

## Preface

This is a history of an experiment which succeeded, not however without frustrations and breakdowns along the way. It tells of the development of the United States Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Advisory Board, established in 1970 to advise the Chief of Engineers on matters relating to environmental policy. On the surface the relationship impressed many as untenable, matching an organization traditionally construction-minded with influential environmentalists devoted to protecting nature's beauty and resources for future generations. But the three Chiefs of Engineers who managed the Corps during the period covered in this study surprised the skeptics. Lieutenant Generals Frederick J. Clarke, William C. Gribble, Jr., and John W. Morris worked to replace confrontation with cooperation, despite occasional self-doubts and a staff not always sure how to handle this Board of environmentalists. The result has been a relationship of mutual benefit and respect.

Writing contemporary history, particularly of events to which the historian was sometimes an actual observer, if not participant, puts additional burdens on the writer. His immediacy to the events and to the people involved, which can be enormously advantageous, must be balanced with careful scrutiny of the documents, probing of people's positions and motivations through oral interviews, and dedication to comprehensiveness. Consequently, accessibility to all the necessary files as well as to the participants, present and past, is essential. Fortunately, this situation was present during the preparation of this history. One reason for the cornucopia of information was the passage of the 1972 Federal Advisory Committee Act, which requires federal agencies with advisory committees to keep all paperwork dealing with the committees. Even before implementation of this act, however, the Corps had developed a comprehensive filing system which included thick binders containing correspondence, minutes, and briefing papers for each meeting. As a result the "active" official files proved extraordinarily fertile research grounds.

Yet whatever virtues this history possesses result more from the enthusiastic participation of past and present Corps officials and Board members than from the abundant written data. Only extensive interviews—indicated in the chapter notes—could provide the insights and background information so vital to this study. Likewise the written comments made by many individuals on earlier drafts considerably improved the final product. Certainly the history could not have been written at all without the support of Lieutenant Colonel George F. Boone, USA (Retired), the Assistant Director of Civil Works for Environmental Programs from 1978 to 1981, who made all

the Environmental Advisory Board papers available to this writer and also gave unfailingly of his time to answer numerous questions. The present Chairman of the Environmental Advisory Board, Dr. Gerald J. McLindon, gave constant encouragement, at the same time providing invaluable criticism and information.

The Director of Civil Works, Major General Elvin R. Heiberg III, agreed from the very beginning that the history must be objective and thorough and helped insure this aim through his oral and written comments and generally supportive position. Drs. John T. Greenwood, Frank N. Schubert, Paul K. Walker, Leland R. Johnson, and Martin K. Gordon of the Historical Division, Office of the Chief of Engineers, contributed numerous suggestions which improved the style and content. Christine Hardyman carefully edited the manuscript, and Margaret Wales of the Historical Division generously assisted in preparing the manuscript for publication. A special word of appreciation is owed Dr. Schubert, whose editorial skills and active interest made the writing both more enjoyable and more succinct.