



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Rock Island District

United States Department of Defense

US Army Corps of Engineers - Rock Island District

## **UMR-IWW Navigation Study 1994 Public Meetings**

### **Interim Product Report, November 1995**

### **"Response to Issues Raised at the Public and NEPA Scoping Meetings of November 1994"**

## **Introductory and Background Sections**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF DOCUMENT**

The purpose of this document is to summarize and address various issues raised during the course of Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study. "Issue statements" were developed from comments made as part of the eight public meetings held in November 1994. The meetings were held in St. Louis, Missouri; Peoria and Chicago, Illinois; Davenport, Dubuque, and Des Moines, Iowa; La Crosse, Wisconsin; and St. Paul, Minnesota. The statements made at these meetings, comments received pursuant to them, and the Corps of Engineers responses form the main body of this document.

A brief description of the study background, the public involvement process to date, and the existing Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System is provided below to establish the context for this study and document.

### **STUDY BACKGROUND**

This study is one component of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers three-component management approach regarding navigation responsibilities. The first component, Operations and Maintenance, assures that routine repairs and maintenance activities keep the system's components safe and operational. The second component, Major Rehabilitation, ensures the structural soundness of the existing navigation system for the next 25 years. The third component, Navigation Planning, focuses on future needs planning. This third component is the basis for the Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study.

The Corps of Engineers project planning process can be summarized into 5 steps or phases. The first is a reconnaissance phase. The purpose of this phase is to perform a preliminary analysis of the problem and determine if there is a potential solution and a need to proceed to the next study phase. The second phase is feasibility. This is a thorough analysis of the problems, solutions, and impacts. The end result of this phase can be a recommendation to Congress. If a feasible project is identified, the next two phases are pre-construction engineering and design and construction. The final phase would be operations and maintenance.

This study initially began as two separate reconnaissance studies (Illinois Waterway and Upper Mississippi River). Within each reconnaissance study, an initial assessment was performed and several sites were identified that appeared feasible for navigation improvements. These two studies were combined into one system feasibility study which began in April of 1993. As currently defined, the feasibility study is 6 years and 9 months in length and has a cost estimate of \$45.98 million.

This system feasibility study is assessing the need for navigation improvements on a waterway system that includes 37 locks, 29 on the Upper Mississippi River and 8 on the Illinois Waterway, and the incremental impacts of additional traffic. This effort is being undertaken to address the primary problem, which is the

potential for significant traffic delays on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway Navigation System within the 50-year planning horizon, resulting in economic losses to the nation.

The Corps of Engineers uses a six-step plan formulation process to determine if there is a worthwhile, feasible plan of improvements (project) to recommend to Congress for action. The steps in this process are to identify the problems and opportunities; inventory, forecast, and analyze conditions; formulate alternatives or measures to deal with the problems and opportunities; evaluate the economic, environmental, and other effects, both beneficial and adverse; compare identified alternatives and measures; and select a recommended plan. Scoping is part of the initial step of identifying problems and opportunities.

## STUDY PROCESS TO DATE

Several public involvement activities have taken place within the feasibility study. Corps of Engineers representatives have twice met directly with the public to present and discuss the Navigation Study, and open houses are planned for the last week in November and the first week in December 1995. In addition, ongoing coordination takes place through the Economics Coordination Committee, Engineering Coordinating Committee, Governors' Liaison Committee, Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee, Public Involvement Coordination Committee, and newsletters. These committee meetings are open to the public.

Prior to the initiation of the feasibility study on December 9-10, 1992, a Reconnaissance Review Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois, to discuss conclusions and recommendations from the separate Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway Reconnaissance Studies and the scope, cost, and schedule for executing this feasibility study. The meeting was attended by representatives of the five Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS) states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), various interest groups, and the Corps of Engineers.

Fourteen informational public meetings were held along the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway in October and November of 1993. Those meetings were designed to provide information to those who were unfamiliar with or who had little knowledge of the Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study. Based on these meetings and the publics' desire for more information, additional meetings were added to the study schedule.

In November 1994, eight public meetings were held throughout the study area. The purpose of these meetings was to provide information on the study plan and on the status of all efforts, and to solicit the publics' input in identifying problems, opportunities, and issues relating to the Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study. The meetings also were designed as a component of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process.

## DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING SYSTEM

The study area includes the Upper Mississippi River from Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock in Minneapolis-St. Paul, River Mile 854.0, downstream to the mouth of the Ohio River, River Mile 0.0, and the Illinois Waterway from the Thomas J. O'Brien Lock, River Mile 327.0, within the Chicago area downstream to the confluence with the Mississippi River at Grafton, Illinois, River Mile 0.0. The Illinois Waterway not only includes the Illinois River, but also the Calumet-Sag Channel, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and the Chicago River South Branch. The combined study area includes approximately 1,200 miles of navigable waterway. [Figure 1](#) on the following page shows the study area.

Many of the locks, built mostly in the 1930s, were not designed to accommodate modern tow sizes. While the majority of the locks on the system are 600 feet long, typical tows on the river today are 1,200 feet in length (15-barge tows). This discrepancy results in time-consuming double lockages, a process which takes from an hour and a half to two hours. In contrast, a 15-barge tow can lock through a 1,200-foot lock in under one hour. Tonnage on the system for 1992 was more than 86 million tons on the Upper Mississippi River and nearly 43 million tons on the Illinois Waterway. This traffic on the system translates into delays. In 1992, the average delay was 4 hours at Lock 22 and over 6 hours at Lock 25. The tows may be queued or waiting a mile or more from the lock site to avoid blocking the approach to the lock. Eight of the 29 locks on the Upper Mississippi River and 3 of the 8 Illinois Waterway locks were identified in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1988 *Inland Waterways Review* as being among the 20 locks in the country with the highest average delays in 1987. With growing usage (preliminary forecasts of annual growth range from 1.2 to 3.1 percent), these delays will increase, resulting in higher delay costs.

### **FIGURE 1 - Map of Study Area**

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[Back to the Interim Report Table of Contents](#)

[Onto ISSUE STATEMENTS](#) (the next part of the report)

[Back to the Navigation Study Home Page](#)

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