

Executive Summary

The Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) System Navigation Study has been restructured to give equal consideration of fish and wildlife resources and navigation improvement planning consistent with recommendations from the National Research Council and the Federal Principals Group. This Interim Report summarizes the results of the navigation feasibility study to date and provides a framework for completing the study as restructured to ensure the UMR-IWW system continues to be a nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant commercial navigation system. The restructured study will address the navigation efficiency needs of the UMR-IWW, the ongoing cumulative effects of navigation, and the ecosystem restoration needs with a goal of attaining an environmentally sustainable navigation system. This Interim Report is not a decision document. The full economic and environmental evaluations necessary to support a potential recommendation for construction of navigation improvements and implementation of ecosystem restoration measures will be contained in the final feasibility report scheduled for completion in 2004.

A collaborative process has been applied in restarting the restructured navigation study and preparing the Interim Report. An important aspect of this collaboration is the Federal Principals Group that was established to assist the Corps in formulation of guidance and oversight. In addition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Principals Group consists of senior level representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Maritime Administration. The Federal Principals Group has endorsed the framework for the restructured study and a Federal Principals Group Position paper is attached to this executive summary. Collaboration has also been emphasized on the regional level to include other Federal agencies, state agencies, the public, and economic and environmental non-governmental organizations. A listing of these participating agencies and organizations is also attached to this executive summary.

Initial plan formulation activities outlined in this report include the establishment of goals and objectives, scenarios of future conditions, identification of navigation improvement and ecosystem restoration measures, description of the evaluation process, and identification of implementation issues.

Goals and Objectives. Successful adaptive management of the UMR-IWW will require stakeholder participation in establishing basic goals and objectives for the system. Stakeholders have agreed that the over-riding goal is to develop a plan for sustainable communities, economies, and ecosystems. The definition of sustainability was collaboratively developed and reads:

“The balance of economic, ecological and social conditions so as to meet the current, projected and future needs of the Upper Mississippi River System without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”

The stakeholders of the system will be engaged in further development of the goals and objectives for the system in the feasibility study.

Scenarios of Future Conditions. A scenario-based approach has been employed to address the uncertainty of forecasting transportation demand 50 years into the future. This approach was suggested by the Federal Principals Group and represents a range of plausible alternative views of the future demand for waterway traffic on the system. A set of drivers was developed including world trade, crop area, crop yield, and consumption. These drivers were varied with respect to trends, policies, conditions, and events that could impact the U.S. agricultural sector export markets. Each of these scenarios represents a “without project” condition that will be used in evaluating alternative plans in the feasibility study.

Navigation Improvement and Ecosystem Restoration Measures. This report outlines those navigation improvement and ecosystem restoration measures that will be carried forward for evaluation. These include nonstructural measures such as congestion fees and traffic management, and structural measures such as guidewall extension, lock extensions, and new locks. Ecosystem restoration measures include those beneficial adjustments to system operation and maintenance, ecosystem restoration opportunities, and environmental enhancement opportunities related to the navigation system. Examples of these measures include traffic impact prevention and reduction; channel modifications; systemic fish passage and water level management; backwater, secondary channel, and island rehabilitation.

Evaluation Process. Alternative plans will be developed by combining measures representing progressive levels of navigation investment in both nonstructural and structural measures and progressive levels of investment in environmental restoration measures to meet identified restoration goals and objectives. The Interim Report describes a process of combining these navigation and environmental measures into alternative plans and evaluating the economic and environmental performance of these plans using the scenarios and environmental goals and objectives. This process will provide decision makers the information needed to make an informed recommendation on implementation of modifications to the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System. Criteria that would be used by decision makers include the degree to which the alternative plan or combination of alternative plans contribute to national economic development and national ecosystem restoration under a range of scenarios, the relative risk of selecting or not selecting the plan, the degree to which the plan is supported by a wide range of interests, and the flexibility and adaptability of the plan.

Implementation Issues. Implementation issues related to authorization, funding and cost sharing, integrated management, scenario development, economic modeling, and adaptive management have been identified in this report. Preliminary conclusions on these issues are provided, although final conclusions and recommendations will be provided in the feasibility report.

1 July 2002

INTERIM REPORT FOR THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND ILLINOIS WATERWAY SYSTEM RESTRUCTURED NAVIGATION STUDY

FEDERAL PRINCIPALS GROUP POSITION

1. This document reflects the position of the Federal Principals Group on the status of the restructured navigation study and the framework for completion of the feasibility study as outlined in the Interim Report. These positions do not in any way limit the prerogatives of any of the member Federal agencies or preclude the agencies from providing additional comments on the Interim Report.
2. The Principals Group finds that the framework for completion of the feasibility study presented in the Interim Report is consistent with the Principals Group 25 June 2001 guidance for restructuring the navigation study. Pursuant to that guidance, the Interim Report does not present recommendations to Congress for consideration in the Water Resources Development Act of 2002 and is not a decision document. The full economic and environmental evaluations necessary to support a potential recommendation for construction of navigation improvements or implementation of ecosystem restoration measures have not been completed.
3. The Interim Report provides a framework for addressing the cumulative environmental effects of navigation and the needs for ecosystem restoration as an integral part of the restructured navigation study with a goal of an environmentally sustainable navigation system. The Principals Group endorses adding ecosystem restoration as an authorized purpose of the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway Navigation System and supports the concept of developing an implementation plan for ecosystem restoration which incorporates both 100% Federal and cost-shared components.
4. The Principals Group endorses the scenarios presented in the Interim Report as capturing a plausible range of future navigation system traffic over a 50-year horizon. The Principals Group recognizes that the Interim Report commits to integrating an adaptive management concept in formulating and implementing navigation improvement and ecosystem restoration plans. The Principals Group supports continued monitoring and analysis of environmental and economic conditions and responses to assure that the plans for navigation improvements and environmental restoration are efficient and effective and appropriately modified and adjusted to meet changing conditions and emerging science.
5. The Principals Group is aware of the controversy surrounding the development of a spatial equilibrium model for the economic evaluation of navigation improvements. The Principals reviewed the findings of the National Research Council and, while endorsing these findings, concluded that a fully developed and tested spatial equilibrium model was unlikely to be

achieved in a reasonable timeframe for feasibility study completion consistent with stakeholder and congressional expectations. The Principals support use of existing economic models while research and development on improved models moves forward but within the context of an adaptive management process that would review study results as new models are developed, tested, and accepted. The Principals also note that the recommendation development process for the feasibility study will recognize the high level of uncertainty surrounding projections of navigation system traffic and anticipate that decision makers will seek alternative plans that are justified under a wide range of future system traffic conditions and enjoy a broad level of stakeholder support.

6. The Principals Group approves the process of developing a range of measures representing progressive levels of navigation investment in both nonstructural and structural measures. The Group also concurs with the process of formulating environmental restoration measures to reflect progressive levels of investment in meeting identified restoration goals and objectives. The Interim Report describes a process of combining these navigation and environmental measures into alternative plans and evaluating the economic and environmental performance of these plans using the scenarios and environmental goals and objectives. The Principals Group believes that the successful implementation of this process should provide decision makers the information needed to make an informed recommendation on implementation of modifications to the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway system. Criteria that would be used by decision makers include the degree to which the alternative plan or combination of alternative plans contribute to national economic development and national ecosystem restoration under a range of scenarios, the relative risk of selecting or not selecting the plan, the degree to which the plan is supported by a wide range of interests, and the flexibility and adaptability of the plan.

7. The Principals Group applauds the collaborative process in restarting the restructured navigation study and preparing the Interim Report and encourages continued collaboration in the completion of the feasibility study and implementation of the resulting recommendations.

8. Assuring the continuation of the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway Navigation System as a nationally significant transportation system and ecosystem resource will necessitate the involvement of all the Federal agencies making up the Principals Group. The opportunities and approaches for leveraging the authorities and programs of all the involved Federal agencies should be explored as the study progresses.

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UMR-IWW System Navigation Study Participating Agencies and Organizations

American Rivers
American Waterway Operators
Audubon Society
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Illinois Department of Transportation
Iowa Department of Agriculture
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Iowa Department of Transportation
Midwest Area River Coalition 2000
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Mississippi River Basin Alliance
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Missouri Department of Transportation
National Corn Growers Association
The Izaak Walton League of America
The Nature Conservancy
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Upper Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri River Association
Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Wisconsin Governor's Office