

27 March 2002

CECW-E/CECW-P/CECW-O

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Working with The Nature Conservancy

1. Reference: Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States Department of the Army, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and The Nature Conservancy dated 14 December 2000 (enclosure 1).
2. The Nature Conservancy staff recently met with my staff to discuss the Green River Dam effort and the possibility of expanding this initiative to additional Corps reservoirs. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been working with the Louisville District for several years to determine if releases from the Green River Dam can be modified to more closely mimic the pre-dam flow conditions in order to help sustain the existing significant native biodiversity, with minimal impacts to other project purposes. The district will be preparing an Environmental Assessment this spring and it is hoped that it will be possible to implement a modified release schedule this fall. The modified release schedule will be tried for three years, during which TNC will collect data to document benefits. Based on the results of the trial the district will determine if a request to make the changes permanent is appropriate.
3. The Green River initiative is an excellent example of the type of partnering envisioned when the Memorandum of Understanding was being developed. It complements our stewardship efforts and is an example of implementing Lieutenant General Flowers directive to integrate environmental sustainability concepts into the planning, construction and operation of our projects. Based on the locations of our dams and its priorities and capabilities, TNC has identified an initial list of projects where it would like to explore this potential. Enclosure two includes this initial list, minus those projects where there is ongoing litigation or other legal concerns, and a brief description of TNC's proposal. The Nature Conservancy's interest in participating in comprehensive studies that may include consideration of flow regime modifications was also briefly discussed.
4. The Nature Conservancy recognizes that the Corps must operate projects in accordance with authorized project purposes and understands that there may be budgetary constraints affecting our ability to participate in some of these efforts. The Nature Conservancy brings considerable expertise to the table regarding the nature and significance of the biological impacts of any proposed changes. The intent is to collaboratively explore possibilities, identify constraints, and where appropriate pursue promising opportunities.

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5. If contacted, I encourage you to bring together team members as appropriate from your Planning, Engineering, Operations, Project Management and other functions to meet with the Nature Conservancy representatives and listen to their proposal. Additionally, partnering with the Nature Conservancy should be considered in your studies that could involve operational modifications to existing projects. If you have any questions, the primary point of contact is Ms. Ellen Cummings, CECW-PD at 202-761-4558.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

/s/

2 Encls

1. Memo of Understanding
2. Dam Reoperations Initiative

ROBERT H. GRIFFIN  
Major General, USA  
Director of Civil Works

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# Dam Reoperation Initiative (DRI)

## Objectives

- Advance TNC’s conservation goals and the Corps’s mission in ecosystem restoration within the context of the national Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Corps and TNC.
- Export the lessons learned from the Corps-TNC collaboration on re-operating the Green River Dam (Kentucky) for ecosystem improvement to additional projects; a list of candidate sites is presented in the table below.
- Analyze successes, problems, and solutions for re-operating Corps dams to achieve more ecologically sustainable flows, while meeting human needs.

## Initiative Sites

<i>River(s)</i>	<i>State(s)</i>	<i>Dam(s)</i>
Bill Williams	Arizona	Alamo
Blackwater	New Hampshire	Blackwater
French Creek	Pennsylvania	Union City / Woodcock
Roanoke	Virginia	John B Kerr
Skagit	Washington	Gorge, Diablo, Ross – these are not Corps reservoirs but the Corps controls manages the releases for flood damage reduction
White / Black / Little Red	Arkansas / Missouri	Table Rock / Bull Shoals / Norfolk / Clearwater

## DRI Implementation Essentials

- Determine flow requirements to maintain or restore natural ecosystem integrity
- Determine anthropogenic influences and human water use/management requirements
- Identify areas of potential incompatibilities between all water users and stakeholders
- Collaboratively search for resolutions to incompatibilities...identify uncertainties
- Conduct water management experiments to resolve or at least bound uncertainties

- Design and implement an adaptive management plan that provides assessment and feedback cycles