



NEW VOICES. Meanwhile, in the Tulsa District — at the farthest reaches of Corps staffing, the district level, at the “end of the whip” of policy changes — the new voices were being heard. In the fall of 1967, the Tulsa District established a new Environmental Resources Section in the Planning Branch.³

Col. Rebh described the new emphasis on what he called environmental engineering, on such “intangible values” as scenic beauty, architectural design, wilderness preservation, and historical and archaeological values — the “cultivation of beauty and the creation of a total, healthy environment.”

Robert M. Black was the first chief of the new section. Subsequent chiefs included Jerry L. Greer, Buell Atkins, and Paul Mace.

Several rounds of federal legislation strengthened the environmental thrust and gave the Corps expanded environmental responsibilities:

- In 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act required environmental impact assessments or statements examining impacts and options before major federal actions were taken.
- In 1972, the Water Pollution Control Act Amendments to the 1969 law made the Corps responsible for issuing “404” permits to regulate dredging and filling in U.S. waters. The 1972 amendments also established a broad new Corps program called urban studies, through which the Tulsa District conducted the Tulsa Urban Study in the 1970s.
- In 1974, Public Law 93-251 authorized the Corps for the first time to study what are called nonstructural flood control projects (such as regulations or purchase of floodplain lands rather than building flood control dams). In the same year, Congress also enacted the Archaeological Act, allowing up to one percent of project costs to go toward archaeological work.

As the District concludes its first 50 years, its Environmental Resources Branch contains nine professionals. Their academic specialties range from anthropology to zoology. Two have Ph.D.s and five have master’s degrees. Their work ranges from environmental studies on the ecology and biology of plants and animals to technical analyses of surface water quality. They prepare environmental impact statements and maintain close coordination with agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Archaeology and recreation planning are also among their responsibilities.

Where eagles dare and pelicans pause . . . the Tulsa District wildlife management programs were boosted during its second quarter-century of life.

Below: Paul Mace.

I learned that there is a beyond to every place — and the bird moving through the air by successive dartings taught me.

— Emerson

