



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

Information Paper

St. Louis Riverfront-Meramec River Basin Construction (Environmental Restoration)



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

Contact

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Location

The project area includes portions of the Meramec River Basin located in St. Louis, Jefferson, St. Francois, and Washington counties in Missouri (MO). 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, MO.

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 while the USACE ecosystem restoration project focuses on watershed quality, the downstream transport of sediments, fish passage and bed and bank instabilities that threaten endangered species and private lands within the watershed. The recommended project includes bank stabilization, sediment capture, and riparian restoration along the Big River with an estimated project cost of approximately \$150 million.

Status

The Chief's Report was signed in November 2019 and construction was authorized in WRDA 2020. 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 \$1.4M 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 August 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 ecosystem restoration project will protect, enhance, and restore degraded aquatic ecosystem and stabilize streambanks and private lands along the Big River, while contributing to the shared local interest in this watershed. A portion of this project is aimed at connecting the needs and considerations of all risk communities within these areas with waterbodies that are inaccessible due to degradation. Construction of this project would also provide direct assistance for private 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: DEC 2024
- First contract award: TBD, pending construction appropriation.

Activities for FY25

Carryover funds will be used to complete PED in FY25. Project will be ready to initiate construction, pending funding.

Activities after FY25

Pending construction appropriation (\$4M capability), team will execute a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) and begin construction activities.

Project Sponsor/Customer

Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

Congressional Interest

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

Financial

Federal funding	\$97,286,000
Non-federal funding	\$52,385,000
Total Project Cost	\$149,671,000

Federal Funds Allocated to Date	\$1,400,000
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