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Army Corps of Engineers and Wood River Drainage and Levee District to build new pump station

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Wood River Drainage and Levee District (D&LD) of Illinois gave the go ahead this week for contractor mobilization to begin for the construction of a new pump station in the southern area of the D&LD known as Grassy Lake in 2007.

The Grassy Lake Pump Station will be located near the intersection of Route 111 and Canal Road in Roxana, IL. Construction will begin in early 2007 and could be completed by July 2007. Costs are being shared between the federal government and the Wood River Drainage and Levee District on a 75-25 percent basis, with the federal share being the larger part.

There are two basic sources of flooding. When the Mississippi River rises, without the levee, its water would flow onto the land currently protected. But at the same time, flooding can be caused by heavy rainfall on the land, or protected side of the levee.

Pump stations are one of two ways that rain falling inside the levee can be returned to the river outside of the levee. Currently, rainfall inside this area of the D&LD drains to one of the many pipes through the bottom of the levee, called gravity drains, and flows out of the levee system. These drains function much like storm sewers.

However, when there is high water in the Mississippi River, the D&LD must close the drains to prevent water from flowing through them from the river into the levee system. Now, when the drains are closed, any rainfall inside the levee must accumulate and remain near the gravity drains until the Mississippi River is low enough that the gravity drains can be reopened. This accumulated water can damage crops and structures.

When the new pump station is completed, the D&LD will be able to reduce water damage by pumping the accumulated rainfall over the closed levee, into the Cahokia Diversion Channel.

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