (number of positions, funding levels, reviews)

- FDOT reminded NFWFMD about need to provide a single-audit for this year and the need to add Single Audit Language to the Funding Agreement. Their next Funding Agreement, which will be completed before July 2005 and will include Single Audit Language. Language for single audit will be provided to NFWFMD.
- NFWFMD discussed consolidating MA, AOA and FA into one agreement or at a minimum for uniformity following the same format used by other WMDs. This will be discussed further when the new agreements are developed.

Billing/Reporting (Invoice spreadsheet, Project Report, Program Review Spreadsheet)

- NFWFMD stated that their third invoice has been submitted. No problems with program management or invoicing.

ETDM Funded Positions Reference Manual

- Buddy Cunill gave a quick explanation and purpose of the ETDM Invoice and Funding Reference Manual. This document will be available to the ETAT agencies via the EST, once it has been finalized.

Renew Funding Agreement

- NFWFMD is approximately seven months away (July 2005) from renegotiating their Funding Agreement (FA). FDOT has established an internal 90-day advance notification process that notifies FDOT to begin working with NFWFMD on their new FA.
- Currently, NFWFMD does all its work in house. They would like to have the flexibility to out source and hire consultants on a Task Work Order (TWO) basis. They currently have general Consulting (GC) contacts that allow them to spend up to \$50,000 before requiring advertisement and competitive bidding for the contract.
- NFWFMD mentioned their desire to modify their agreements to be consistent with the other WMD agreements. NFWFMD will review other WMD agreements
- It was suggested that NFWFMD extend the Funding Agreement duration two years from July 2005 to October 2007, which would be identical to NFWFMD fiscal year.
- NFWFMD mentioned that they might want to request Advance Pay funding process instead of the reimbursable funding process.

General Discussion

What were the major barriers to coordination and involvement with FDOT projects?

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- NFWFMD stated there were no major barriers to coordination and involvement with FDOT projects – ETDM process breaks through barriers. ETDM has provided more and earlier exposure to projects, better organized information, better coordination, helped in staff hours, management, helped in setting staff priorities and managing their time

Discuss how things have changed in your process and relationship with District Three?

- More exposure to projects, more coordinated, helped with scheduling, manpower and priorities.

What would be your self-assessment of NFWFMD performance over past year?

- NFWFMD rates their performance of the past year as an A+. This self-assessment is based on early involvement, good quality comments and the cost effectiveness of NFWFMD involvement.

Explain any program successes you have experienced.

- The EST is a great tool for better quality reviews, efficiency in information management and communication – more direct and specific (not a shot gun approach).
- Allows for trained and professional staff involvement.

What recommendations would you make to improve the environmental streamlining of the process?

- Recommendations to improve the environmental streamlining of the ETDM process include better feedback from FDOT district and MPO once comments are provided by ETAT. Quarterly meeting with all permitting agencies for review consensus on “common issues”.
- Degree of Effect (DOE) is subjective and sometimes hard to determine. This could be better defined. NFWFMD recommends a workshop on DOE.
- FDOT support In-lieu Fee proposal (Discuss with Josh Bowen). In-lieu Fee proposal will help streamline process. Chapter 373/FS Amendments would help too.

What Performance Measures does your agency track/report?

- NFWFMD does not have agency Performance Measures and do not intend to develop Performance Measures. NFWFMD does track environmental resources. They have an extensive inventory of wetland impacts, acres, mitigation costs etc...

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and could produce a report for FDOT annually to assist with performance measures data collection and reporting.

What can be done better in ETDM performance by all parties?

- There should be better coordination with FDOT District Three and other permitting agencies. It would give better picture of impacts and mitigation needs.

What are your training needs for ETDM?

- NFWFMD stated that training has been very good in terms of the overall ETDM process and the use of the EST tool. The NFWFMD staff is very appreciative of the training received.

Annual Report

- NFWFMD was asked to begin development of Annual Report and coordinate with FDOT and FHWA in terms of content and due date.

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Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

- Improved communication and coordination between District Three, Pensacola MPO, Panama City MPO, Tallahassee MPO and NFWWDM is needed related to feedback on agency comments, FDOT and MPO responses and assigned summary degree of effect. FDOT District Three and the relevant MPO need to make sure NFWWMD is aware of their Planning and Programming Summary Reports for projects that have been screened using the EST so they can provide feedback.
- NFWWMD is concerned with organizing their workload and suggests notifying them earlier of upcoming or soon to be released ETDM projects. Peter McGilvray and the Technology Group will address this issue.
- NFWWMD Funding Agreement needs to be modified to include Single-Audit language. FDOT will provide NFWWMD with language.
- FDOT will work with NFWWMD to develop new Agency Agreements that consolidate the existing three agreements, are consistent with other WMDs and provide for comparable durations. In addition, the NFWWMD Funding Agreement will be modified to allow the flexibility to out source and hire consultants on a Task Work Order (TWO) basis. The new FA must also be updated to include Single Audit Language.
- NFWWMD has additional GIS data layers or datasets that need to be provided to FDOT and FDGL for loading into the EST. Coordinate with Pete McGilvray.
- Quarterly agency meetings with DEP, District 3 and other permitting agencies should take place to increase communication, coordination and consolidate reviews and recommendations.
- NFWWMD feels the training they have received from FDOT has been very good in terms of the ETDM process and the use of the EST tool. They look forward to continuing training efforts as the tool and process are enhanced.
- NFWWMD can provide FDOT with information related to performance measures concerning acres of wetlands impacted, mitigation measures and other pertinent data. This will be pursued with NFWWMD as part of their contribution to the performance measures program information. Coordinate with Pete McGilvray
- NFWWMD has had difficulty establishing thresholds related to the Degree of Effect and recommends conducting a workshop with other agencies on this issue. FDOT will consider this request.
- Once completed, FDOT will provide NFWWMD with copy of Funded Position Reference Manual

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- NWFWMMD request FDOT support on In-lieu fee proposal. Support amendment to Chapter 373 F.S. Coordinate with Josh Boan.
 - NWFWMMD will complete a Draft Annual Report consistent with the FDOT guidelines. FDOT and FHWA will review the Draft Report and provided comments for consideration by NWFWMMD, before finalizing Annual Report.