Location: The Big Five Levee System is situated in Alexander and Union Counties, Illinois, comprising 54.6 miles of levee. This levee system includes Preston D&LD (14.9 miles of levee in Union County), Clear Creek D&LD (20.6 miles of levee in Alexander County), East Cape Girardeau Drainage District (10.9 levee miles in Alexander County), North Alexander County D&LD (5.15 miles of levee near the north end of Alexander County) including the bottomlands, and Miller Pond Drainage District (3.1 levee miles). As of May 26, 2009, the Miller Pond Levee and Drainage District was annexed into the Clear Creek District.

Description: As all five of the segments form a single system, a failure of any levee would result in the inundation of the combined protected area. The Big Five Levee System was raised and enlarged by the Corps in the 1950's with construction completed in 1957. The Big Five Levee System has a documented history of uncontrolled underseepage and significant interior flooding from seepwater and rainfall.

Issues: Annual levee inspections were performed in September 2014. The entire system received an unacceptable rating due to multiple deficiencies. Repeat minor and major flood events have produced serious underseepage problems exhibited by sand boils, quick soil conditions, and piping of foundation material; along with significant interior drainage problems.

Importance: This levee system, which is part of the Alton to Gale levee system, protects approximately 49,100 acres, the majority of which is agricultural or U.S. Forest Service lands. The protected area also includes residences, small businesses, and farm buildings.

Risk: A failure of any levee in the system would result in the inundation of the combined protected area.

Consequence: Without improvements to the existing levees, excess seepage, quick conditions, and sand boils will occur during subsequent flood events.

Activities for FY 15: Minimal carryover funds are being used to negotiate a Feasibility Cost Share Agreement with the sponsor and bring the reconnaissance phase to completion.

Acquisition Strategy: No contract awards are scheduled for FY15 or FY16.

Amount That Could Be Used in FY 16: An amount of $75,000 could be used to initiate the Feasibility Study under the SMART planning process, pending an executed Feasibility Cost Share Agreement with the sponsor.

Project Sponsor/Customer: The Big Five Levee System

Congressional Interest: Senate: Senators Kirk (IL) and Durbin (IL); House: Representative Bost (IL-12)