



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Upper Mississippi River - Illinois

Waterway System Navigation Study

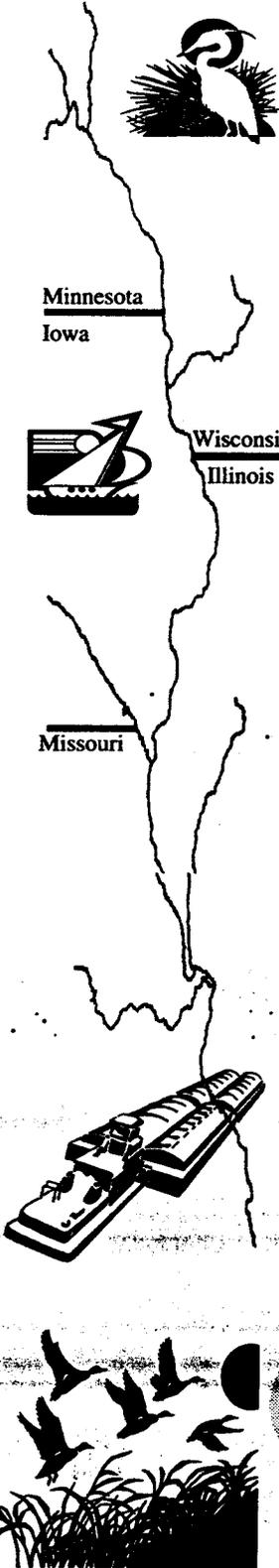
UMR-IWW System Navigation Study Newsletter

April 1995

Vol. 3 No. 2

“SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosted a series of eight public meetings in November 1994. This “Special Edition” newsletter summarizes the public meetings and public’s input, and addresses questions and concerns from the public meetings. ○



PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

The November 1994 public meetings were held for the following reasons:

- (1) to provide a study update;
- (2) to provide the public with background information concerning many of the river uses which include: habitat for many species of wildlife, transportation of bulk commodities, recreation and boating, and community and industrial water supplies;
- (3) to receive comments from the public and interest groups concerning problems and opportunities relating to the navigation improvements; and
- (4) to gather comments and information on environmental issues relevant to the Navigation Study and its proposals for consideration in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). ○

MEETING LOCATIONS

Public meetings were held in eight cities during November 1994: St. Louis, MO; Peoria, IL; Chicago, IL; Davenport, IA; St. Paul, MN; La Crosse, WI; Dubuque, IA; and Des Moines, IA. ○

MEETING FORMAT

The meeting format was identical in each city. Each meeting began with a welcome, an explanation of the meeting format, and a presentation by the technical manager of each work group (study management, economics, environmental, engineering, and public involvement). After the formal presentations, audience members gave oral statements. The Corps of Engineers technical managers then responded to written questions submitted by the audience.

After the written questions were addressed, members of the audience were invited to ask questions, which were again addressed by the technical managers of each work group. ○

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ATTENDANCE

The following attendance was noted at the eight meeting sites:

St. Louis	34	St. Paul	89
Peoria	33	La Crosse	215
Chicago	13	Dubuque	247
Davenport	83	Des Moines	26
Total	740		

These meetings generated 124 oral statements, 340 written questions, 280 oral questions, and 88 written statements. This input was invaluable in identifying the issues which most concerned the public. ○

INTEREST GROUPS/INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTED

A wide variety of interest groups attended the public meetings. Attendees included those who had a commercial interest in the river, such as barge lines, agricultural groups, and other businesses which depend on the river to ship commodities, and various environmental advocacy groups who strive to ensure the environmental integrity of the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway riverine system. Representatives from various state natural resource agencies and recreational and sporting groups wanted further pursuit of environmental safeguards in the Navigation Study.

While everyone agreed that the riverine environment should be one of the main considerations of the Navigation Study, there was little agreement on how this should be accomplished. Business and industry groups cited the low cost of river transportation and its vital importance to the economy of the Midwest. They did not think that improvements in the navigation system, and anticipated large increases in river traffic, would lead to subsequent environmental collapse.

Representatives from sporting and recreational organizations, along with officials from several state natural resource agencies, were concerned

about the Navigation Study plan. They wanted to make certain that it included environmental studies necessary to fully estimate the ecological impact of the existing system and the system with the proposed changes.

Several environmental advocacy groups called for the removal of all locks and dams and a return to the days when the rivers were not used by commercial traffic. They thought that the present navigation system was responsible for perceived ecological damage and predicted the impending collapse of the entire riverine ecosystem. ○

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

A summary of both the written and oral questions revealed several themes common to most of the meetings. These are discussed below.

1. The study's relationship to flood control efforts and the "Galloway Report" needs to be included.

In response to the flood of 1993, the White House assembled The Floodplain Management Review Committee, which was composed of 31 professionals assigned to Federal agencies dealing with water resources. Their report, "SHARING THE CHALLENGE: FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY," was directed by Gerald E. Galloway, Brigadier General, U.S. Army.

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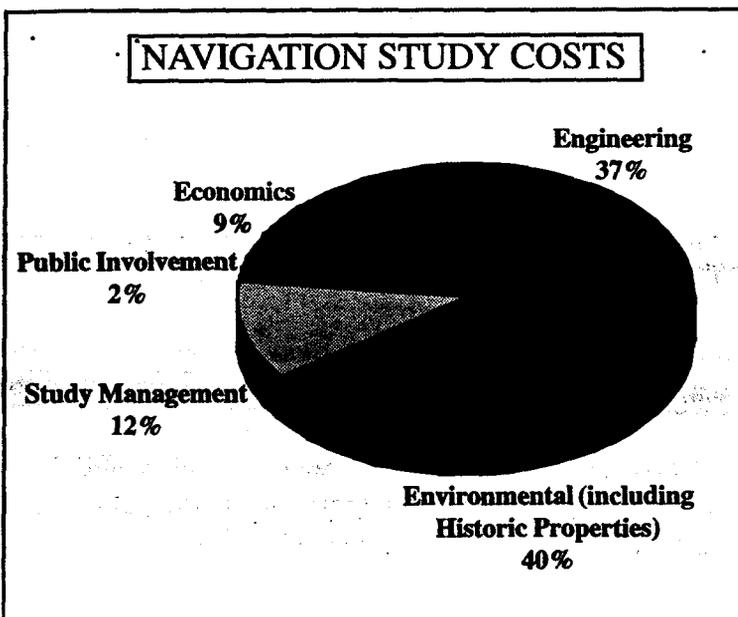
The Galloway Report proposes legislation to develop and fund a national Floodplain Management Program with principal responsibility and accountability at the state level.

accountability at the state level. It supports a floodplain management strategy of sequentially AVOIDING inappropriate use of the floodplain, MINIMIZING vulnerability to damage through both structural and nonstructural means, and MITIGATING flood damages when they do occur. In all, the Galloway Report made 36 recommendations and presented more than 60 actions to be taken to help alleviate future damage like that caused by the flood of 1993. Ecological restoration and effective floodplain management were seen by the report's authors as being interlinked. This approach called for a flood reduction system which met the needs of the basin and restored natural floodplain functions on appropriate lands.

Congress, through the Energy and Water Appropriations Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-126), authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a system-wide assessment of flood control and floodplain management needs which recognized and complemented the efforts of the Galloway Report. The Navigation Study has no direct relationship to these flood control and floodplain management efforts.

2. The study's cost is not justified.

The funding for the six-year navigation feasibility study is \$39.02 million, which averages about \$6.5 million a year. The funding will support all



technical studies examining the Upper Mississippi River from Cairo, IL, to Minneapolis, MN, and the Illinois Waterway from Grafton, IL, to Chicago, IL. In light of the large study area and the required data collection, analysis, plan formulation and evaluation process, expenditures of this magnitude are warranted.

3. The annual operations and maintenance (O&M) costs need to be included in the study.

The operations and maintenance costs will be included in the study and are an important factor in the decision-making process within the Navigation Study.

4. Regional economic benefits and assessments should be studied.

The Navigation Study's focus is on national economic development benefits of the waterway system. The states participating in the study have requested, through the Governors' Liaison Committee and the Economics Coordination Committee, that regional benefits be studied. This analysis was also requested by individuals at the public meetings. Regional economic development will likely be included, contingent upon funding.

5. Revenue sources, including the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, diesel fuel tax, and the cost sharing responsibility of the river transportation industry, need to be clearly explained.

The Inland Waterways Trust Fund is funded by a tax on diesel fuel used by commercial vessels. In 1976, Congress enacted a law to charge fees to inland commercial waterway users to help pay for construction and rehabilitation, as directed by Congress. The tax was first collected in 1980 and currently is 20 cents per gallon. The total revenue received in Fiscal Year 1994 was approximately \$88.4 million. This money is invested and, together with accrued interest, is applied toward a schedule of capital improvements.

If the Navigation Study concludes that the navigation system merits capital improvements and

Congress authorizes those improvements, the cost will be shared by the Trust Fund.

All forms of transportation receive government subsidies in one form or another. The fuel tax helps reduce the amount taxpayers pay to support capital improvements to inland waterway navigation structures. Congress periodically adjusts the fuel tax rate the commercial waterway shippers pay.

6. Are new dams and deeper channels, along with longer lock chambers, being considered, too?

New dams and channels deeper than the nine-foot navigation channel now authorized are not being considered in this study. Recent engineering assessments have found the dams to be in sound condition. Longer locks capable of handling the tows now seen frequently on the river are being studied along with more than 90 small-scale navigation improvements, such as extended guidewalls or powered keels that mechanically pull the first cut of a double lockage out of the lock to reduce total lockage time.

7. The long-term environmental effects of increased erosion and sedimentation of backwaters from commercial river traffic, existing locks and dams, navigation pools, and proposed construction need to be included in the study.

Sediment resuspension, bank erosion, and sedimentation in side channels and backwaters caused by navigation traffic will be investigated as part of the Navigation Study. Field and laboratory studies will provide information to model these effects. Physical (small-scale) models of Mississippi and Illinois River channel sections are being used at the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station in Vicksburg, MS, to quantify the physical effects of commercial vessels. A system of numerical models will be developed and calibrated to assess the effects of both commercial and recreational navigation.

8. The cumulative environmental effects of the existing navigation system both with and without the proposed improvements need to be examined.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is required to assess the cumulative effects of improvements to the navigation system under the National Environmental Policy Act and internal regulations. System-wide effects of increased traffic will be quantitatively assessed, including effects on fish, aquatic plants, mussels, sedimentation in backwaters and side channels, and bank erosion. With and without-improvement long-term scenarios will be assessed.

9. Is there efficient use of data collected by all previous studies, including those produced outside of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?

Data from previous environmental/navigation studies will be examined for consideration in the current Navigation Study. Literature searches are currently being conducted by the various staff within the Corps of Engineers who are involved in the study. Data collected for the Comprehensive Master Plan for the Management of the Upper Mississippi River System during the 1970s and 1980s is one source of information which is being examined. To be effective, the Navigation Study must rely on previous work.

10. Access to the study needs to be improved.

There are several ways in which the public can be kept informed about the study:

○ Following the November 1994 public meetings, the study's mailing list was expanded to include more than 7,500 people and organizations. Those on the mailing list receive the study newsletters, which are published three times a year. Each newsletter contains study information and a comment sheet.

○ A toll-free interactive telephone number (1-800-872-8822) has been set up to provide to the public general study information and information on economics, engineering, environmental, and public involvement activities. By using the toll-

free system, the public has the option of leaving comments or asking to be added to the study's mailing list.

○ The Initial Project Management Plan (IPMP) for the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study is available for \$7.50. See the information below on how to obtain an IPMP.

○ The Content Analysis Report from the November 1994 public meetings is available for \$12.

○ To purchase an Initial Project Management Plan or a Content Analysis Report, send a check payable to "FAO, USAED, Rock Island" to the following address:

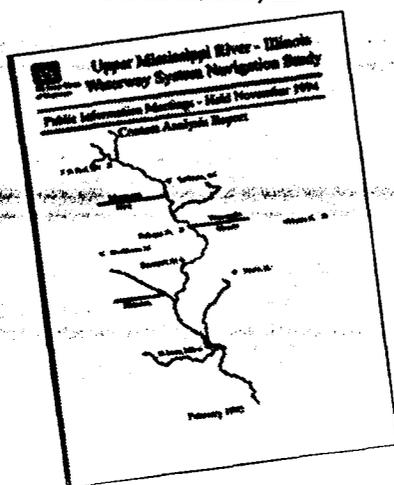
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island
ATTN: Planning Division (Simmons)
Clock Tower Building
P. O. Box 2004
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004

The Initial Project Management Plan and the Content Analysis Report are also available for review in the libraries at the District Offices in St. Paul, Rock Island, and St. Louis at the following addresses:

St. Paul District
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN

St. Louis District
1222 Spruce Street
St. Louis, MO

Rock Island District
Clock Tower Building
Rock Island, IL



A copy of the Content Analysis Report has been sent to the following libraries:

Chicago Public Library
425 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60602

Peoria Public Library
107 NE Monroe St.
Peoria, IL 61602

Davenport Public Library
321 Main St.
Davenport, IA 52801

St. Paul Public Library
90 W. 4th St.
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Louis Public Library
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100 Locust St.
Des Moines, IA 50308

Dubuque Public
Library
11th & Bluff St.
Dubuque, IA 52001

La Crosse Public
Library
800 Main St.
La Crosse, WI 54601

Copies of the Content Analysis Report may also be obtained through inter-library loan at public libraries.

11. Financial responsibility for any spill or any other environmental disaster happening on the river needs to be clearly established with the river transportation industry.

Environmental damage caused by a shipping accident on the Upper Mississippi River and/or Illinois Waterway is a rare event. Notwithstanding, there are at least three sources of Federal legislation which fix financial liability and assist with the immediate restoration of the environment. These acts include: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, and Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986. The responsible party is financially liable under these statutes.

In addition, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 requires the phaseout of all single hull tank vessels and prohibits the operation of those weighing less than 5,000 gross tons by the year 2015. The

inland waterway shipping industry was ahead of this legislation. Of the 271 inland tank vessels constructed between 1984 and 1993, only one was of single hull design.

The current study will address the relationship between increased traffic and future spills.

Major Concerns/Written Statements

The major concerns of the meeting participants were expressed in many well-prepared and thought-provoking oral and written statements. Environmental concerns ranged from those who were opposed to the Navigation Study, to those who had concerns about portions of the study. Both groups perceived degradation of the river ecosystem as inevitable given current and future navigation demands.

Many environmental advocacy groups predicted that any recommended improvement in the navigation system would lead to a steady increase in commercial river traffic and an eventual collapse of the entire ecosystem. The latter group, including commercial and sport fishermen, did not see immediate disaster, but rather an unfolding of events from an increase in commercial traffic which would lead to a slow decline in fish, mussel, and bird populations. They wanted the environmental efforts to improve the present situation, not just maintain it. Both groups were pessimistic about environmental issues being given the same attention as commercial shipping. They also questioned whether there is adequate time to complete the studies needed for the Environmental Impact Statement.

The agricultural and commercial shipping interests cited the need to be competitive in the world market and how this was directly linked to reducing shipping delays. ○

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Whenever possible, concerns expressed in the written and oral statements during the comment period of the public meetings are being addressed in the study. Perhaps the concern expressed the

most dealt with those who asked if environmental interests would be given the same attention as commercial navigation interests in the Navigation Study. The current environmental analysis plan for the Navigation Study includes numerous efforts to address impacts from potential navigation improvements. The system impact studies can be generally be divided into three categories: physical effects of navigation, biological impacts, and numerical (computer) modeling.

Hydraulic studies are being conducted to quantify the physical effects of towboats and barges moving in the navigation channels. Biological response studies are being performed to quantify the response by riverine life to the physical effects. The numerical modeling will provide a tool to tie together the various physical and biological effects in order to better understand the consequences which may occur to the river system as a result of potential navigation improvements, and to integrate the environmental component into the plan formulation process for developing navigation improvement plans. These efforts will help the Corps of Engineers address direct, secondary, and cumulative effects, and prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Study initiatives include:

- A 1 to 25 scale physical model constructed at the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station Lab to analyze various physical effects of passing tows in sample river reaches.
- A study to determine the amount of sediment resuspended by passing tows, and the amount of sedimentation in side channels and backwaters that results from vessel resuspension of sediment.
- Effects of navigation-induced currents, waves, and sediment on aquatic plants.
- Effects of wave wakes generated by recreational boats on bankline erosion, sediment resuspension, and aquatic plants.
- Effects (entrainment, disturbance, and draw-down) on adult, young of the year, and larval fish.

- Effects on mussels.
- Effects of recreational craft on environmentally sensitive backwaters and side channels.
- Effects of barge fleeting.
- Relationship between potential navigation improvements and accidental spills.
- Environmental effects of alternative modes of transportation.
- An assessment of environmental impacts of any potential site-specific construction for navigation improvements.

It is evident from the above, that substantial initiatives are underway in the current study plan to assess environmental issues and incorporate them into the plan formulation process. Thirty seven percent of the current Navigation Study budget is dedicated to environmental analysis.

Coordination during the study process to date has resulted in numerous statements to increase the level and number of environmental studies performed under the Navigation Study. These statements and desires to further address various issues and questions have been expressed both during the public meetings and by members of the Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee.

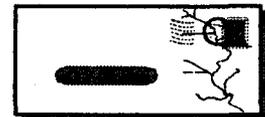
A package of additional environmental study plans was developed in consultation with the Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee. These plans propose detailed studies to: (1) assess the cumulative effects of the operation and maintenance of the navigation system, (2) forecast the future condition of the river environment, (3) evaluate river regulation alternatives, and (4) evaluate additional navigation traffic effects. The total cost of the additional efforts was estimated to be more than \$25 million. After examination, the Corps of Engineers determined that the

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additional studies are not necessary to meet National Environmental Policy Act requirements for the Navigation Study. Some of these study plans do have considerable merit, and may be pursued under authorities other than the Navigation Study.

We appreciate the information that was gathered as a part of the public meeting series. We will take these comments into consideration as the study progresses and decision points are reached. In addition to the Content Analysis Report dated February 1995, information presented at the meetings and in written statements will also become part of the permanent record of this planning study through their inclusion in the scoping document and in the Environmental Impact Statement. The scoping document, to be prepared in 1995, will include Corps of Engineers responses to the questions or issues posed during the public meetings. ○

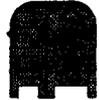
Questions?

○ for general study information, call Dave Tipple, study manager, at 309/794-5399 or write to the address below, ATTN: CENCR-PD-W.

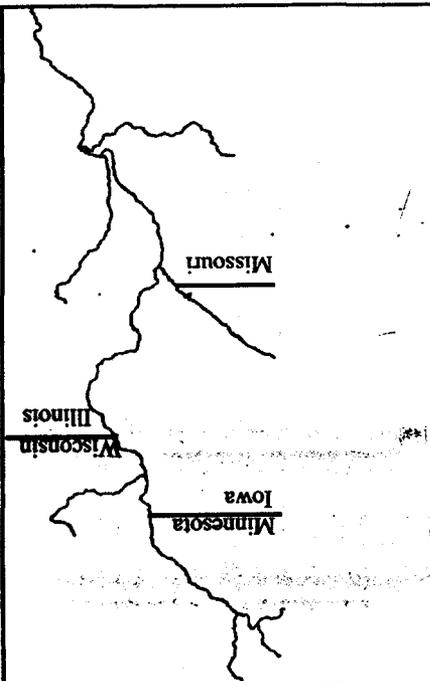
○ or for information on Public Involvement meetings, call the toll-free telephone number, 800/USA(872)-8822. Meeting announcements will be in the Public Involvement menu. Or call Kevin Bluhm, public involvement coordinator, at 612/290-5247, or write to the address below, ATTN: CENCR-PD-C/Bluhm.

○ if you want to be added to the mailing list for future newsletters, study updates, and meeting announcements, write to the address below, ATTN: CENCR-PD-C or call the toll-free telephone number and leave your information in the Public Involvement menu.

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