

**PEER REVIEW PLAN**

**[NESP PROJECT R3] POOL 18 GROWING SEASON DRAWDOWN  
NAVIGATION AND ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM  
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT WITH  
INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

## PEER REVIEW PLAN

### [NESP PROJECT R3] POOL 18 GROWING SEASON DRAWDOWN NAVIGATION AND ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT WITH INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

#### I. PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS

**A. The Document.** This document outlines the peer review plan for NESP Project R3 – Pool 18 Growing Season Drawdown Ecosystem Restoration Project Implementation Report (PIR) with Integrated Environmental Assessment and Appendices. The project is a component of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). The NESP was authorized for study and design by Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970. Construction authorization is currently pending in the 2007 version of the Water Resources Development Act. The Chiefs Report for the comprehensive feasibility study recommending the need for further study on several ecosystem restoration projects was approved on 02 December 2004. The PIR for this project build on the comprehensive feasibility study and provides the site specific planning details necessary for project approval.

EC 1105-2-408 dated 31 May 2005 “Peer Review of Decision Documents” 1) establishes procedures to ensure the quality and credibility of Corps decision documents by adjusting and supplementing the review process and 2) requires that documents have a peer review plan. The Circular applies to all feasibility studies and reports and any other reports that lead to decision documents that require authorization by Congress. The feasibility level reports (PIRs) in this program will lead to Congressional Authorization and are therefore covered by the Circular.

**B. The Circular.** The Circular outlines the requirement of the two review approaches—Independent Technical Review (ITR) and external peer review (EPR)—and provides guidance on Corps Planning Centers of Expertise (PCX) involvement in the approaches. This document addresses review of the decision document as it pertains to both approaches and planning coordination with the appropriate Center.

**1. INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW (ITR).** Districts are responsible for reviewing the technical aspects of the decision documents through the ITR approach. Independent Technical Review is a critical examination by a qualified person or team that was not involved in the day-to-day technical work that supports the decision document. Independent Technical Review is intended to confirm that such work was done in accordance with clearly established professional principles, practices, codes, and criteria. In addition to technical review, documents should also be reviewed for their compliance with laws and policy. The Circular also requires that DrChecks (<https://www.projnet.org/projnet/>) be used to document all ITR comments, responses, and associated resolution accomplished.

**2. EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW (EPR).** The Circular added external peer review to the existing Corps review process. This approach does not replace the standard ITR process. The peer review approach applies in special cases where the magnitude and risk of the project are such that a critical examination by a qualified person outside the Corps is necessary. External Peer Review can also be used where the information is based on novel methods, presents complex interpretation challenges, contains precedent-setting methods or models, or is likely to affect policy decisions that

have a significant impact. The degree of independence required for technical review increases as the project magnitude and project risk increase.

a. Projects with low magnitude and low risk may use a routine ITR.

b. Projects with either high magnitude/low risk or low magnitude/high risk would require both Corps and outside reviewers on the ITR team to address the portions of the project that cause the project to rate high on the magnitude or risk scale.

c. Projects with high magnitude and high risk require a routine ITR as well as an EPR.

**3. PCX Coordination.** The Circular outlines PCX coordination in conjunction with preparation of the review plan. Districts should prepare the plans in coordination with the appropriate PCX. The Corps PCX are responsible for the accomplishment and quality of ITR and EPR for decision documents covered by the Circular. Centers may conduct the review or manage the review to be conducted by others. Reviews will be assigned to the appropriate Center based on business programs. The Circular outlines alternative procedures to apply to decision documents. Each Center is required to post review plans to its website every three months as well as links to any reports that have been made public. The Office of Water Project Review (OWPR) will consolidate the lists of all review plans and establish a mechanism for soliciting public feedback on the review plans.

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

**A. Decision Document.** The purpose of the decision document entitled *Pool 18 Growing Season Drawdown Ecosystem Restoration Project Implementation Report (PIR) with Integrated Environmental Assessment* and Appendices is to present the results of a feasibility study undertaken to restore hydrologic variability and function to lower Pool 18. This report provides planning, engineering, and implementation details of the recommended restoration plan to allow final design and construction to proceed subsequent to the approval of the plan.

**B. General Site Description.** Pool 18 borders Iowa and Illinois in Henderson and Mercer Counties, Illinois, and Des Moines and Louisa Counties, Iowa. Lock and Dam 18 is located near Gladstone, IL, approximately 6.5 miles north of Burlington, Iowa.

**C. Project Scope.** The proposed project influences the hydrology of Pool 18, encompassing 135,000 acres of aquatic and floodplain habitat. The project is expected to beneficially impact up to 1400 acres of shallow aquatic and low-lying terrestrial habitat. The preliminary estimated total project cost is \$1.35 million.

**D. Problems and Opportunities.** Historically, the Corps of Engineers has regulated the river for the single, Congressionally authorized, project purpose of maintaining a safe and reliable navigation channel. Through this Water Level Management effort, we are examining opportunities to modify the current methods of river regulation to improve conditions of the river ecosystem through restoration of hydrologic processes.

**E. Product Delivery Team.** The product delivery team (PDT) is comprised of those individuals directly involved in the development of the decision document. Contact information and disciplines are listed below.

First	Last	Discipline	Phone	Email
REMOVED	REMOVED	Team Leader/Hydraulics/Hydrology	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Civil Design	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Biology/NEPA	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Operations/Channel Maintenance	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Socio-Economics	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Cost Engineering	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Real Estate	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Cultural resources	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	HTRW	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Water Quality	REMOVED	REMOVED

**F. Vertical Team.** The Vertical Team includes District management, District Support Team (DST) and Regional Integration Team (RIT) staff as well as members of the Planning of Community of Practice (PCoP). The District project manager is, CEMVR-PM-M. The regional project manager is REMOVED. DST manager for this project is CEMVD-PD-SP. The RIT manager is REMOVED. The PCoP contact is CEMVD-PD.

### III. INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL PLAN

As outlined above in paragraph 1.b. (1), the District is responsible for ensuring adequate technical review of decision documents. The responsible PDT District of this decision document is the Rock Island District. The St. Paul District is recommended for comprising a portion of the ITR team for this project due to their previous, recent experience in planning and implementing similar growing season drawdowns in Pools 5 and 8; as well as to leverage the Mississippi Valley Division Regional Technical Specialist for Water Quality and Environmental Restoration (removed). Selection of the ITR Manager, and the Plan Formulation and Biology reviewers, will be coordinated with the Ecosystem Planning Center of Expertise.

**A. General.** An ITR Manager shall be designated for the ITR process. The recommended ITR Manager for this project will be requested from, and coordinated with, the Ecosystem Planning Center of Expertise. As is required by the PCX, a manager from outside the PDT's Division will be required. The proposed scope of work for the ITR Process is provided in Appendix A. In general, the ITR Manager is responsible for providing information necessary for setting up the review, communicating with the Team Leader, providing a summary of critical review comments, collecting grammatical and editorial comments from the ITR team (ITRT), ensuring that the ITRT has adequate funding to perform the review, facilitating the resolution of the comments, and certifying that the ITR has been conducted and resolved in accordance with policy.

**B. Team.** The ITRT will be comprised of individuals that have not been involved in the development of the decision document and will be chosen based on expertise, experience, and/or skills. The members will roughly mirror the composition of the PDT. The ITRT members and their areas of expertise are:

First	Last	Discipline	Phone	Email
To be coordinated with the PCX.		ITR Manager	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Hydraulics / Hydrology	REMOVED	REMOVED
To be coordinated with the PCX.		Plan Formulation	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Civil Design	REMOVED	REMOVED
To be coordinated with the PCX.		Biology/NEPA	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Operations	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Cost Engineering <sup>1</sup>	REMOVED	REMOVED
REMOVED	REMOVED	Real Estate/Lands	REMOVED	REMOVED

<sup>1</sup> The cost engineering team member nomination will be coordinated with the NWW Cost Estimating Directory of Expertise as required. The Directory will decide if the cost estimate will need to be reviewed by Directory Staff.

### C. Timing and Schedule

1. Throughout the development of this document, the team will hold planning charrettes to ensure planning quality. Senior staff and subject matter experts from the PDT District and members of the vertical team (DST, Planning CoP, RIT) will attend the charrettes and provide comments on the product to date.

2. The ITR process for this document will follow the timeline below. Actual dates will be scheduled once the review period draws closer. It is estimated that review of this document will be begin in the 2nd Quarter of FY08.

Task	Date
Comment Period Begin	Week 1
Kickoff Meeting	Week 1
ITR Comments Due	Week 4
PDT Responses Due	Week 6
Responses Backcheck	Week 8
Certification	Week 10
Alternative Formulation Briefing (AFB)	Week 14
AFB Policy Memo Issued	Week 18
After Action Review	NLT Week 20

### IV. EPR PLAN

A. This decision document will present the details of a feasibility study undertaken for ecosystem restoration in Pool 18 as described in paragraph 2 above. This critical restoration project is part of a larger program aimed at restoration of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. This project does not meet the EPR standards outlined in the Circular.

**1. Project Magnitude.** The magnitude of this project is determined as low. The cost of the project will likely not exceed \$1.4 Million. It is assumed that the amount of benefits accrued by the project will justify the cost. The scale of the project is limited because the project construction footprint will be limited to isolated main channel dredging and river access points (marinas, boat ramps, barge terminals) but will still contribute to the overall goal of the program. The project is not considered complex and involves restoration of aquatic habitat through the implementation of standard concepts that are currently in practice elsewhere on the Upper Mississippi River. The project will have positive long term and cumulative effects.

**2. Project Risk.** This project is considered low risk overall. The potential for failure is low because restoration accomplished through seasonal drawdowns is a straight forward concept with numerous successful national applications. The potential for controversy regarding project implementation is low because the recommended plan will take into account the public's concerns. A socio-economic analysis will be prepared and at least one public meeting will be held. The uncertainty of success of the project is low because the methods used for evaluating the project are standard and the concept of implementing a growing season drawdown is not innovative. The ecosystem has not reached an irreversible state so it is likely that a restoration effort of the magnitude proposed will be successful. No influential scientific information will likely be generated from this project.

**3. Vertical Team Consensus.** Initial coordination has been conducted with the vertical team regarding the scope and level of review; however, final determination as to whether the subject matter covered in the decision document meets the requirement that it is NOT novel, controversial, or precedent-setting, and the project will not have significant interagency interest or significant economic, environmental or social effects will be made after completion of the PCX review.

4. Therefore, a separate EPR will not be conducted on the decision document and external members will not be part of the ITR team. The ITR, Public, and Agency Review will serve as the main review approaches.

## **V. PUBLIC AND AGENCY REVIEW**

A. Public review of the document will occur after issuance of the AFB policy guidance memo and concurrence by HQUSACE that the document is ready for public release. As such, public comments other than those provided at any public meetings held during the planning process will not be available to the review team.

B. Public review of this document will begin approximately one month after the completion of the ITR process and policy guidance memo. The estimated time frame for this review is March, 2008. The period will last 30 days.

C. The public review of necessary State or Federal permits will also take place during this period.

D. A formal State and Agency review will occur after the release of the final report is approved by the Civil Works Review Board. However, intensive coordination with these agencies has occurred concurrent with the planning process. Possible public concern issues are related to maintaining recreation access to the river during a growing season drawdown. Possible State and Agency issues are concerns over potential impacts to freshwater mussels.

E. Upon completion of the review period, comments will be consolidated in a matrix and addressed, if needed. A comment resolution meeting will take place if needed to decide upon the best resolution of comments. A summary of the comments and resolutions will be included in the document.

## **VI. MODEL CERTIFICATION**

This project will use the Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide (WHAG, developed by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service) to quantify benefits in terms of habitat quantity (measured in acres) and quality (measured with Habitat Suitability Index Models). The WHAG model is currently uncertified. Model certification will be sought through the PCX in conjunction with other ecosystem restoration projects (also using WHAG) currently underway within the Rock Island District. The PIR would not disseminate a highly influential scientific assessment as defined by OMB in the Federal Register Vol. 70 No. 10 pages 2664-2677.

## **VII. PCX COORDINATION**

The appropriate PCX for this document is the National Ecosystem Planning Center of Expertise. This review plan will be submitted through the PDT District Planning Chief, to the PCX Director, REMOVED, and PCX Deputies, REMOVED and REMOVED, for approval. Because it was determined that this project is low magnitude and low risk, an EPR will not be required. As such, the PCX will not be asked to manage the review, but is requested to review and comment on the sufficiency of the ITR team proposed in paragraph 3.b. above. The approved review plan will be posted to the PCX website. Any public comments on the review plan will be collected by the Office of Water Project Review (OWPR) and provided to the PDT District for resolution and incorporation if needed.

## **VIII. APPROVAL**

The PDT will carry out the review plan as described. The Team Leader will submit the plan to the PDT District Planning Chief for approval. Coordination with PCX will occur through the PDT District Planning Chief. Signatures by the individuals below indicate approval of the plan as proposed.

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REMOVED  
Team Leader, Pool 18 Growing Season Drawdown  
Product Delivery Team (NESP Project R3)

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Date

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REMOVED  
Ecosystem Technical Manager,  
Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

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Date

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REMOVED  
Plan Formulation Technical Manager,  
Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

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Date

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REMOVED  
District Project Manager,  
Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

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Date

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REMOVED  
Chief, Planning and Policy Branch  
Rock Island District

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Date

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REMOVED  
Deputy for Programs and Project Management  
Rock Island District

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Date