Webinar 18 August 2009
"IEPR" by Karen Johnson-Young

Thank you very much Julie, and welcome everybody. Thanks for participating in the webinar. I have been working to support the Corps since 2005 on independent external peer reviews. Back in 2005 they were called independent technical reviews, but pretty much the same process. I've been at Battelle for about twenty years and I've been doing Corps work for about ten of those years, so just to give you a little background on myself. The presentation provided to you is pretty long. It was prepared as a resource, and as Julie said it is going to be put up on one of your share points or websites for access. I'm not going to go through every slide. I'm am going to just hit the high points just so we can stay on out time frame, but if there is something that you see on a slide that you have a question on please stop me and I will review that for you.

This presentation was given to the planning chief's workshop on July 29 and at that time I actually did some modifications based on the new guidance that is coming out 1165-2-209 which called these types of reviews type one reviews vs. type two reviews which are the safety assurance reviews. The agenda I am going to go through that I am going to talk about are some experience doing peer review, some general commission on cost, I am going to skip the part on keys to success, I am going to talk about the process, after action review, and some of the feedback we have gotten from some panel members. Because of our experience we have completed to date 16 peer reviews in general and I classify those as the ITRs which are the early ones: type one reviews, model reviews, policy and other reviews, some of them had to do with vegetation policy, some DSTAK projects de-action classification, and then type two which are hurricane storm damage risk reduction which we are doing for the New Orleans District through the costal storm damage reduction planning center of expertise. I have about 21 ongoing right now; most of them are the type two reviews. Then on pending you can kind of see a shift there are a lot more of type one that are getting ready to hit my desk within the next week or so. So that is kind of a history of what we have done and what we are doing now.

Cost of conducting peer reviews: the cost is dependent on the number of panel members and the hours for each of the panel members and the charge out rate. Because we do not recruit the panel members as part of our proposal process when we bid our proposals we use the average charge out rate. Panel members rates can range from $80-$250 an hour, and for these projects our understanding which has been confirmed is that the schedule is number one. We have to meet the schedule we have to produce a quality document so we don't want to spend our time trying to find a panel member who is under a certain dollar amount because that could impact the schedule so what we have put together as a general charge out rate and then we negotiate with the panel members if anyone exceeds that rate. The other thing is that there are site visits included in the IEPR that are required and that is a projects specific requirement where the project team decides they want the panel members to visit the site. The comment response process is new that actually happens after the final report is submitted and is documented and I'll talk about a little bit later. Then if we have a really large volume of review documents that could affect the number the panel receives. Battelle costs are 40 to 45% of the total IEPR costs and that is associated with managing the review, providing comments to the director, and making sure that they are responsible for delivering a quality product on time. So that is just a general idea of what the costs are like.

This next slide I'm not going to go into detail with but it gives you kind of the range of where the cost and benefits are of these peer reviews. Most of the ones listed here are prior to us doing the comment response process for every peer review, or we were just starting. A couple where we actually implemented the process was on Freeport Harbor. That is one where we had the comment response process and in L31. So I can't really tell you they all cost a certain amount because it all depends on the panel members, the volume of documents that are needed, and any time constraints that may be required.

I'm going to skip over these next few slides and go to our process slides.

There are four basic steps to the process: planning and this is right afterward to get the notes from Steve we talk about the schedule, conflict of interest for the panel members, put together a work plan of what we are going to do how we are going to do it and when we are going to do it, the review process which is pretty much the panel members reviewing the document, the comment response process, and then the close out. I'm going to talk about each one of those during the presentation. The codes on the bottom: orange are deliverables, green are the Corps activity, and light blue is the Battelle activity. The time line for this type one IEPR's is shown in this slide there are actually three activities that go on simultaneously: the charge, the panel recruitment, and the work plan are all the same time. There are three teams of people working on each one of those. When we get the notes to proceed there is a very fast-paced level of activity to try to get the charge questions developed even though the Corps is responsible for the charge questions we do the draft and then provide them to the Corps for review and approval. The panel member review also happens during that period and then we develop a work plan. Once the work plan is approved panel members are under contract and we shift down to this slower time line and that brings us through the end of the process.

The after action summary topics I'm going to go through and this is based on looking at the scope of work and also looking at the specific elements of this scope of work and providing some feedback on those. So I am going to go through the communication, the actual scope, the schedule, the panel, the conflict of interest which is very important because we want to make sure none of the comments are results of this process are jeopardized because of the proceeds of conflict, charge questions, the final panel comments report, and the current response process. If we have time we can go through the model review but those slides will be here if you would like to review them later and get back in touch with me for questions.

The communication we have had with the PCXPM and the PCX's, our client, they actually served as the main point of contact for Battelle and for the product delivery team. So I communicate directly with the PCXPM and only communicate with the PDT on an as needed basis if the PCXPM is not available or I am directed to ask PCXPM a question. Often times they are copied on emails but the person I work with on a day to day basis is the PCXPM. This next bullet actually had some sub bullets under it and then I realized the critical time to get in touch with the PCXPM could be at any time during a process. So we would like to know your schedule in terms of when you are not in your office. If I can't find you I will probably hunt you down and I have been know to send emails to my clients and say I am stalking you because I really need to get a response to a question. We don't want to be the reason a schedule is not met so we will aggressively try to find you and ask you to provide us with the backup earlier in the project and that is what is listed here on the third bullet. We like to have a backup or an alternate point of contact and sometimes the best person for that could be the PDTPM or the lead for the project team who could provide an answer to a question but not provide us with directions.

In terms of scope of work, data version number is important is to keep track of which version we have a draft schedule where you have noted critical dates and usually the most critical one is the civil works review board. One of the things I would like to request is that if you are scheduling civil works review board it would be good to have an idea of the schedule of when your review documents are going to be available and how long it is going to take to do the peer review. So that you know you are going to have a product well in advance of when the civil works review board is scheduled. We have been in a situation where we got on to a project and the civil works review board was already scheduled and we looked at the schedule and pretty much said there is no way we are going to finish this peer review in time to give you a product to use at the civil works review board, and that date had to be rescheduled. So we have a pretty tight schedule in terms of delivering those results, the IPR, and doing the comment response process, and we can squeeze it but there is only so much squeezing we can do to make a date that has already been established. That would be one request would like you to provide. Scope of work has general information on product to review documents and supporting documents indicates that a work plan will be provided, it talks about communication quality, how the panel members are selected, basically how the project will be run.

Task two listing the panel members that are going to be needed and usually we identify 1.5 to 2 times the actual panel members that will be selected so we identify a primary and a backup and the scope of work should have some detail regarding the qualifications of the panel member. It shouldn't just say hydraulic engineer, economist, and plant formulation expert. We need some detail in what you are looking for because that is directly used to recruit panel members. Then a range of years of experience is needed. The other thing that I will say is that PhD folks are sometimes harder to get so I just wanted to make you aware of the degree. The minimum amount of a master's degree is an easy way for us to recruit. The Corps as I mentioned before is responsible for the charge but we have to provide a draft and then provide it to you for review and comment.

I would say there are three meetings that actually happen, kick off meetings. The first is with the Corps and Battelle just shortly after the notes to talk about the schedule, any questions we may have, questions of the panel members, and just to make sure we all start off on the same page and to make sure the PCX and the PDP knows the process we go through to get to the final product. Battelle then has a conference call with the panel once we have them on board to explain to them what their expectations are what is on the schedule some nondisclosure information. Then we have a conference call with everyone: the Corps, Battelle, the panel members where the panel is briefed by the Corps on the project. That is a teleconference that usually involves some kind of power point presentation developed by the PDP to walk the panel through the project and what the project is. There have been a couple of insentience's where that kick off has happened in person where we are a sight visit in the early part of the project.

Another option that has been included in the scope of work is the Civil Works Review Board. And that participation can be by teleconference where Battelle will be on the phone with all the panel members or it can be in person where Battelle shows up with one or two panel members. I have actually participated in each one of these activities in being there in person and by teleconference. That might be an option you want to include in your scope so if you decide you want the panel to be involved you can exercise that option.

Task five is actually the peer review being conducted, and the panel has been given the charge questions and they do their review focusing on answering those charge questions. Battelle gets all their comments back in. We identify key issues and get on a conference call with the panel and they develop these final panel comments and that is what is usually included in the scope of work for that task. Then task six is the report, and usually the language for that is pretty standard and there are some parts of that that come directly from the current EC guidance 1105-2-410.

Task seven is the comment response process and previous scopes of work this war called "response to USACE clarifying questions". That was when you submitted the report and the only thing that would happen after the report was if there were any questions on it. Now we actually go through a process of before looking at the final panel comments and responding to those, DrChecks and the panel provides a back check response. This is the newest task in the scope of work, and it pretty much outlines what we would be looking for there and I feel the most important part to include in there is the Corps providing draft evaluator responses before we get on teleconferences with this comment response teleconference. That allows us to have a much more productive focused discussion if we have an idea of how the Corps may be responding to those comments.

Excuse me just a minute Karen but we are getting some background noise from one of the groups so you might want to mute if you have some background noise. Sorry Mrs. Karen.

That is ok.

Now as far as after action review goes, the schedule is always revised after notes proceed. When we get a schedule and scope it usually has a projected proceed date. Sometimes we are right on it; I think that has happened once, but a lot of the time it does proceed a little bit different than the actual so we will advise that based on actual notes to proceed and the revised schedule will be in the work plan for approval. The average schedule is about 14 to 18 weeks to go over the final IEPR report not including the comment response process. That could add 4-6 weeks depending on how the PDT can respond to the final panel comments, providing the evaluated comments, and then closing out those after the panel members provide their back checks

Other critical elements of the schedule it takes about 2 to 3 weeks to recruit panel members, two weeks to get them under sub contract, 3 to 4 weeks for them to conduct their review, and 10 work days to develop a their final comments, and 15 days to prepare the final IE PR report. We like to have peer review performance that extends 2-3 months after the project to close out just to accommodate slippage in schedule. We want to avoid contract modifications because they take up time and they cost money. It doesn't cost any more to expand the schedule out 2-3 months beyond when we think we're going to be done but we are all grateful to have that when the schedule slips a bit. If we have to modify the contract for the period of performance there is usually no-cost extension.

Things that impact the schedule, I have listed several here I am not going to go through all of them just a couple noteworthy ones. Natural disasters, we had a couple incidences last year during hurricane season one of the panel members roofs got blown off and another member got stranded because he had no gas so we were able to work with them and deliver as close original schedule as possible but I just kept the PDT informed on what was going on. Other things having to do with a delay, because we are having to deal with not getting specific information about conflicts of interest. We submitted a roster of candidates for panel members that we selected and we found out one of them worked for a company that had a contract associate with the project since we had to re-recruit. So these are some things to be aware of in terms of impacts to the schedule.

Review documents, this is just a list of what we have received to date in terms of review documents. Transferring review documents to Battelle; Battelle IM security folks have had problems with viruses so they would really like us to use a file transfer site that Battelle has established. In fact I have received from some of the PDTs that it's pretty nice site and easy to use. So that is what we would prefer as a method to send us documents. If we have to use the ftp site, I just have to get permission to access it; I have to get it unlocked from my Battelle IM staff. We are thinking about having an external SharePoint put those documents up on by that has not been set up yet.

In terms of submitting the review documents to us, the ideal schedule is for us to have a note and the review documents at the same time. That allows us to expedite the process of doing the peer review without any delays. If that is not possible we like to get all the documents at the same time as opposed to a couple here and then a couple weeks later getting a couple. When those documents are provided to us either by the FTP site or Battelle site, some kind of roadmap telling us whether it's a review document supporting document and also explaining what it is because sometimes the file name is not very self-explanatory in terms of what we are getting. On the Battelle file transfer site there is a little space for notes so when you sent the documents you can actually put a little notation there about what the document is and whether it is a review document or supporting document. When we get all of these documents we go through them very carefully and kind of do quality control and make sure we have all of them, and we will go back and forth with you just to make sure we have all the documents and we understand completely what each one is and the purpose of them.

In terms of the peer review panel, as I mentioned having those documents we have notes to precede is the most efficient recruiting process. For our recruiting process we actually read through the documents and try to identify some additional areas where we might need to list some COI screening criteria. Sometimes we have found an appendix with the name of a contractor that provided some support and we will use that as part of the screening criteria as we are recruiting. If we don't have those review documents we will ask you for some input on the COI and we will have to rely on the PDT and PCX provided us with input on COI so we don't recruit someone who later gets taken off the panel of candidates because they have a COI.

Panel size ranges from usually 3 to 7 panels. I would say 3 to 5 is the most common. There are a couple of disciplines where there aren't a lot of people in the country who have the corps experience and that's economists and plant formulators so we have had to use repeat panel members on those although we really try to have a hundred percent new panel, different panel for each project but there are times where we may have to use a repeat panel member and some times that's for projects where they have a very aggressive schedule we want to use folks we have already selected and for lack of a better term broken into the process. So they know what needs to be done and can jump on the job quickly. A panel with all PhDs can be a challenge in terms of recruiting them with the appropriate experience. We have done that for a recent project but that tends to take a little more time.

This next slide, I think I have pretty much gone over this. The panel members have been very flexible with their schedule. We have given them a heads up on what the schedule is and when we are recruiting them. We have told people thanks but no thanks when they have told us they won't be available for this day or this week if that fell right in the middle of a critical period of time.

Peer review performance, in general the peer reviewers we have had have been well-qualified and have worked well as a team. There have been some panel members that were a little bit more or a challenge than others, and we think twice in terms of using them again but they have all provided valuable input. The sources of the peer review input, we have developed a database of several months pry almost a year ago. It is pry about 600 experts right now because we just finished recruiting for one project were we went through almost a 100 candidates. We actually start there, we have 27 different disciplines we put notes in there on their performance which projects we have used them on we also get recommendations from business colleagues and previous peer reviewers that we have used. We only use advertising for the type two reviews and actually it didn't work out very well we ended up getting responses from people who were not as well-qualified as the ones we found ourselves.

Conflict of interest, this is very important to the screening process for panel members and we will develop a conflict of interest screening criteria and provide them to you the PCX PM who will share them with PDT to see if there's anything that we have missed or if there are any revisions that need to be made. Ideally we'd like to get your input before we start recruiting but we will accept it anywhere during the recruiting process and we will go back to people and rescreen them if we have to. They are required to sign a COI statement prior to their subcontract and that is a nonnegotiable item. We have had one panel member who we had already selected and had been approved and his company wouldn't allow him to sign it and we said thanks but no thanks we will find somebody else.

Charge questions, the charge questions are about engineering, economics, and environmental methods models and analysis and we actually make sure we don't violate any of the rules in terms of charge questions you can not ask if the alternative selected is the best one, if all the alternatives have been identified, if new ones should be identified, there are no questions on corps policy, no question on the corps laws and regulations. Those are the things that were not allowed to ask but we have developed, I don't know how many charge questions we have developed so far but pry close to a 1000 that we have put together for various projects.

The final panel comment development how things are developed is after the panel member has responded to the charge questions. We give them a table to respond to those charge questions. We Battelle actually take all those responses and it could be 400, 500 responses and we read through all of them to see what are the key issues and topics that seem to be repeatedly mentioned by one panel member or by several panel numbers. We actually develop a list of talking points to focus on the key issues, potential conflicts were one panel member said yeah and another said no, and positive feedback and we put this together. I usually go though the first draft of that and then give it to one the people on my team to review it to make sure we have not left anything out and then we give it to the panel members who are the ultimate judge of whether we caught everything. We usually do catch mostly everything.

Then we get on a conference call with panel for about three hours and we go through every one of those key issues and there could be upwards of about 50 of them that we go through. We decide which ones warrant developing into final panel comments. They could affect either the justification or approval of a project. They could affect the technical understanding of that project or there could be another reason why they should move forward and become a final panel comment. Those are assigned to the panel members to design these final panel comments in a four part format and those are presented in the final report.

Our next slide actually shows you what our final panel comments look like in the final report. It has a comment number and this one is four, comment statement, and then below that is the basis for the comment and the basis for this comment is the best professional judgment expertise of the panel members drawing on specific parts of the review document that brought them to make this comment. So that is what they are required to do and that was the first two parts. The third part is that they have to label it as a level of significance as high medium and low. Level of significance high refers to a comment that describes a fundamental problem with the project that could affect the recommendation and justification of the project. Medium affects the completeness or understanding of the report or project, and low affects the technical quality of the report but will not affect the recommendation of the project. So each one of their comments has to have a level of significance associated with it. Battelle watches the process for them developing a comment and gives them lots of feedback in terms of the basis and really justify the significant level is this really an appropriate comment to make, they also provide a recommend a resolution which is just kind of an added benefit. It is not something that the PDT has to respond to but it helps them understand what this comment is about and chat the panel member thinks is needed to resolve it.

In terms of the final report, the final report has an executive summery, an introduction which we pretty much pull form the scope of the work and the work plan, the message so it talks about a description of the process, how we selected the panel members, charge question summery so how we came up with questions and it also included a panel description with a short biography, a paragraph, of the panel members and a table that shows how well they adhere to the criteria in the scope of work for panel member expertise. The results are provided without attribution and the results talk about the panel's comments and not one individual's comments and include a table with all the panels' comments as I showed you in the previous slide and then there is an overall summery statement including positive feedback.

The appendix has each one of the full panel comments. In the results section it is pretty much the comment statement. Let me just go back and show you that. So in the executive summery and in the report we actually just have the comment statement right here. The alternative analysis ignores major non-structural alternatives. So we will have that for each one of the comments and we will sort them by level of significance so there will be a table with five high, two mediums, and ten lows with just that comment statement in the main document and the appendix will have the full four part comment statement and we will also include the charge question.

This slide is the flow chart on the final comment response process. The PDT sets up the project in Drchecks, and we provide them with a Battelle administrator person that is going to be entering information. We enter those ourselves instead of trying to train the panel members to enter them themselves. Under our type two peer reviews we actually train the panel members to enter the comments because they are a lot more involved and it is more efficient that way. We have actually developed a whole training program for the panel members under the type two reviews to enter their own comment. So Battelle answers the final panel comments and docks the checks and I will show you what those look like. The PDT provides draft evaluator responses to Battelle by email. That is the easiest way to do it and that actually happens before the teleconference. Then I provide those draft evaluated responses to the panel for them to look at and think about how they might respond so by the time we get on the conference call, number five, the panel has a good idea of how the corps has responded and how they will respond. For example on a recent peer review we had 27 final panel comments and before we got on the conference call we knew there were about eight that we had a non-concurrence on. Either a non-concurrence from the corps or a non-concurrence from the panel or both had a non-concurrence. When we got off the conference call we only had three because we were able to focus on those eight and the rest of them, the other 19 we just concur and we could sail right by them. If we didn't have that information we would have been talking about each of those 27 and pry would have been on the call for about six hours. So it really helps us focus the conference call.

After the conference call the PDT enters the evaluator responses in DrChecks. Previously, in the draft, they just gave them to us in an email. So after the call it is highly likely that they will be revising some of their responses and put those revised responses into DrChecks. Battelle will download those responses for the panel members and provide them to the panel by email. The panel will look at those, look at their notes from the conference call, and if those responses the evaluator responses are in line with what we talked about during the conference call then they will respond accordingly with a concur. If they are not I will immediately get in touch with the PCX PM and copy the PDT people and let them know that there are one or two responses where panel members were expecting something and did not see that and do you want to talk about it and see if we can resolve it. That has happened on this last one we had three that were non-concur but we actually got it down to two. It took a little bit of discussion but we finally resolved it. So we are pretty diligent with trying to get concurrence on as many final panel comments as possible because we realize that the PCX needs to make a determination based on this IEPR review and the more concurrences we have the easier it will be to make that determination on how the process went and what came out of that process. Then we enter the Backchecks into DrChecks from the panel and then we close it out and provide PDT with a .pdf print out to the PCX indicating that we have finished out the process.

In terms of current response process, just some details, our scope includes one round and what I mean by that is that we have one teleconference where we talk about the comments. Any subsequent conference calls will just be on one comment like previously we had a discussion on comment number four on one of my project and we had a couple of discussions on that so it was only the PDT the person that was linked to that discipline for that comment and the panel member who wrote that comment. So it was just four of us on the phone as opposed to everyone being on the phone for a lengthy period of time, and we were able to work that one out with teleconferences and emails.

Our two point of contacts that are skilled in using DrChecks so we don't have any hold ups on access if someone is on vacation and we requested that the actives get provided at the beginning of the project because things just start moving and before you know it we are there and we are trying to get on DrChecks to post and we have to wait for it to get opened up. In terms of posts I'm going to show you and example of what one looks like. Because DrChecks has some limitations we have had to figure out how to post these comments within the restraints of DrChecks. It is character limited as I mentioned and we usually attach the four part comment statement. We require that a concurrence or non-concurrence be included in every response so we know right away if it is an agreement or a non-agreement and the panel members do the same thing too. They put concur or a non-concur with their BackCheck response. We do assign a discipline with every comment.

This next slide, it actually shows you what the comment looks like in DrChecks and there is a comment ID number that is automatically assigned by DrChecks, the discipline is listed, we don't put in the input section or figure the final panel comment numbers listed. This one is comment one and line number is not applicable. In the green you see that it says a high level of significance for this comment, comment number one, this statement says there are uncertainties in the model and they are unclear how these are carried through in the design elements and costing. That is the final panel comment statement. The attachment here in blue is a full four part comment that is attached and here one dash over is an evaluation by the PDT and you can see it starts off as concurred and then there is a statement here. So this is what is initially put in by the Corps project delivery team.

This next slide, underneath the evaluation concurred you will see 1-1 where it says BackCheck recommendations close comment and the next line says concur. So this is where the panel members actually concurred and had a little comment there and then we closed out the comment and that is indicated in green. All comments are closed out after the BackCheck response there is no continued back and fourth. If the BackCheck comes back and the panel says non-concur there is not another round or DrChecks with the evaluation. It is closed out at that point and documented.

The next slides are model reviews. I'm not going to go through those because I don't have enough time, but they are here and if you have any questions please feel free to contact me. I'm going to skip to the end here. Peer reviewer survey, at the end of each IEPR we send out a survey to the panel members because we want feedback from them about the process and their experience because we always want to have continuous improvement on our process and making sure we are recruiting the best people and giving them enough time to do the review and sometimes they don't get as much time as they would like but they are aware of that when they sign up for the job, that we are on a very strict schedule.

So this is what the survey looks like the question we ask, about 11 questions. These next couple slides give you some idea about they type of feedback received. Most of the feedback is very positive about the process, about the communication. There are several who have said they would like to have a face to face meeting when we have that final panel teleconference before we go though all the final panel comments. They just think that would be more effective. In terms of schedule, it may not be practical but that is something they have said they think would be beneficial. The only comment we have received that was probably more negative had to do with the civil works review board, and this is something that we are still trying to work out the best way to do and involve the panel members. We've only been involved in two and each one of them had their challenges. So that is something we will be working on to improve their experience on that part of the peer review.

The process we have had we have been fine toning it sense we started this in 2005 and each one I would say we find some new way to be more efficient in our process and improve or make things a little easier. Again more information here about having the panel be more involved in a face to face meeting. The panel members do understand and we brief them in the beginning that their role is not to serve as a jury. They are part of the team in terms of helping to improve the project. So they take that role on very seriously and all the panel members I can say do perform that way in terms of being part of the team and helping to improve the project and their comments come across as that.

Each panel member is part of the subcontract have to agree with a nondisclosure agreement. They can not talk about this project to anyone either within or outside their company. If they have to, like to a manager, that is on a need to know basis. This is something we have had panel members say well I know the person upstairs was involved in putting this document together can I talk to them? Well no you can't. So there are some very strict rules on that and there is one panel member who violated that rule and we will not be using that person ever again on any peer reviews. For their resumes we provide them with some draft language on how they can indicate their participation in a panel then we tell them if there are any media inquiries they are to contact us immediately, and that has actually happened one or two times.

That is all I have. One thing I wanted to mention to you is right now Battelle is being accessed for peer reviews through the army research office scientific services contract and I don't have time to go into all the steps for that but if someone has a peer review that needs to get done soon they should contact me and I can provide you with those steps in going though the ARO and guide you through that process to make it go as quickly as possible to get projects underway, but that is the vehicle we are using right now and that is all I have. Are there any questions?

Do any of the participants have questions for Karen? You can ask verbally or use the chat feature whatever you prefer.

Hi, this is Cindy Barker from the Honolulu District. I had a question about on the panel review team for operations and regulation it said that the public could nominate or make recommendations for the review team. How exactly does that get incorporated into Battelle's process?

We have actually never received recommendations from the public. Early on we did receive recommendations from the Corps but there were a couple of projects where the PDTX asked me if they could make recommendations and I said that it was in the guidance that recommendations could be made but when they asked the legal department, the legal department said no that they could not make recommendations. So we have yet to have a public entity make a recommendation and incorporate that but if there is one made we will put them into the system and make sure there is no conflict of interest. We will put them though the same review of COI and technical qualifications as we would with any panel member we identified.

Great thanks! I had one other question and I don't know if I miss this, but on the peer reviews that have happened is there a lessons learned that we can see the comments that have come out of those peer reviews so that we can make sure we are addressing them in the level of detail needed in our projects before we are sending them forward.

That is an excellent idea. Each of the PCXs has the report. Is Jodi on the phone? Jodi Staebell?

Yes I am.

Jodi how would you address it? Would people go to the PCXs and ask them for the reports or what would you suggest?

I guess that is something I can bring up to the PCXs and also Bruce Carlson as to how we could post those that we already have.

Well even if it is just hitting the high ones and sterilizing everything that needs to be sterilized I think that might be a very useful understanding for us to see what types of questions come out of it so we can see and be better prepared.

Yeah I will email Bruce and try and track that down. Stewart McClain, can I get you to help? I'll follow up.

I have a question you commented that it takes 4-6 weeks for comment and response. Is part of the reason it only takes that long is because there is not a total back and fourth and in the end you just have a non-concurrence and just document that?

Yes, and it is totally dependent on how much time the PDT needs to respond to the comments. I have had them respond in a week; I have had it take three weeks, but you are right we don't have a back and fourth until comment or we have kind of beat them to the ground and have gotten to the point where we can't go any further and we have a non-concur here. We just get to the point where we try maybe one more time after the teleconference and then we decide to agree to disagree.

There was one item in you presentation where it said panel comments are referred to as individual not verbatim. What does that mean.

I should probably take that out. That is kind of sensitized from last February when I was giving a presentation to headquarters and somewhere I think in the guidance somewhere where it talked about verbatim comments and I just wanted to clarify that the verbatim comments are the panel comments and that is what we are providing to you. Everything else prior to that is kind of working comments and comment discussion that is consolidated and reviewed to give the final panel comments which are actually the official comments.

This is Daniel Small in SAD. Are you tracking your independent technical reviews vs. the success of different practical and physical civil works review board processes.
Can you say that again.

Yes. Once you are doing an independent review do you track that project through the civil work review board in terms of the success and failures?

Um no. Actually there have only been two that I have been involved in, in terms of civil works review board. One was approved to release the documents even though they understood there were some things that needed to be done. The other one the PDT was asked to go back and revise the documents. The other ones that we have done I'm not aware of them getting to the civil works review board yet and if they have I haven't heard any results of that.

Will you be doing anything like that in the future?

I think we may get more involved in the civil works review board in the future and that's why we are beginning to see the option of the civil works review board in the tasks, but I guess it depends on whether they think that we need it. If we have all comments concurred or there is only one non-concurred it may be possible that they don't need the panel involved. We will be called upon as needed so I don't have any say in that.

Ok thank you.

Karen, this is Mike Jordan SWD. Have yall been involved with any safety modification projects since we initiated the external peer review process?

We are actually doing one now.

Ok that is what I was getting at. That's what I was getting at so you are working on one ?
Yeah we actually are doing two. We have one tasked with two.

Ok that is good to hear I was wondering if we had gotten you involved in that. How about levee projects?

Levee projects, there is one that we are doing for common features for San Francisco. Other levee projects, we are involved in other type two projects that are going on in New Orleans.

Ok good. You can reach out and touch whatever technical expertise you need then. I mean you can have them on staff or contract so you can go out and make contact with those recourses that are needed in a specialty expertise.

We don't use any staff or Battelle staff as panel members. We contract with individuals who are consultants or through their company or through a university if we need to. Although we try to get people to do individuals rather than through their university because it just becomes cumbersome in terms of contracting but yeah we can reach out to engineers, economists, whoever is needed. We have contacts across the country and some international ones. The database is pry at 700 or more in terms of people we have contacted.

Very good. Will you be sending out compact information, kind of a short version of this or your whole presentation to us, or will you post this somewhere were we can have that as resource?

I actually have a one page kind of front back thing that is kink of a really quick guide that I developed that is a pdf. If you could send me an email, I think my contact information should be here, and I will send you that which is a really quick guide. Then I can answer any additional questions you have. I didn't put any of the type two on this presentation because I am just focusing on type one but I can answer any additional questions you have about type two also. The safety assurance reviews.

Ok is your email here or how about just sending it to all of us? I think it is on the last page.
Discussion and Questions is all I see.
There we go. Here is my contact information.

Any additional questions for Karen? Or perhaps on some of the sections she had to move through quickly in the interest of time. Was there a question there that you wanted to ask?

If people have questions on model review we have been working with Jodi mostly, well entirely. The slides I presented on model review I am sure are things that she is aware of so if you had any specific question there she is the person we have been working with mostly with the model reviews.

Any additional question?

I had a question, My name is Ted Warner from the Sacramento District. I was wondering how the panels are selected for the safety assurance reviews. Is it the same kind of thing?

Um yes we look at the scope of work. We really need you to kind of give us the specifics on what disciplines are needed and type of expertise if it is specific to a region of a country or a specific facility or structure. And we use the same process in terms of recruiting people and bringing them on board. Most of safety assurance reviews are all engineers with different disciplines electrical, mechanical, structural, hydraulic, and we need to make sure that each ones has the specific criteria for that project. So they are brought on the same way. The process of engaging them in the review is a little bit different it is a little bit more hands on with them. As I mentioned they go into DrChecks and enter their comments themselves. We actually use a critical items list for them to provide their thoughts on what are the critical items to do with that structure. If there is a failure is this a low medium or high level of significance. So there are some differences in that review in terms of how we go about doing it compared to the type one review.

Ok thank you.

Any additional questions for Karen?

This is Jodi Staebell and I would like to just put in an additional plug that if you have an IEPI that you are going to need an FY10 that you coordinate that with the appropriate player in the center of expertise so we can get it on for FY10.

Well let's thank Karen for taking time out of her schedule to be with us today. It looks like we had a good session and good participation from across the country. As we mentioned earlier we will be capturing the archived program and saving the documents on the environment gateway site. You can also see the schedule of upcoming program including our next webinar on 1 Sep incorporating risk and uncertainty and an EVA by Dr. Burton Suedel of ERDC. With that Mrs. Karen thank you again.