

Working within the Matrix at USGS

ELT Champion: Geoff Plumlee, Acting Associate Director, Energy and Minerals, and Environmental Health (EMEH)

Sponsors: Paul Young, Deputy Associate Director, EMEH
Dan Hayba, Center Director, Eastern Mineral and Environmental Resources

Problem Statement:

- *How can you manage change in a program that spans multiple science centers operating under different regional directors?*

Issue: The USGS has a matrix management system in which regions, science centers, and mission areas co-exist and overlap but often have different goals, drivers, and reward systems. How does a program leader work this system to create and manage change without being thwarted by a matrix where nobody has complete control? This scenario will be based upon the experience of the Mineral Resources Program, and is generally applicable to any program or unit within the USGS management matrix.

Background: The Mineral Resources Program experienced a decade of budget and leadership difficulty culminating in two National Research Council reviews and a change of senior leadership. As Congressionally allocated resources declined to less than existing payroll, drastic action was required including a nationwide but Program-specific VSIP/VERA retirement program. We also refocused priorities and reallocated resources within the program and across regions and science centers. Within several years the Program was re-centered on core priorities and the budget stabilized with a smaller workforce. The next challenge is to transition from downsizing to rebuilding.

Leadership Challenge: How can a program work strategically with the multiple science centers and regions to identify new workforce priorities, knowing that programs do not hire people, science centers do, with concurrence from their regional directors? This effort requires both an operational plan and a psychological makeover as people move from a downsizing to a moving-forward mentality.

Resources:

- Future Challenges for the U.S. Geological Survey's Mineral Resources Program, National Research Council