



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Rock Island District

Information Paper

W. Island and Shoreline Protection

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 Island and Shoreline Protection project is one of 23 initial NESP ecological component projects being implemented under this new UMRS program.

The products of the Island and Shoreline Protection Team will be to construct bank protection on various sites throughout this 1200 mile river system. Innovative and cost effective methods of bank stabilization will be developed.

Problem Statement

Shoreline and island erosion are natural processes that characterize dynamic rivers. In the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS), shoreline erosion is exacerbated by commercial and recreational boats and by wind-generated waves in the impounded system. Shoreline erosion is a problem where it damages social resources, important habitats, or archeological resources.

Existing planform features of the UMRS need to be protected. Critical resources such as forest stands, heron and egret colonies, eagle roosting trees, and cultural sites are being threatened.

Natural resource managers have identified numerous locations where island and bank erosion is threatening critical resources. Highly valuable forest stands such as heron and egret nesting colonies, eagle roosting trees, or rare bottomland hardwoods are targets for protection of terrestrial resources. Erosion of natural levees or islands is undesirable in locations where introduction of sediment laden river flow, bed load, or currents may degrade backwater habitat.

Current Status

A Product Delivery Team (PDT) was formed in FY05 consisting of representatives of the three participating Corps Districts as well the states of Missouri, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The PDT meets periodically via teleconference to prioritize sites for construction and to plan activities and tasks to meet this goal.

Each of the three districts have selected an initial site and are pursuing construction of bank protection on these sites to protect valuable natural resources. These initial sites were selected based on recommendations of natural resource managers.

The initial sites selected are: MVS – Twin Island on the Illinois Waterway, MVR – Long Island in Pool 21 on the Mississippi River, and MVP – Pool 2 Islands / Methodist Lake.

Activities currently underway include, surveying, site inspection, cultural coordination, preliminary design, and development of Project Implementation Reports with integrated Environmental Assessment.

Authority

Pending new authority, our 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).