05/10/2018 Interview with Flo Agua, Agency for Natural Resources Protection, Laguna Niguel Field Office, Environmental Research Staff, Inland Waters Division

Flo is responsible for managing records related to the Environmental Research Staff’s Inland Waters studies.

Flo Agua: I’m happy to help with your records inventory! I’m responsible for keeping all of the records of studies, the photography, and even the records on our boat operators who assist with data collection. None of our records have any access restrictions.

We have recreation studies, which are reports on the impacts of recreation on lakes and rivers. These range from 2013 to present. They’re paper files and we organize these by the lake name and close them every fiscal year. We send them to storage off-site after 5 years and then they are sent to NARA 5 years later. All of our files are in the Central Files in room 205, except for any digital files, which are on the shared drive. The current year’s studies are kept in the first drawer of cabinet 2. The closed ones are in about 15 boxes in our warehouse.

The environmental impact assessments are evaluations of any building projects (bridges, roads, etc.) that might impact an inland waterway. These evaluations are paper records and are kept in cabinet 4, drawers 1 and 2. We have them from 1993 on. We close these at the end of the calendar year when the study is completed, but we keep them in onsite storage, not at the records center. We have about 45 boxes of these in the warehouse. They are sent to NARA 25 years after the file is closed. They’re filed numerically by the project number.

We also maintain data records on waterways. These document things like temperature, aeration, flow, wells, and gaging station readings. This data is used to support the recreation studies and impact assessments. They are in cabinet 4, the third and fourth drawers. Plus, we have 15 boxes in the warehouse. These are filed alphabetically by the name of the body of water and then by date. We cut these off at the end of each fiscal year, but we keep them onsite for as long as they might be needed for reference. We currently have them dating back to 2013. Then they go to the FRC. They have to be stored for 30 years after going to the FRC and then they are destroyed.

The boat operator records are filed alphabetically by the operator’s last name and then first. These are the operator technical training records, first aid, CPR, medical records, things like that. These are in cabinet 3, drawers 1 through 4. I told you earlier that none of our records are restricted, but these actually are access restricted to myself and the boat operator supervisor, since they contain PII. We keep cabinet 3 locked. When a boat operator no longer works for us, we can send their record to the FRC. It is kept for 65 years from the date it goes to the FRC and then it’s destroyed. We have files dating back to 2011.

The last type of record I maintain is the aerial photography. We keep these in negative format (these photos are all taken with film), the negatives are permanent and we recently started maintaining digital files of these aerial photo negatives, but these aren’t permanent. The negatives are kept in a climate-controlled area in binders of archival storage sheets. They are on shelves 1-3, binders 1-14. The digital files are on the shared drive (location I:EnvironmentalResearch/InlandWatersDivision/PhotographyCartography). We have about 15 gigs of these digital files. Both the negatives and the digital files are arranged geographically be region and then by date taken. We send the negatives to the FRC when we don’t need them for reference anymore and then they go to NARA 10 years after going to the FRC. The digital copies are cut off at the end of each fiscal year. I create a new folder for the current fiscal year and put the cut off folder in the archive folder. The negatives date from 2013 to present. The archived digitals only go back to 2016, which is when we started creating them.