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Comprehensive Mississippi and Illinois River Study Nears Completion

ROCK ISLAND, ILL. – After more than a decade of research and analysis, the Restructured Upper Mississippi River – Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study is nearing completion and public participation now, and at upcoming public meetings, is key to developing a plan to ensure the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers continue to be nationally treasured ecological resources, as well as effective transportation systems.

A public meeting will be held in St. Louis on Oct. 20 at Spazio Westport, 12031 Lackland Road, 314-576-0488. From downtown St. Louis participants will want to take I-64 West to I-270 North, take Exit 16A (Page Avenue East) and turn right at the first exit – Lackland Road. The hotel is on the right, one half mile from the exit.

Another public meeting will be held in Quincy, Ill. on Oct. 21 at River's Edge Hall, 1231 Bonansinga Drive, 217-223-2353. The meeting in Quincy, Ill. may be closer for individuals living north of St. Louis.

"The restructured study provides equal consideration for fish and wildlife resources and navigation improvement planning," said Brig. Gen. Don Riley, commander, Mississippi Valley Division. "The Corps is working to ensure any recommended improvements meet both objectives."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, is managing the study effort to map out the environmental and navigational needs of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers for the next 50 years.

Navigation Study Timetable

Through Sept. 2003 – Complete alternative evaluations

Oct. 2003 – Public Meetings

20 Oct. – St. Louis, Mo.
21 Oct. – Quincy, Ill.
22 Oct. – Peoria, Ill.
23 Oct. – Davenport, Iowa
28 Oct. – St. Paul, Minn.
29 Oct. – La Crosse, Wis.
30 Oct. – Dubuque, Iowa

Nov. 2003 – Apr. 2004 – Develop Draft Feasibility Report and Recommended Plan

April 2004 - Draft Feasibility Report with tentative Recommended Plan distributed for public review

May 2004 – Public Meetings
(Locations to be Determined)

Oct. 2004 - Final Feasibility Report transmitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Office of Management and Budget and Congress

On the Web @:
www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/umr-iwwsns

- more -

NAVIGATION STUDY

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“It’s a challenging task that has brought together some of the nation’s finest scientists, engineers, biologists, economists, and a host of other highly skilled individuals to develop a plan for the future of these two great rivers,” said Col. Duane Gapinski, commander, Rock Island District. “A key foundation of the restructured study is the collaboration among federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public which is increasing cooperation and communication, fostering trust and understanding among participants, and allowing a greater set of interests to be met.”

Over the next several months, the study team will be evaluating a set of tentative alternative plans for potential ecosystem restoration and navigation improvements. Examples of ecosystem restoration alternatives include avoid and minimize measures, channel modifications, systemic fish passage and water level management, and backwater, secondary channel, and island rehabilitation. Navigation efficiency alternatives include nonstructural measures such as congestion fees and traffic management, and structural measures such as switch boats, lock extensions, and new locks.

This month, tentative alternative plans will be presented at a series of seven regional public meetings. A draft recommended plan will be developed based on input and comments received. A Draft Feasibility Report with the tentative recommended plan will be distributed for public and stakeholder review in April 2004. An additional series of public meetings will be held across the region in May 2004 to gain final public and stakeholder input into the recommended plan. The Final Feasibility Report will be transmitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Office of Management and Budget and Congress in Oct. 2004.

The public can obtain current status reports, monitor, comment, and participate through the study website at: www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/umr-iwwsns. For more information about the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study, contact the project manager, Denny Lundberg, at (309) 794-5632, or the Rock Island District Public Affairs Office at (309) 794-5274.

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