



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
Galveston District

BIOGRAPHY

Kelly A. Burks-Copes, PhD

Chief, Program Support Branch, Mega Project Division
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District

Dr. Kelly Burks-Copes currently serves as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Galveston District's chief of the Programs Support Branch, in the District's new Mega Projects Division. She manages schedule, budget and public outreach for the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Mega Program (S2G), a \$4.4B civil works program focused on increasing the storm resiliency of the upper Texas coast.

With nearly 30 years of experience in civil works and military projects, Dr. Burks-Copes specializes in hybridizing engineering and environmental strategies to tackle tough coastal storm risk management, flood damage reduction, navigation, and ecosystem restoration problems.

Early in her career, she worked for the USACE's Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), where she developed practical ways to transfer research and technology to the field. Most notably, she provided R&D support for post-Superstorm Sandy recovery initiatives for the North Atlantic Coastal Comprehensive Study (NACCS) and served as the Project Manager for a Strategic Environmental R&D Program project quantifying coastal storm and sea level rise risks to Naval Station Norfolk.

In 2016, Dr. Burks-Copes served as the Project Manager for the USACE's largest-ever civil works study addressing coastal storm risk management and ecosystem restoration study for the entire Texas coast (aka the Coastal Texas Study). She led the \$20-million team effort to produce a \$30B Recommended Plan to the Chief of Engineers in 2021.

Dr. Burks-Copes' awards include two Army Civilian Service Awards, an Army Superior Civilian Service Award, five individual Commander's awards, five R&D Achievement awards, and the Outstanding Planning Achievement Award for the NACCS study in 2014. She is also a graduate of the Eckerd College Leadership Development Program.

She holds both a Bachelor and Master of Science in Biology and earned her Doctorate in 2015 by double-majoring in Interdisciplinary Ecology and Urban/Rural planning from the University of Florida.

Dr. Burks-Copes was also an instructor for the Association of Climate Change Officers, teaching courses on sea level rise, coastal infrastructure, and climate hazards. She has written more than 20 peer-reviewed reports and papers on ecosystem restoration, engineering with nature, and climate change topics.

