



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Louis District

St. Louis Riverfront–Meramec River Basin

Information Paper

Construction (ENR)

Contact:

Matthew Vielhaber, Project Manager

(314) 331-8052

matthew.r.vielhaber@usace.army.mil

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 included 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 located approximately 35 miles south of St. Louis, Missouri.

Description: 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 Superfund Sites that impact the Big River; USACE and EPA are working together closely to address the problems in the watershed. EPA is addressing human health and overall CERCLA compliance, while the USACE Feasibility Study focused on ecosystem restoration and investigated 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. The recommended project includes bank stabilization, sediment capture, and reforestation along the Big River with an estimated project cost of approximately \$114 million.

Status: The Chief's Report was signed in NOV 2019 and construction was authorized in WRDA 2020. The EPA is actively working on a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the Big River; USACE continues to coordinate this project closely with the EPA to efficiently maximize use of Federal funding. The State of Missouri and other State and Federal agencies are interested in potential restoration projects throughout the watershed. This project was included by Congress in the FY23 Community Project Funding, where \$1.4 million was provided to fully fund Pre-Construction Engineering and Design (PED). A Design Agreement was executed with the non-Federal sponsor, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), in AUG 2023.

Importance: MDNR has agreed to serve as a cost-share sponsor for this project and has provided cost share funding to support PED. In addition, MDNR currently has funding to support construction once a federal appropriation is provided. 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. A portion of this project is aimed at connecting

urban areas and disadvantaged individuals within these areas with waterbodies that are inaccessible due to degradation. Construction of this project would also provide direct assistance for landowners losing land to bank erosion, improve the Big River for recreation, and provide over \$100M of construction and economic activity in economically challenged areas. This project is a priority for the State of Missouri.

Authority: Section 401 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020; P.L 116-260, December 27, 2020

Schedule:

- Design Agreement executed: AUG 2023
- First set of plans and specifications complete: SEP 2024
- First contract award: TBD, pending construction appropriation.



Figure 1: Unstable banks along the Big River continue to contribute excessive sediment and heavy metals to the already degraded aquatic ecosystem

Activities for FY24: Continue PED and complete first increment of design. Project will be ready to initiate construction, pending funding.

Activities after FY24: Carryover funding will be used to complete PED in FY25. Pending construction appropriation (\$4M capability), team will execute PPA and begin construction activities.

Project Partner: Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Congressional Interest: Senate: Schmitt and Hawley (MO)
House: Wagner (MO-2),
Luetkemeyer (MO-3), and Smith (MO-8)

Financial:

Estimated Federal cost: \$73,905,000

Estimated non-Federal cost: \$39,795,000

Estimated total cost: \$113,700,000

Total Federal funding to date: \$1,400,000