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# Southeast Energy Partnership Pushes Forward

The Army's Regional Environmental & Energy Office – Southern (REEO-S) hosted the inaugural meeting of the Southeast Regional Group for Energy Security/Sustainability (SERGES) on August 27, with representatives from 10 federal agencies. The Centers for Disease Control; Departments of Army, Air Force, Defense and Energy (DoE); Environmental Protection Agency; National Park Service; Tennessee Valley Authority; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) came together to discuss how, as federal partners in the southeast, they “can do things better” to foster energy security.

## The Drivers

SERGES is a collaboration of regional federal executives seeking to better implement energy-related federal requirements like the Energy Policy Act of 2005; the Energy and Independence and Security Act of 2007; Executive Order 13423, “Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management”; and Executive Order 13514, “Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance.” The group is part of the Southeast Natural Resources Leaders Group, which has over 25 years of partnership experience in the region.

Individually, the military services have embarked on their own programs to meet energy requirements. The Army established the Energy Initiatives Task Force (EITF) to help ensure its success in implementing, by 2025, one gigawatt of cost-effective, large-scale renewable energy projects while leveraging private sector funding. The Navy established its Energy Coordination Office to manage the overall Navy Energy Strategy. The Air Force Civil Engineer Center Energy Directorate helps implement technologies and funding strategies to reduce energy consumption and costs.

“In our region, known for its favorable partnering climate, and with such a high level of action from the military services, the timing was right to bring together federal agencies to discuss needs for energy security and availability, as well as efficiencies,” said Ms. Susan Gibson, REEO-S Director.

## The Meeting

The concept of integration -- sharing ideas across jurisdictions and linking agency efforts together -- came up repeatedly during the meeting. The group discussed assimilating people, resources, and ideas to advance energy security and sustainability. SERGES also talked about the need to integrate generated energy and transmission systems with other systems. Mr. Ben Cross, DoE-Savannah River National Laboratory Senior Advisor – Clean Energy Directorate, gave the example of possibly linking thermal systems that require cooling water with wastewater systems that include algae farms to naturally clean water, and then use the algae as feedstock to produce drop-in fuels and bio-based chemicals.

“You can’t integrate [energy] systems until you integrate people,” he said. “We need to start small and integrate locally, but first we need to learn what others are doing.”

An introduction to the EITF provided by Mr. Dave Blalock, REEO-S Regional Counsel, gave the DoD perspective on energy security. Ms. Christine Willis, FWS Energy Coordinator, gave a presentation on energy planning and impacts on wildlife of using renewable technologies. The group considered whether the partnership should be project-oriented or an informative exchange. They discussed existing energy-focused groups

with which SERGES might mesh. They also talked about building an online repository of information for SERGES members and collaborated on the group charter. Partners agreed to compile Geographic Information Systems data to build an all-encompassing, layered map of each agency’s facilities and properties in the region; a good map will determine where best to leverage work.

## Future Actions

Partners concluded their first meeting by saying that they recognize many opportunities for collaboration on energy projects, energy savings performance contracts, and other joint efforts that will meet the intent of federal requirements, while saving resources across their agencies. SERGES will continue to meet regularly to share information and discuss where their resources can be used most efficiently.



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