

Good Afternoon, All,

Last week the Recreation Program Team, composed of representatives from each MSC, HQs, and ERDC, met here in HQs to review the FY 06 budget data for the Recreation Program. Our goal was to understand the data we had, to put our budget proposal together (with alternative scenarios), and to prepare justification and defense for the proposal. Although we did not achieve our goal completely, we made great progress in agreeing on a credible process for evaluating our data and finalizing a program.

At this point, let me thank you for your conscientious efforts in tackling this new budget process this year. The budget this year was conceptually very different from past years, involving new definitions, the use of new software tools, a new review process, and new points of contact. It is clear that you all worked hard to understand the concept and provide the best data possible to support our budget development and request. Thank you for stepping up to the plate once again and proving yourselves to be the dedicated professionals the Corps has always been privileged to have in the recreation program. I don't have to tell you, this was hard - nor do I have to tell you it wasn't perfect.

One of the pieces of data we didn't ask for, but realize we need now, is the current level of service we provide our customers. For the first time in FY06, we identified an acceptable level of service we want to provide and you were asked to develop your budget request to provide that level of service. In order to justify our budget request, we must be able to answer the question, "What level of service are you currently providing?". Since every project had to identify that level in order to develop their budget, the information should be readily available. Again, this is the current level of service - the service you are providing this summer. Please visit <https://wwwel.wes.army.mil/nrm/rec-best/> to enter this information. After the login page, click on "Budget Submission". Then click on "Enter Service Standards" link for each of your projects. There is no need to go through the RecBEST Performance Measure Data Entry System. **This information must be completed and submitted by 6 August.**

Not surprisingly, we also found some errors in the data when we looked at it closely. This is to be expected for this first year; however, the accuracy of some pieces of data is especially critical. Accordingly, the MSC Recreation Program Managers will be making necessary corrections in the coming days (this week) and may need your assistance to do this. The corrective actions include: 1) Identifying recreation areas included in error in RecBEST. These are generally areas that were included in OMBIL in error as recreation areas operated by the Corps, but were actually operated by others or aren't recreation areas, etc. We must eliminate them so we have an accurate number of recreation areas to be closed with initial program funding only. 2) Identifying items placed in Increment 2 in error. This would include items beyond providing service to the remaining 25% of visitation, such as purchasing equipment or upgrading restrooms. 3) Identifying and quantifying unusual situations, ie. an increase in real estate costs for recreation in FY06, resulting from closer review under the new process or an increase in O&M in FY06 due to Congressional adds in prior years, etc. Your MSC Recreation Program Manager will contact you for your assistance with these items, if necessary.

We will continue to give you progress reports as we proceed through the budget process this summer and fall. You need to understand the decisions we make and the reasons for them, so you can participate more knowledgeably in the FY07 budget development and beyond. We will also establish a procedure and timeframe for you to provide comments and suggestions for improvements for next year soon. We learned a great deal this year and should be able to make significant improvements in the process and tools for next year.

Thank you,
Judy Rice