



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Louis District

Information Paper

U1. Side Channel Restoration – Buffalo Chute

Upper Mississippi River System - Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

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Location/Description

The program area comprises the Upper Mississippi River System, as defined by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (WRDA 1986), which includes the Upper Mississippi River from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Cairo, Illinois; the Illinois Waterway from Chicago to Grafton, Illinois; and navigable portions of the Minnesota, St. Croix, Black and Kaskaskia Rivers. This multi-use resource supports an extensive navigation system (made up of 1200 miles of 9 foot channel and 37 lock and dam sites), a diverse ecosystem (2.7 million acres of habitat supporting hundreds of fish and wildlife species), floodplain agriculture, recreation and tourism. Based on the recommendation of the recently completed UMR-IWW System Navigation Feasibility Study that examined system needs over the next 50 years, the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) was implemented to achieve the dual purposes of UMRS ecosystem restoration and navigation improvements. The Lock 25 – New 1200 ft Lock is one of 8 initial NESP navigation efficiency component projects being implemented under this new UMRS program.

Project location is the Middle Mississippi River, river miles 26.5 to 24.5, in Scott and Mississippi Counties, Missouri.

Project is a side channel restoration effort looking at notching existing dikes and placement of new training structures to improve connection to the river. Expected benefits include improved water quality, increased over-wintering and rearing habitat for fish, and increased habitat diversity within the side channel.



Problem Statement

Sedimentation at the upper and lower end of the chute isolates the side channel from the river as river levels decline. The chute maintains good depth except at the lowest river levels but is connected to the river only during periods of high water. Reconnection of the lower end of the chute would provide access for over-wintering fish, improve spawning and rearing habitat during warmer seasons of the year and enhance water quality in the chute.

Current Status

FY07 activities will include preparation of a Project Implementation Report, environmental assessment, and conclusion of pre-project monitoring.

Authority

Pending new authority, current activities supporting UMRS navigation and ecosystem improvements are performed under authority provided by Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-611).