



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
St. Louis District

Resolution of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives, 21 June 2000.

# Information Paper

## St. Louis Riverfront–Meramec River Basin

### Investigations (ENR)

**Location:** The project area includes portions of the Meramec River Basin located in St. Louis, Jefferson, St. Francois, and Washington counties in Missouri. The study area includes the entire Big River, a major tributary of the Meramec River, and the lower 50 river miles of the Meramec River. The Meramec River is a tributary of the Mississippi River, with its confluence approximately 35 miles south of St. Louis, Missouri.

**Description:** A 2004 reconnaissance study investigated problems and opportunities for flood damage reduction, aquatic habitat restoration, and harbor safety issues in the entire project area. The study recommended proceeding with an ecosystem restoration feasibility study for the Meramec River, pending completion of a reconnaissance report addendum. This addendum was initiated in 2011 and focused on declining aquatic environment in the Meramec River Basin within St. Louis and Jefferson counties, Missouri. The report was signed, approved, and finalized in June 2013. The Big River is a main tributary to the Meramec and is listed as impaired with over 55 river miles adversely affected by sediment containing cadmium, lead, and zinc. The EPA is actively working on the Jefferson County Superfund Site that encompasses the entire county. EPA will be addressing the Superfund Site and overall CERCLA compliance. The USACE Feasibility Study focuses on ecosystem restoration and investigates the downstream transport of sediments, fish passage issues, and bed and bank instabilities that threaten the few remaining freshwater mussel beds known to be strong holds for the endangered species.

**Status:** The USACE feasibility study is complete; the Chief's Report was signed in November 2019. The EPA is working on a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the Superfund site that covers the Big River. The EPA's study will result in a Record of Decision (ROD), with an estimated completion in 2022. The USACE Recommended Plan will be coordinated closely with the EPA and their ROD. The State of Missouri and other agencies are interested in potential restoration projects throughout the watershed.

**Importance:** The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR) has agreed to serve as a cost-share sponsor for this project and signed the FCSA on August 27, 2015. In addition, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) has selected this project location as one of 19 national waters of significance. UWFP is aimed at connecting urban areas and disadvantaged individuals within these areas with waterbodies that are inaccessible due to degradation. The USACE feasibility study identified potential aquatic ecosystem restoration projects that will protect, enhance, and restore degraded aquatic ecosystem and contribute to the shared local, state, and Federal interest and objectives in this watershed. Significant resources in the watershed include five Federally endangered mussel species that

are listed within the Meramec and Big rivers. This project is a priority for the State of Missouri.

**Risk:** Sediments contaminated by lead, zinc, and cadmium continue to migrate down the Big River toward the lower Meramec and its confluence with the Mississippi River. These sediments, along with fish passage barriers, bank instability, and altered riparian corridor continue to pose a significant risk to aquatic habitat and human health.

**Consequence:** The Meramec River Basin is among the most biologically significant river systems in the United States. Impacts to the aquatic environment will continue, and in some cases increase, if no ecosystem restoration measures are identified and implemented. Some of the last remaining mussel beds of endangered species are downstream of the migrating contaminated sediment. Without the USACE restoration project, the aquatic ecosystem will continue to be at risk as the USEPA's potential remediation is focused on human health. The USACE ecosystem restoration mission is an essential part of the local, state, and Federal objectives in this watershed.



Unstable bank along the Big River that is contributing excessive sediment and heavy metals to the aquatic ecosystem

**Activities for FY22:** The feasibility study is complete; the Chief's Report was signed in November 2019. Construction authority was provided in WRDA 2020. An appropriation is needed to execute a Design Agreement and initiate PED.

**Acquisition Strategy:** No contracts are scheduled to be awarded in FY22.

**Activities after FY22:** Carryover funding will be used to continue PED and execute a PPA.

**Project Partner:** Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR and U.S. FWS are co-administrators of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment account)

**Congressional Interest:** Senate: Blunt and Hawley (MO)  
House: Bush (MO-1), Wagner (MO-2), Luetkemeyer (MO-3), and Smith (MO-8)

Phase	FY 22 Allocation
Investigations	\$0