



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

ILLINOIS RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FEASIBILITY STUDY SUPPLEMENTAL NEWSLETTER



Remaining Three Public Open Houses Rescheduled

January 2001

Corps & DNR Formally Initiate Study

On November 29, 2000, Colonel William J. Bayles, Rock Island District, Corps of Engineers, Commander, and Mr. Brent Manning, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director, formally initiated the Illinois River Ecosystem Restoration feasibility study in a cost-sharing signing ceremony. Congressman Ray LaHood sponsored and attended the event. This ceremony confirmed the agencies' commitment as "partners" to identify opportunities to implement ecosystem restoration and to evaluate recommendations made in the State of Illinois' *Integrated Management Plan for the Illinois River Watershed* and determine if there is a Federal interest (environmental benefits exceeding costs) in their implementation.

The first in a series of seven public open houses followed the signing ceremony. Six additional open houses were planned to be held throughout the study area during the month of December. Open houses were held in Bloomington, IL, on December 4, Kankakee, IL, on December 5, and Yorkville, IL, on December 6. The last three open houses were cancelled due to inclement weather.

**** Open Houses Rescheduled ****

The cancelled open houses have now been rescheduled. The public is invited to attend an open house *at any time* between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at one of the following locations:

Tuesday, February 20
Pere Marquette State Park
Grand Ballroom
Route 100, Great River Road
Grafton, IL

Monday, February 26

Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center
Starved Rock State Park
Route 178 & Route 71
Utica, IL

Tuesday, February 27

Western Illinois University
Lamoine Room in University Union
Murray Street
Macomb, IL

(NOTE: Because of construction, the University recommends that visitors enter the campus by taking University Drive to Western Avenue. Lot 17 (south of the library) is recommended for parking.)

The purpose of the open houses is to provide the public with the opportunity to learn about the Illinois River Ecosystem Restoration Study. Study team members will be available to meet with the public to discuss on a one-to-one basis information on the range of alternatives for restoring the environment in the Illinois River watershed and to gather comments on the alternatives and problems in the area.

Several displays will be set up to explain the Illinois River Ecosystem Restoration Study. All interested members of the public are encouraged to attend an open house, visit the displays, talk to agency representatives, and provide comments. The comments received at this open house will be considered during the study and will be part of the official NEPA scoping process.

If you know of someone who may have an interest in this study and who did not receive this announcement, please encourage him/her to attend an open house. (Also, please see the

“Study’s Mailing List Continues to Grow” paragraph on the reverse side of this sheet.)

Study Background

The study area includes the entire Illinois River Basin and its tributaries. The Illinois River is part of the Illinois Waterway System, extending 327-miles from Lake Michigan at Chicago, Illinois, to the Illinois River’s confluence with the Mississippi River at Grafton, Illinois. Major tributaries included in the study are the Fox, Des Plaines, Kankakee, Iroquois, Vermilion, Mackinaw, Spoon, Sangamon, and La Moine Rivers.

The study will identify Federal and State interest in addressing the loss of fish and wildlife habitat due to problems related to the loss of backwaters and side channels due to sedimentation, destabilized tributary streams, changed hydrologic regimes and water fluctuations, and other impacts on the system caused by human activity.

Study efforts will focus on four broad categories:

(1) Watershed/Tributary Restoration - evaluate options to address tributary degradation and instability by looking at stream restoration, wetlands creation/restoration, water retention, conservation easements, and riparian buffers.

(2) Side Channel and Backwater Restoration - consider opportunities to restore aquatic habitats in these areas including off-channel deep water habitat, backwater lakes, side channels, islands, etc.

(3) Water Level Management - evaluate options to reduce rapid fluctuations and naturalize flows.

(4) Floodplain Restoration and Protection - evaluate floodplain use, potential restoration of floodplain function, and value/potential for acquisition/use of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) easements.

Additional study information is available on the Corps of Engineers’ web site at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/>. In the left column, click on “Studies Underway” under “What’s New.”

Need Directions?

If you need directions to any of the open house locations, please call or email Ms. Sue Simmons,

Corps of Engineers, at 309/794-5573 or suzanne.r.simmons@usace.army.mil.

Study’s Mailing List Continues to Grow

It is important to include on our mailing list as many interested agencies, organizations, and individuals as possible. If you are aware of someone who may wish to be added to the study’s mailing list to receive newsletters and future study mailings, please ask him/her to contact Ms. Simmons.

What’s Next?

Following the completion of the rescheduled open houses, we will consolidate the comments received at all seven open houses. This information will be used by the study team to further refine study efforts and areas of potential evaluation. In addition, a summary of the comments received will be provided in a newsletter scheduled to be released this spring.

Comments?

If you have technical comments or questions about the Illinois River Ecosystem Restoration Study, please contact Mr. Brad Thompson, Project Manager, by phone at 309/794-5256 or by email at bradley.e.thompson@usace.army.mil.

You may write to Mr. Thompson at the following address:

District Engineer
U.S. Army Engineer District, Rock Island
ATTN: CEMVR-PM-M (Thompson)
Clock Tower Building – P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004

The contact for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources is Mr. Jim Mick. Mr. Mick can be reached by phone at 309/543-3316 or by email at jmick@dnrmail.state.il.

You may write to Mr. Mick at the following address:

Mr. Jim Mick
Illinois River Basin Coordinator
Region III Fisheries Administrator
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
700 South 10th Street
Havana, Illinois 62644

Your Comments Are Important To Us!

