PEPC Update Log

The PEPC Team has been hard at work making improvements to the PEPC System. Most of these changes are “under the hood” and not readily visible to users. However, some are visible, and we will update this document to summarize updates relevant to users.

Please provide any questions or suggestions to the PEPC Help Desk: pepc_helpdesk@nps.gov

December 2022

Infrastructure

- New Server: PEPC and ParkPlanning went from two web servers (internal and external) down to a single new web server in the DMZ
- File Server: PEPC and ParkPlanning now use a shared file server for managing user uploaded files
- Deployment: the PEPC Team is now using more highly automated processes for deployment of updates

Security

- all public comment fields now scrubbed appropriately

Bug Fixes/Cleanup

- "Publish to Public" checkbox should now appear in step 6 for Single Project Edit/Publish role
- Application error no longer displays when a user with Single Project Edit/Publish role tries to edit links for a published project
- Demographics report no longer throws an error when selecting Non-Form Letter

September 2022 (updates to ParkPlanning)

Security

- updated handling of URL variables
- addressed Windows short filename issue

Bug Fixes/Cleanup

- multiple clicks of submit button on comment form now only result in one saved comment
- mailing address now shows correctly on comment print form
- broken links fixed
- removed unused "How Did You Hear?" and "How Would You Like to Hear" components

August 2022 (updates to PEPC)

User Authentication and Authorization

- Many improvements made to authentication (verification of a user's identity) and authorization (what a user is allowed to do)
- Improved synchronization with DOI Active Directory (AD) to update user contact information and deactivate PEPC accounts for users who are disabled or missing from AD

Cleanup

- Removed remaining traces of Member selection for public comments and Public Requests
- Removed old Admin menu item for List Park Admin

May 2022 (updates to PEPC)

Step 4 - NEPA

- Re-allowed use of Extraordinary Circumstance F - Cumulative effects

March 2022 (updates to PEPC)

PEPC Announcements Updated

- Refreshed to allow for dynamic content to be added by the PEPC support team

Other

- CE Justification character limit increased
- Corrected NEPA 3.2 Citation warning message

- Fixed bug renaming NHPA supporting documentation file
- Removed List Park Admin tool on Site Maintenance menu

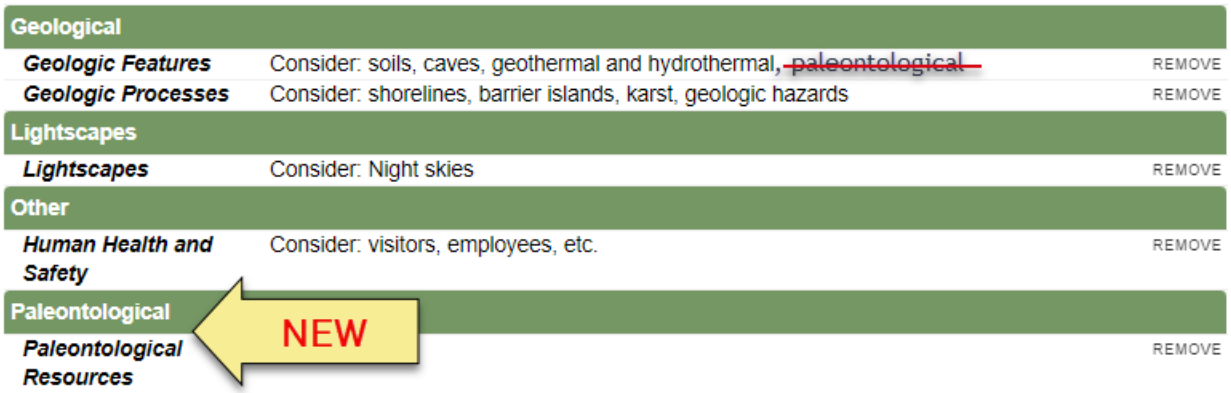
February 25, 2022 (patch update to ParkPlanning)

- Addressed error handling issues

February 2022 (updates to PEPC)

New ESF Resource “Paleontological Resources”

- Added new Paleontological ESF Resource category with “Paleontological Resources” ESF Resource
- Park Lookups:
    - 283 parks had the new Paleontological resource added to the park lookup based on a list provided by Senior Paleontologist/Paleontology Program Coordinator Vince Santucci
    - Other parks may add the Paleontological resource using the admin tool for managing the ESF Resource Lookup Table as described in the [PEPC QUICK START GUIDE for Park & Region Administrators]
- ESF:
    - Paleontological resource is available on project ESF if it has been added to the ESF Resource Lookup Table
    - * Old Geologic Features is no longer on the ESF Resource Lookup Table and was replaced by a NEW Geologic Features that does not include paleontology.
    - * If the old Geologic Features was used on a project, it will still appear on that project, but it is replaced with the NEW Geologic Features for new projects. Note that the new Geologic Features will also appear on existing projects if it is on the Park ESF Resource Lookup Table.



File Management

- Fixed bugs with file upload and renaming
    - When uploading multiple files, file names are preserved
    - Spaces in file names are preserved on upload
    - Files can be renamed and saved properly

Security

- Updated JqueryUI libraries

Admin Tools

- Disabled use of Delete Project tool until it can be fixed

Other

- Updated Project Home file section labels to reflect mix of files/links
- Updated Meeting Notice Time Zone to only allow ~35 characters

January 2022 (updates to ParkPlanning)

User Interface Updates

Comment Form

- Removed “Member” choice when entering Organization associated with comment
- Mailing Addresses now display properly on Comment Print Form

Project Pages

- Time Zone now correctly displays for Meeting Notices
- Revisited criteria to assure that all projects for park display on either Current Projects page or Archived Projects page

Project/Document Data Grids

- Added Document Title to Search page and hyperlinked to corresponding Document page
- Park column on Search page now links to Park page
- Review End columns now correctly sort chronologically
- Project Title column now correctly does case-insensitive sort

- State search now searches for projects where an associated primary or secondary park is in the state or the project location occurs in the state
- Region search now searches for projects where either primary or secondary park occurs in the region

General

- Consolidated error handling and provided more friendly/useful messages
- Park Name search box now leaves spaces in between search terms

Security

- Updated database user accounts to scale down to least privilege required to run application
- Consolidated database actions into stored procedures
- Sanitized user-entered values and other outputs to screen
- Removed version disclosure information from header responses
- Improved field validation on comment form
- Remedied possible phishing by navigating browser tabs
- Updated to newer JQuery

Cleanup

- Removed deprecated code, files, and database objects

October 2021

Authentication/Log In

- Fixed bug where Reset Password page was failing
- Updates to automatic user profile synchronization with DOI Active Directory (AD)

Projects

- Fixed bug with filename display on Project homepage

Step 6

- Fixed bug where publish checkmark would uncheck when editing Meeting Notice

Step 7

- Fixed bug with display of “Official Representative” for public correspondence
- Fixed bug where error would occur when adding correspondences when Date Sent entered
- Removed Public Requests

Reports

Funding Status Report

- Added multi-select for park in Report Criteria
- Standardized column headings across output types (standard, HTML, Excel)
- Fixed bug with data pull date from PMIS

Other Updates

- Fixed links to documents in eTIC to use updated URL for eTIC2
- Fixed file handling issues
- Database cleanup

September 2021

Required Training

Training Status

- Training Status now includes “Expired” for training that was completed in the past and is no longer valid, along with existing Training Status values of “Incomplete” (training has not been completed in the past), “Due Soon” (due date is in the next 30 days), and “Complete”
- Role-Based Privacy Training (RBPT) completions for DOI/NPS users now based on completion of RBPT Certification in DOI Talent
- IMT completions for DOI/NPS users now based on completion of Cybersecurity (FISSA), Privacy, Records Management, Section 508 Compliance, Controlled Unclassified Information Reference Guides and the DOI Rules of Behavior (IMT) Certification in DOI Talent

Training Import

- Import Training PEPC support tool updated to import RBPT and IMT certification completion records from DOI Talent

User Profile

- Required Training section now shows Due Date and Source, which can include “DOI Talent”, “Visual”, and “File”
- Superusers can now view All Completed Training and delete “Visual” or “File” records
- Removed Training Year and Notes
- Added Due Date (adds one year to Completion Date if not provided)
- Updated notifications at top when emails sent

Login Screen/Training Due Soon popup

- Minor updates to information provided about missing Required Training

Emails

- No longer email PEPC Helpdesk when new users created
- Training Required email no longer sent to new users if we have training completion records for all Required Training

Other Updates

- Color coded PEPC environments (Production, Stage, Test, Training)
- Fixed Inactive User Report (interactive)
- Fixed Mitigation List lookup

July 2021

File Management

- Unified treatment of file name and file title in PEPC database
- Update to ensure all files uploaded to a project are recorded in system file table
- Fixed bug where user uploaded files were not being deleted from disk when removed through user interface
- Fixed bug where files were not properly moved/deleted from “holding” folder (folder 0) when creating new projects

Site Administration

- Fixed bug where Active Directory (AD) sync was not checking case sensitivity when deciding whether to update first and last name
- Fixed path error for park banner images
- Update to ensure PEPC helpdesk (pepc_helpdesk@nps.gov) is receiving all error emails
- Updated ColdFusion settings to maintain connections

Error Handling

- Rolled back changes to deal with previous Oracle error
- Added graceful error handling for bad/missing URL parameters
- Updated global error handling for consistency

Help/documentation

- Updated new user emails links to Required Training docs on Data Store
- Updated Required Training instruction links on user profile page

Miscellaneous

- Fixed bug where editing correspondence would cause time part of Receipt Date/Time to disappear
- Updated Step 4: NEPA CE Citation G.1. popup to link to correct Fuels and Rehab CE Memo Template
- Fixed broken links for 508 guidance and SiteImprove tool on Step 7 Public Document page

May 2021 – all about Park Planning

Comment Form

- Simplified international comment submission
- Document that is being commented on is linked at top of page
- Added Privacy Act Statement
- Added CAPTCHA if <href> tag added to comment

508 Compliance

- Changed banner image from slideshow to static image
- Addressed contrast errors on homepage
- Updated headings for ease of navigation using assistive technologies
- Added missing form labels
- Updated alt text for images
- Added page regions

Other

- Removed “Park News” link from left nav. Menu
- Added intercepts for non-government URLs added in project pages

- Updated Park Planning footer
- Error emails for Park Planning will go to PEPC Helpdesk
- Policy/Guidance page
    - Now titled Policy/Links throughout
    - Removed outdated Glossary link and other outdated links
- Removed RSS feed and link from footer
- Removed Google Maps link on Meetings page
- Updated Javascript libraries

March 2021

File Management

- Inventory file upload locations/methods in use in PEPC
- Generate report of files on disk, files listed in database, and where files are in one and not the other
- Fix to Cooperating Agencies file upload
- Add digital “thumbprint” to files

Updates due to NEPA updates

- Disallowed use of “Cumulative impacts” Extraordinary Circumstance (Question F)
    - Only editable if Yes/No value or Notes filled in
    - “[Repealed per DOI]” prepended to question
    - Does not appear on CE print forms
- Expanded character limits
    - ESF Issues
    - ESF Impacts
    - NEPA Extraordinary Circumstance notes

Miscellaneous system bug fixes/enhancements

- Clarified language for expired passwords
- Updated PEPC 411 Newsletter Archives
- Improvements to facilitate smoother PEPC updates in future
- Faster PEPC homepage loading
- Privacy Act Statement added to bottom of PEPC login page
- Bug fixes
    - Fixed issue where blank users were being created
    - Error creating PEPC user if they were previously and IDT member

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November 2020

PMIS Integration

- Updates in PEPC include:
  - Added a homepage widget (for users with park or region roles who are on the IDT for a project) called “My Formulated Projects” that displays your open projects with formulated dollars in PMIS
  - Updated Funding Status Report to display more funding lifecycle information (proposed, formulated, funded) from PMIS
  - Flagging of projects that are deleted in PMIS
  - More efficient synchronization with PMIS (currently daily) and much faster loading of pages that display PMIS information

- Additionally, the PMIS team made the following updates in PMIS:
  - Updated search for PEPC projects
  - Updated display of related PEPC information on the Project Detail sheet once a PEPC project has been tied to a PMIS project
  - Added a new “Peek into PEPC” display for PEPC Projects to show more details, including Mitigations and Stipulation
  - Created a tool to highlight projects that are linked in PEPC, but not in PMIS

Miscellaneous system bug fixes/enhancements

- Other updates include:
  - Task auto-emails got a little nicer - now when you get an email about a task that is due today you won’t be told that the due date has passed
  - Automated inactivation of users who are absent from DOI Active Directory for 30 days
  - Other little behind the scenes fixes to make your PEPC experience better

June 2020

Active Directory (AD) Synchronization

- Significant changes were made to the User Profile and Create User tools. Both now rely on Active Directory (AD) for User Profile information. See Summer 2020 PEPC System

Update & New Create User Demo training video for this change. Review these changes here.

  - Account creation for DOI AD users now consists of entering an email address – first name, last name, username will be pulled automatically from AD.
  - For existing DOI AD users, the properties listed above will sync automatically with AD.
  - To update these properties in PEPC, make updates to your AD account through MyAccount.nps.gov

- PEPC users who are not on the NPS network/VPN may now log in with either username and password OR email address and password

Role-based Privacy Training (RBPT) Validation

- The annual Role Based Privacy training requirement will now be automatically validated when the user completes the required training in DOI Talent. See FY20 PEPC Required Training Update video for this change.
  - DOI/NPS users will no longer have to upload certificates to PEPC as proof of training. See PEPC Training Requirements for DOI/NPS PEPC Users – FY20.
  - Non-DOI/NPS users (e.g., contractors, state officials, university staff) will still need to complete the required training as directed and are now required to submit their proof of training to the PEPC Helpdesk. See PEPC Training Requirements for Non-DOI/NPS PEPC Users - FY20.

Miscellaneous system bug fixes/enhancements

The PEPC Team made small changes to various aspects of PEPC, including:

- Added the Superintendent name to the optional signature block on the Environmental Screening Tool (ESF).
- Funding Status Report: Enhanced the results available and added a disclaimer on the provisional nature of the PMIS data in the report.
- PEPC Admin responsibilities webinar recording

April 2020

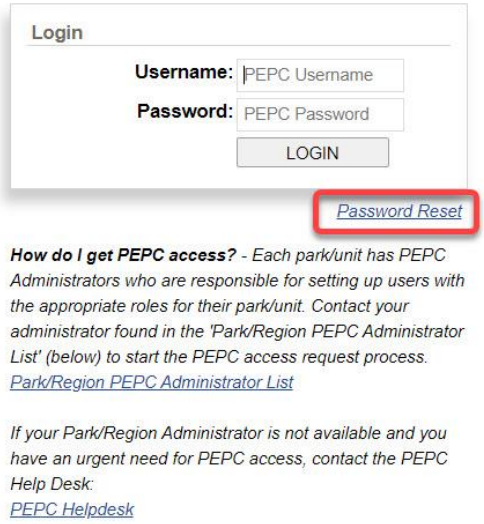
Inactive User Management, Default NEPA Type, and Logging in off VPN/NPS Network

- A new “Inactive User” management tool is available under the Reports tab. The report compares the selected Park/Region user list against Active Directory (AD), the central user validation database for DOI. Users who are no longer active in AD or whose email addresses are not recognized in AD are flagged in this interactive report. Admins can

then remove the appropriate PEPC access for multiple users via this page or download the report to adjust user profiles individually. The “remove access” button is the same button found on individual user profile pages. See the Inactive User Report (Interactive) help document.

- The new default “NEPA Type” selection is “TBD”, standing for To Be Determined. TBD is thus the same as not selecting a NEPA Type and if a project has prematurely selected a NEPA Type, users can now select TBD instead.

- While on VPN or the NPS Network, a user’s Active Directory log-in will carry them into PEPC. The https://pepc.nps.gov/ website allows users to access PEPC outside of the VPN or NPS Network using a unique password. This external access webpage was refreshed for clarity. Users can also automatically request a password reset on this page:



Miscellaneous system bug fixes/enhancements

The PEPC Team made small changes to various aspects of PEPC, including:

- Resolved a bug: past Project Leader selections were non-editable/retained on IDT list.
- Resolved a bug: editable Administrative Record/Decision File fields on Basic Info page.
- Several deep “under the hood” PEPC bugs associated with rare use cases.

January 2020

Miscellaneous system bug fixes/enhancements

The PEPC Team made small changes to various aspects of PEPC, including:

- Fixed a bug that prevented changes to the PEPC Homepage from being saved (click on Homepage Settings on the upper right).

- Documents limited to “IDT Only” are now invisible to non-IDT users.
- Add/Save buttons on various PEPC sub-pages are now disabled once clicked until the page fully reloads.
- Many deep “under the hood” changes to long-standing PEPC bugs associated with rare use cases.

November 2019

Miscellaneous system bug fixes/enhancements

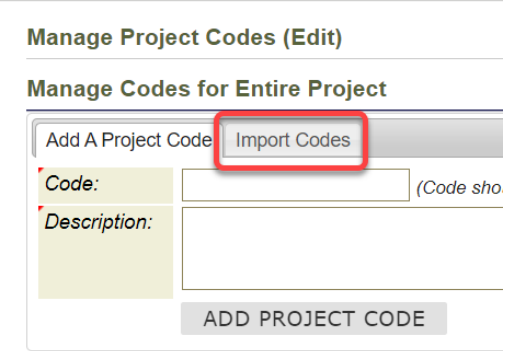
The PEPC Team made small changes to various aspects of PEPC, including:

- New features added:
    - “Go To Project” widget on navigation bar (same feature as on Homepage)
    - Character counters for ESF Issue and Potential Impact text input fields
- Increased character limits to Project Description, General Notes and Public Project Description (main ParkPlanning project page) text input fields (from 4k characters to 16k characters)
- Excel spreadsheet export and import row limit increased to one million rows
- PEPC Tools tab re-organized and links updated
- Data Integrity Changes
    - The “Save” button is now disabled until a page fully loads
    - The “Create” button can only be clicked once when creating a project from another PEPC ID to prevent accidental creation of a duplicate project
        - Thanks in advance for your patience with these new features, especially if you are in an area with a slow network connection!
- Report and Forms Updates:
    - AdHoc Report: PEPC Project ID in results list is now a hotlink to that Project
    - AOE Form: Synced language to PEPC System and report now lists resources as “present” instead of “affected”
    - The Superintendent’s middle initial was added to the signature line for the Letter of Compliance Completion, Memo To File, CE Form and AOE form
    - Public Documents Report: Review Start/End date fields added to filters and output columns re-ordered for clarity

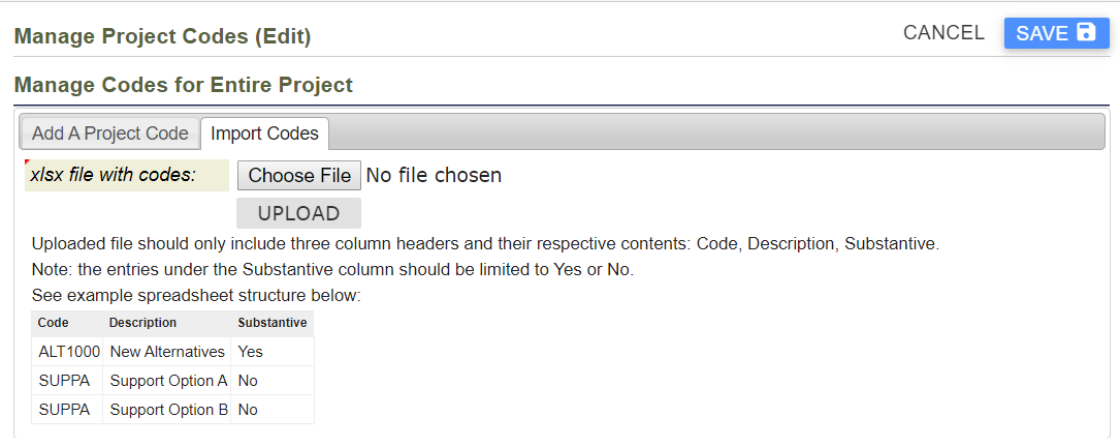
September 2019

Step 7 - Code Structure upload tool

Users can now upload an entire code structure at once, instead of creating individual codes one at a time, under Step 7 - Manage Codes for Entire Project in the Edit view. There is a now a tab titled “Import Codes”:



A user can workshop a Code Structure with their team, prepare and format a Microsoft .xlsx spreadsheet, then upload it to PEPC using this tool:



The tool will not overwrite any existing codes using the same Code ID. All codes uploaded will be limited to the project. This tool will be particularly useful for analysis of projects that do not fit easily within the template code structure that users can select from, such as proposed rules or fee increases. Please contact the PEPC team with any questions about this new tool.

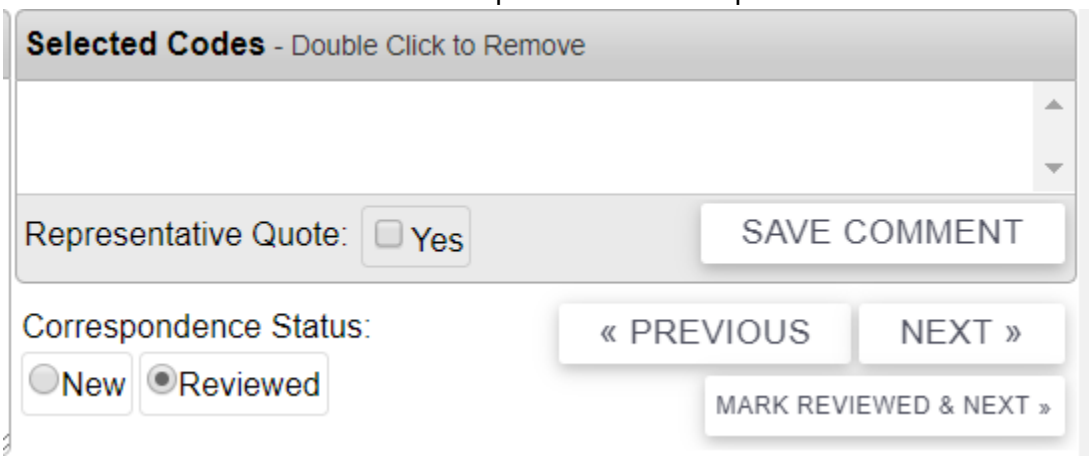
Bulk Correspondence Coding tool

The PEPC Team now has a tool to support the bulk application of codes to Correspondences associated with a PEPC Public Document. This will be particularly useful when scanning large volumes of correspondences to determine if they are substantive or not, or to apply a general code like “General: Support” or “General: Oppose” to high numbers of correspondences. The tool was developed to address several recent high-profile projects that generated hundreds of thousands of comments.

Access to this tool is currently limited to the PEPC Team. If you have a large volume of comments and would like to explore using this tool, please contact us.

Step 7 - Quick Coding Tool enhancements

The PEPC Team has added additional functionality to the Quick Coding Tool to compliment the “Edit Filters” update addressed below. The page now features additional tools on the bottom right to assist the review of large volumes of comments by separating common actions. This will be particularly helpful when multiple individual analysts are reviewing the same Correspondence sets for different Codes. This is a snapshot of the new options:



- Comment reviewers can now:
    - Code and save or edit and save individual Comments without changing the overall Correspondence Status
    - Tag a Comment as a Representative Quote while Saving it or while Editing it
    - Change the Correspondence Status (New/Reviewed) without coding a comment (note that this status is automatically saved when changed)
    - Navigate through Correspondences via the Previous/Next buttons (duplicating at the buttons at the top of the screen)
    - Mark a Correspondence as Reviewed and proceed to the next Correspondence without having to Code a Comment by clicking on the new “Mark Reviewed & Next” button.

August 2019

Enhancement to “User Profile” Search (useful for PEPC Admin)

- Email address is added as a search filter to assist with finding/updating User Profiles
- Email address has been added to the search results as well.

June 2019

Miscellaneous system bug fixes/enhancements

The PEPC Team resolved several long-standing issues with various aspects of PEPC, including:

- Added the “PMIS ID” to the Basic Information Form
- Removed the requirement that a public commenter select Member or Official Representative when entering a Organization in a comment via Parkplanning.nps.gov.
- PEPC now automatically removes leading or trailing spaces in a text field on any search page. Before, if a space was accidentally entered before a word or number, the system would not find accurate results.
- PEPC now sends a notification email to a NEPA/NHPA Specialist if they are changed after the project is created.
- User Homepage now retains the last selected Column Sort Option made. Remember you can adjust your Homepage via the “Homepage Settings” button on the upper right.
- Roman numerals are now sorted first on submitted comments on Internal Documents under step 5.
- The recent “PEPC 101” webinar via the NRSS Webinar series is linked under Tools > PEPC Guide.

Floodplain & Wetland Statement of Findings Updates

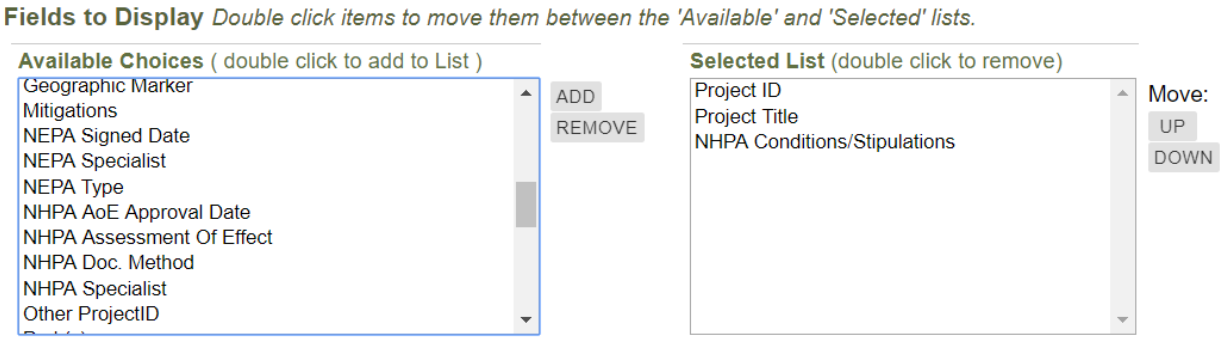
In concert with NRSS Water Resources Division, updates were made to the Step 4 - Other Compliance - Floodplains/Wetland/§404 Permits section for clarity and consistency with new revised guidance related to a consolidated Floodplains/Wetland Statement of Findings workflow. Contact WRD (Joel Wagner / Kevin Noon) with questions about this new workflow.

AdHoc Report Changes

Several small changes were made to the AdHoc Report on the User side. They are:

- Criteria
    - Now when a Project ID is entered, results will include all “Related to” projects (e.g. projects that were copied from another PEPC project).
    - Target Compliance Completion date fields have been added.

    - Removed Contract Labor, Day Labor and the ETS checkbox from the Criteria and Display fields options.
- Display
    - Several Display Criteria options were re-named for clarity, including several compliance fields which now begin with NHPA and NEPA to group them in the option list:



    - Mitigations now merges the selected Mitigation and Mitigation Comment into a single cell in the Report output.
    - Conditions/Stipulations has been added as a Display column.
    - Target Compliance Completion date fields have been added as Display Columns.
    - Tract is now a Display option.

Numerous code cleanup actions were also taken, which should improve consistency of results. Remember - you can save your AdHoc search criteria at the tip under the “My Reports” expandable widget.

Mitigation Notes field on Forms

Mitigation Notes will now print on the Assessment of Effect form, Letter of Compliance Completion, Categorical Exclusion (CE) form, Other Compliance (Only specific mitigation types), and Mitigations List Form. A note is provided on the Create Mitigation page that says “Comments and selected mitigations are included on all applicable printed PEPC Forms”.

Character limits on ESA Notes and ESF Issue fields

Users will now see a counter that shows the remaining number of bytes available in these fields. PEPC fields are limited by bytes, not characters (as some characters like bullets take up more memory than a simple letter or number).

Active Directory integration in user creation/access

Newly created DOI/NPS PEPC users no longer need to create a password to access PEPC when on the DOI network. When a DOI/NPS user accesses PEPC, the system will search

Active Directory (AD) by email address and enable single sign-on. Contractors and non-DOI/NPS users will still need to generate a password. Note that PEPC Admin's will still have to remove/inactivate separated staff from their park/region - PEPC does not currently sync to AD for user management after the creation step.

April 2019

Updated Park Names

In the recent natural resource bill (S. 47 - John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act), nine national park units were re-designated. The park lists in PEPC have been updated. The full list of changes is below:

Golden Spike National Historic Site to Golden Spike National Historical Park, UT
Ocmulgee National Monument to Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, GA
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site to Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park, NH
Fort Sumter National Monument to Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park, SC
Honouliuli National Monument to Honouliuli National Historic Site, HI
Camp Nelson National Monument to Camp Nelson Heritage National Monument, KY
Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area to Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River National Heritage Area, NY
Reconstruction Era National Monument to Reconstruction Era National Historical Park, SC

Further information on S.47 is available on this InsideNPS summary article.

October 2018

Expandable Search Results

When a user runs a search under the Project/Search tab, the results now includes a column titled “Details”. In this column, next to each entry, is a small button that the user can toggle to expand or contract the Project Description and Project Status. We hope this feature will provide a “snapshot” view of a project right in the search results, instead of opening each project up to see if it is relevant to your search. Please let us know if there are additional fields you would find valuable in this view.

Master Form Letter Matching Improvements

The “Master Form Letter” tool automatically scans incoming correspondences for matching strings of characters with the identified form letter(s). This scan tool has been improved to ignore spaces in between words, returns after paragraphs, punctuation (comma, period, exclamation point, colon, semicolon, quotes, question marks, hyphen, parenthesis), and is now non-case sensitive (capital letters are reviewed the same as lower case letters). We hope this feature will improve the “% match” results, especially on large correspondence volumes. Future master form letter improvements are planned for 2019!

August 2018 & April 2019

New Naming Convention for Forms and Reports

Prior downloads of PEPC Forms or Reports did not have differentiated file names. The new naming convention will start with PEPC, include the Project ID and Form/Report short title, and conclude with the date exported from the system (e.g. PEPC_17233_NHPA_date.doc or .xls). Files will still need to be “saved as” the current MS Office file format.