



## A TRAINING COURSE FOR MITIGATION BANKING INTERAGENCY REVIEW TEAMS



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### Reference Document: Dispute Resolution

#### **2008 Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources**

##### *§ 332.8 Mitigation banks and in-lieu fee programs.*

##### *(e) Dispute resolution process.*

(1) Within 15 days of receipt of the district engineer's notification of intent to approve an instrument or amendment, the Regional Administrator of the U.S. EPA, the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Regional Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and/or other senior officials of agencies represented on the IRT may notify the district engineer and other IRT members by letter if they object to the approval of the proposed final instrument or amendment. This letter must include an explanation of the basis for the objection and, where feasible, offer recommendations for resolving the objections. If the district engineer does not receive any objections within this time period, he may proceed to final action on the instrument or amendment.

(2) The district engineer must respond to the objection within 30 days of receipt of the letter. The district engineer's response may indicate an intent to disapprove the instrument or amendment as a result of the objection, an intent to approve the instrument or amendment despite the objection, or may provide a modified instrument or amendment that attempts to address the objection. The district engineer's response must be provided to all IRT members.

(3) Within 15 days of receipt of the district engineer's response, if the Regional Administrator or Regional Director is not satisfied with the response he may forward the issue to the Assistant Administrator for Water of the U.S. EPA, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks of the U.S. FWS, or the Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere of NOAA, as appropriate, for review and must notify the district engineer by letter via electronic mail or facsimile machine (with copies to all IRT members) that the issue has been forwarded for Headquarters review. This step is available only to the IRT members representing these three federal agencies, however other IRT members who do not agree with the district engineer's final decision do not have to sign the instrument or amendment or recognize the mitigation bank or in-lieu fee program for purposes of their own programs and authorities. If an IRT member other than the one filing the original objection has a new objection based on the district engineer's response, he may use the first step in this procedure (paragraph (e)(1) of this section) to provide that objection to the district engineer.

(4) If the issue has not been forwarded to the objecting agency's Headquarters, then the district engineer may proceed with final action on the instrument or amendment. If the issue has been forwarded to the objecting agency's Headquarters, the district engineer must hold in abeyance the final action on the instrument or amendment, pending Headquarters level review described below.

(5) Within 20 days from the date of the letter requesting Headquarters level review, the Assistant Administrator for Water, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, or the Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere must either notify the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) (ASA(CW)) that further review will not be requested, or request that the ASA(CW) review the final instrument or amendment.

(6) Within 30 days of receipt of the letter from the objecting agency's Headquarters request for ASA(CW)'s review of the final instrument, the ASA(CW), through the Director of Civil Works, must review the draft instrument or amendment and advise the district engineer on how to proceed with final action on that instrument or amendment. The ASA(CW) must immediately notify the Assistant Administrator for Water, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and/or the Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere of the final decision.

(7) In cases where the dispute resolution procedure is used, the district engineer must notify the sponsor of his final decision within 150 days of receipt of the final instrument or amendment.