

PEER REVIEW PLAN

**ALTON POOL ISLAND RESTORATION
ILLINOIS RIVER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM
PROJECT INFORMATION REPORT**

1. Purpose and Requirements.

a. This document outlines the peer review plan for Alton Pool Island Restoration Project Project Information Report. EC 1105-2-408 dated 31 May 2005 “Peer Review of Decision Documents” 1) establishes procedures to ensure the quality and credibility of Corps decision documents by adjusting and supplementing the review process and 2) requires that documents have a peer review plan. The Circular applies to all feasibility studies and reports and any other reports that lead to decision documents that require authorization by Congress.

b. The Circular outlines the requirement of the two review approaches (independent technical review (ITR) and external peer review (EPR)) and provides guidance on Corps Planning Centers of Expertise (PCX) involvement in the approaches. This document addresses review of the decision document as it pertains to both approaches and planning coordination with the appropriate Center.

(1) ITR. Districts are responsible for reviewing the technical aspects of the decision documents through the ITR approach. ITR is a critical examination by a qualified person or team that was not involved in the day-to-day technical work that supports the decision document. ITR is intended to confirm that such work was done in accordance with clearly established professional principles, practices, codes, and criteria. In addition to technical review, documents should also be reviewed for their compliance with laws and policy. The Circular also requires that DrChecks (<https://www.projnet.org/projnet/>) be used to document all ITR comments, responses, and associated resolution accomplished.

(2) EPR. The Circular added external peer review to the existing Corps review process. This approach does not replace the standard ITR process. The external peer review approach applies in special cases where the magnitude and risk of the project are such that a critical examination by a qualified person outside the Corps is necessary. EPR can also be used where the information is based on novel methods, presents complex interpretation challenges, contains precedent-setting methods or models, or is likely to affect policy decisions that have a significant impact. The degree of independence required for technical review increases as the project magnitude and project risk increase.

(a) Projects with low magnitude and low risk may use a routine ITR.

(b) Projects with either high magnitude/low risk or low magnitude/high risk would require both Corps and outside reviewers on the ITR team to address the portions of the project that cause the project to rate high on the magnitude or risk scale.

(c) Projects with high magnitude and high risk require a routine ITR as well as an EPR.

(3) PCX Coordination. The Circular outlines PCX coordination in conjunction with preparation of the review plan. Districts should prepare the plans in coordination with the appropriate PCX. The Corps PCX are responsible for the accomplishment and quality of ITR and EPR for decision documents covered by the Circular. Centers may conduct the review or manage the review to be conducted by others. Reviews will be assigned to the appropriate Center based on business programs. The Circular outlines alternative procedures to apply to decision documents. Each Center is required to post review plans to its website every three months as well as links to any reports that have been made public. The Office of Water Policy Review (OPWR) will consolidate the lists of all review plans and establish a mechanism for soliciting public feedback on the review plans.

2. **Project Description.**

a. Three islands in the Alton pool of the Illinois River are considered for this study – Fisher Island (river mile 38.8 L), Spar Island (river mile 39.8 L), and Wing Island (river mile 40.3 R). All islands are located in Pike County, IL. The project seeks to restore the degraded islands and side channels of Fisher, Spar and Wing. Potential measures include side channel dredging, revegetation, bullnose construction, off-bankline revetment, and enrichment of upstream island tips.

When resources allow additional information will be gathered on two additional islands, Moores and Meredosia, in the near vicinity of the others for future reference. Project activities will also be performed in conjunction with the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) Twin Island and Shoreline Protection project to take advantage of any cost efficiencies. These three islands will not be included in the report.

The primary objective of the Alton Pool Island Restoration project is restore and maintain the islands and side channels in the Alton Pool in order to increase the ecological health of the Illinois river. The expected ecological outcomes of this project include reduction in island erosion; improvement in vegetation on the upstream island tips; protection creation of deep water, off-channel aquatic habitat; and improvement in overall habitat diversity in the area.

b. Product Delivery Team. The product delivery team (PDT) is comprised of those individuals directly involved in the development of the decision document. Contact information and disciplines are listed below.

Last	First	Discipline	Phone (314-331-)	Email
REMOVED	REMOVED	Cost Estimating	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Specifications	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	River Engineering	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil

REMOVED	REMOVED	Aquatic Ecologist	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Economics	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Cultural	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Water Quality	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Geotechnical	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Office of Counsel	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Real Estate Acquisition	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Contracting	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Operations – Dredging	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Real Estate Appraisal	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil
REMOVED	REMOVED	Project Management	REMOVED	@usace.army.mil

c. Vertical Team. The Vertical Team includes District management, District Support Team (DST) and Review Integration Team (RIT) staff as well as members of the Planning of Community of Practice (PCoP). The District project manager is (REMOVED), CEMVS-PM-F, 314-331- (REMOVED). DST manager for this project is (REMOVED), CEMVS-PD-SP, 601-634- (REMOVED). The RIT manager is (REMOVED), CECW-MVD, 202-761- (REMOVED). The PCoP contact is (REMOVED), CEMVD-PD-N, 601-634- (REMOVED).

d. Planning Models. To evaluate benefits the project will use the Aquatic Habitat Appraisal Guide (AHAG), and possibly the Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide (WHAG), and the Functional Assessment Score (FAS). The certification of these models is still pending. These models are commonly used for assessing potential project benefits on most of the ecosystem restoration projects. Most teams using these models are comprised of a variety of individuals including the Corps, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and state agencies.

3. ITR Plan. As outlined above in paragraph 1.b. (1), the District is responsible for ensuring adequate technical review of decision documents. The responsible PDT District of this decision document is St. Louis District. The District recommended as the ITR District is yet to be determined and will be determined by the ECO PCX.

a. General. An ITR Manager shall be designated by the ECO PCX for the ITR process and will be a person from outside of MVD. The proposed ITR Manager for this project is TBD. The ITR Manager is responsible for providing information necessary for setting up the review, communicating with the Study Manager, providing a summary of critical review comments, collecting grammatical and editorial comments from the ITR team (ITRT), ensuring that the ITRT has adequate funding to perform the review, facilitating the resolution of the comments, and certifying that the ITR has been conducted and resolved in accordance with policy.

b. Team. The ITRT will be comprised of individuals from outside of MVS who have not been involved in the development of the decision document and will be chosen based on expertise, experience, and/or skills. The ITR team member for cost engineering will be obtained through the Walla Walla District. The members will roughly mirror the composition of the PDT. The ITRT members and their areas of expertise are to be determined.

Last	First	Discipline	Phone	Email
		ITR Manager/plan formulation		@usace.army.mil
		Civil design		@usace.army.mil
		Biology/NEPA		@usace.army.mil
		Hydraulics/hydrology		@usace.army.mil
		Socio-economics		@usace.army.mil
		Cost engineering (Walla Walla)		@nww.usace.army.mil
		Real estate/Lands		@usace.army.mil
		Cultural resources		@usace.army.mil
		Geotechnical engineering		@usace.army.mil

c. Communication. The communication plan for the ITR is as follows:

(1) The team will use DrChecks to document the ITR process. An electronic version of the draft report and appendices in Word format shall be provided to the ITRT at least one business day prior to the start of the comment period.

(2) The PDT shall host an ITR kick-off meeting virtually to orient the ITRT during the first week of the comment period. If funds are not available for an on-site meeting, the PDT shall provide a presentation about the project, including photos of the site, for the team.

(3) The Study Manager shall inform the ITR manager when all responses have been entered into DrChecks and conduct an in progress review to summarize comment responses.

(4) A revised electronic version of the report and appendices with comments incorporated will be made available to the ITRT for use during back checking of the comments.

(5) Team members shall contact ITRT members or leader as appropriate to seek clarification of a comment's intent or provide clarification of information in the report. Discussions shall occur outside of DrChecks but a summary of discussions may be provided in the system.

(6) Reviewers will be encouraged to contact PDT members directly via email or phone to clarify any confusion. DrChecks shall not be used to post questions needed for clarification.

(7) The ITRT, PDT, and vertical team shall conduct an after action review (AAR) no later than two weeks after the policy guidance memo is received.

d. Funding. The Project Manager will work with the ITR manager to ensure that adequate funding is available and is commensurate with the level of review required. The current cost estimate for this review is to be determined.

e. Timing and Schedule.

(1) The ITR will begin once a recommended plan has been selected, the preliminary design is complete, and the environmental assessment has been performed.

(2) The PDT will review the draft report to ensure consistency across the disciplines and resolve any issues prior to the start of ITR.

(3) The ITR process for this document will follow the timeline below. Actual dates will be scheduled once the period draws closer. It is estimated that review of this document will be begin in the Fourth Quarter of FY08.

Task	Date
ITR of Draft Report Comment Period	Begin Week 1
Kickoff Meeting	Week 1
ITR Comments	Due Week 4
PDT Responses	Due Week 6
Responses back-check	Week 8
Certification	Week 10
Alternative Formulation Briefing (AFB)	Week 14
AFB Policy Memo Issued	Week 18
After Action Review	NLT Week 20
Policy Guidance Memo	Week 23
Public Review of Draft Report	Begin Week 25
Final Report	Completed Week 40

f. Review.

(1) ITR Team responsibilities are as follows:

(a) Reviewers shall review the draft report to confirm that work was done in accordance with established professional principles, practices, codes, and criteria and for compliance with laws and policy. Comments on the report shall be submitted into DrChecks.

(b) Reviewers shall pay particular attention to one’s discipline but may also comment on other aspects as appropriate. Reviewers that do not have any significant comments pertaining to their assigned discipline shall provide a comment stating this.

(c) Grammatical and editorial comments shall not be submitted into DrChecks. Comments should be submitted to ITR manager via electronic mail using tracked changes feature in the Word document or as a hard copy mark-up. The ITR manager shall provide these comments to the Study Manager.

(d) Review comments shall contain these principal elements:

- A clear statement of the concern
- The basis for the concern, such as law, policy, or guidance
- Significance for the concern
- Specific actions needed to resolve the comment

(e) The “Critical” comment flag in DrChecks shall not be used unless the comment is discussed with the ITR manager and/or the Study Manager first.

(2) PDT Team responsibilities are as follows:

(a) The team shall review comments provided by the ITRT in DrChecks and provide responses to each comment using “*Concur*”, “*Non-Concur*”, or “*For Information Only*”. *Concur* responses shall state what action was taken and provide revised text from the report if applicable. *Non-Concur* responses shall state the basis for the disagreement or clarification of the concern and suggest actions to negotiate the closure of the comment.

(b) Team members shall contact the PDT and ITRT managers to discuss any “non-concur” responses prior to submission.

g. Resolution.

(1) Reviewers shall back check PDT responses to the review comments and either close the comment or attempt to resolve any disagreements. Conference calls shall be used to resolve any conflicting comments and responses.

(2) Reviewers may “agree to disagree” with any comment response and close the comment with a detailed explanation. ITRT members shall keep the ITR manager of problematic comments. The vertical team will be informed of any policy variations or other issues that may cause concern during Headquarter review.

h. Certification. To fully document the ITR process, a statement of technical review will be prepared. Certification by the ITR manager and the Study Manager will occur once issues raised by the reviewers have been addressed to the review team’s satisfaction. Indication of

this concurrence will be documented by the signing of a certification statement (Appendix A). A summary report of all comments and responses will follow the statement and accompany the report throughout the report approval process.

4. External Peer Review Plan. This decision document will present the details of an ecosystem restoration study undertaken to restore and maintain the islands and side channels in the Alton Pool in order to increase the ecological health of the Illinois River as described in the main body of the PMP.

The potential for river rehabilitation, as well as the constraints, differ depending on the degree of anthropomorphic change and the many functions the river may currently serve. The Illinois River is a multi-use system, and multiple use conflicts are likely to continue to increase as river uses increase.

This project does not meet the EPR standards outlined in the Circular.

a. Project Magnitude. The magnitude of this project is determined as low. The cost of the project is yet to be determined, but is expected not to exceed \$5,000,000. At this time, it is assumed that the amount of benefits accrued by the project will be worth the cost. The project is not considered complex because of the nature of the proposed measures and the fact that this type of work has been done extensively in the past.

b. Project Risk. This project is considered low risk overall. The preliminary idea for the project was discussed with private landowners and agencies during the alternatives development stage. Both supported the action, therefore risk of controversy is minimal. Proposed actions will occur outside of the navigational channel and risks to navigation are low. The methods chosen to be utilized have been successfully employed in similar situations on other rivers. They would not be considered novel concepts. Because the Illinois River is slow-flowing and because adequate size stone will be used, risk of structural failure is low. The purpose of the project is to improve habitat in the Illinois River. There is little to no risk of adverse environmental impacts.

A separate EPR will not be conducted on the decision document and external members will not be part of the ITR team. The ITR, Public and Agency Review will serve as the main review approaches.

5. Public and Agency Review.

a. Public review of the document will occur after issuance of the AFB policy guidance memo and concurrence by HQUSACE that the document is ready for public release. As such, public comments other than those provided at any public meetings held during the planning process will not be available to the review team.

b. Public review of this document will begin approximately one month after the completion of the ITR process and policy guidance memo. The period will last 30 days as required by law.

c. The public review of necessary State or Federal permits will also take place during this period.

d. A formal State and Agency review will occur concurrently with the public review. However, it is anticipated that intensive coordination with these agencies will have occurred concurrent with the planning process. Possible public concern issues are landowner issues regarding use of private lands. Possible State and Agency issues are concern over project operation and maintenance. Possible coordinating parties' issues are not expected.

e. Upon completion of the review period, comments will be consolidated in a matrix and addressed, if needed. A comment resolution meeting will take place if needed to decide upon the best resolution of comments. A summary of the comments and resolutions will be included in the document.

6. PCX coordination. The appropriate PCX for this document is the Ecosystem Planning Center for Expertise, Mississippi Valley Division. This review plan will be submitted through the PDT District (MVS) Planning Chief, to the PCX Director, (*REMOVED*) for approval. Since it was determined that this project is of low magnitude and low risk, an EPR will not be required. Upon approval by the MVD Commander, the peer review plan will be posted to the District website and linked to the PCX and HQUSACE websites. Any public comments on the review plan will be collected by the Office of Water Project Review (OWPR) and provided to the PDT District for resolution and incorporation if needed.

7. Approvals. The PDT will carry out the review plan as described. The Study Manager will submit the plan to the PDT District Planning Chief for approval.

Project Manager, Alton Pool Island Restoration
Product Delivery Team

Chief, Planning and Project Development Branch
St. Louis District

**APPENDIX A
STATEMENT OF TECHNICAL REVIEW**

**COMPLETION OF INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW
ALTON POOL ISLAND RESTORATION PROJECT**

St. Louis District has completed the Project Information Report of the Alton Pool Island Restoration Project. Notice is hereby given that an independent technical review, that is appropriate to the level of risk and complexity inherent in the project, has been conducted as defined in the Review Plan. During the independent technical review, compliance with established policy principles and procedures, utilizing justified and valid assumptions, was verified. This included review of: assumptions, methods, procedures, and material used in analyses; alternatives evaluated; the appropriateness of data used and level obtained; and reasonableness of the result, including whether the product meets the customer's needs consistent with law and existing Corps policy. The independent technical review was accomplished by an independent team composed of St. Louis and staff of another district to be determined. All comments resulting from ITR have been resolved.

_____	_____
Team Leader, Alton Pool Island Restoration Project Independent Technical Review Team	Date

_____	_____
Project Manager, Alton Pool Island Restoration Project	Date

CERTIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW

A summary of all comments and responses are attached. Significant concerns and the explanation of the resolution are as follows:

(Describe the major technical concerns, possible impact and resolution)

As noted above, all concerns resulting from the independent technical review of the project have been fully resolved.

_____	_____
Chief, Planning and Project Development Branch St. Louis District	Date