

## ***Chapter 3***

### ***Resource Objectives***

The USACE vision for the future management of the land, water, and recreational resources of the Mississippi River will be managed to protect, conserve, and sustain natural and cultural resources, especially environmentally sensitive resources, and provide robust outdoor recreation opportunities that complement project resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

This vision is supported by the following broad management goals:

- Practice professional and active environmental stewardship of Corps lands and waters consistent with the primary missions of Corps and partnering agencies under the Cooperative Agreement
- Identify and protect environmentally sensitive species, habitats, and landscapes
- Identify and protect important cultural resources
- Identify and protect important scientific research locations of shared interest by Corps and partners for the use monitoring to improve current and future management decisions
- Identify outdoor recreation needs and provide those that complement the natural resources
- Manage public use areas to provide safe and enjoyable opportunities
- Collaborate with community leaders and academic entities
- Maintain open communication with the public at large
- Create partnerships and volunteer opportunities to leverage fiscal resources

### **3.1. RESOURCE OBJECTIVES**

Resource considerations at the Mississippi River exist primarily from needs of navigation, natural resource management, recreational access, and public use. Multiple user types have interests in the project lands, recreation facilities, and waters; demands from each user type create conflicts. Outside of Limited Development Areas, private exclusive use of public resources is prohibited with the exception of honoring pre-existing agreements.

The Mississippi River will manage natural resources for the overall interest of the general public and not for a select group of individuals. Natural resource management is the responsibility of the river staff and will be coordinated and incorporated with district staff and partner agency staff for review to provide an environmentally sound balance of competing interest and ensure availability of resources for future generations. Impacts on the environment will be assessed during the decision making process prior to any change to management plans, strategies, developments, or policies.

#### ***3.1.1 Environmental Stewardship Resource Objectives***

1. Manage, promote, restore, and establish important native forest and non-forest community types where best suited to maintain diversity, health, and sustainability on Project lands including General Plan lands.
2. Reach determined forest target conditions described in the Upper Mississippi River Systemic Forest Stewardship Plan established in 2012 or newest revision.
3. Proactively manage to sustain habitats or habitat conditions to protect, promote, and benefit federally and state listed Special Status Species.
4. Monitor lands for invasive and exotic species and take action when feasible to prevent and/or reduce the spread.
5. Inventory, monitor, and interpret current and historic conditions of native community types.
6. Maintain, enhance, develop, and promote communication channels between project personnel with inside and outside agency professionals to maximize cooperative exchange of management philosophies, practices, and implementation.
7. Ensure natural resource management implementations will be done in a manner to assure safety for public users of project lands and waters.
8. Carefully evaluate land use requests that will alter current habitat conditions and function as to avoid unnecessary natural resource damage, fragmentation, and permanent loss to environmental benefits.
9. Minimize encroachments and trespassing by maintaining an easily recognized federal property boundary line and performing periodic inspections of the boundary. Maintain contact with managing agency partners, adjoining landowners, real estate agents and developers to help ensure understanding of Corps and managing agency roles, responsibilities, and policies. Take prompt action or coordination as appropriate to help resolve encroachments and trespass.
10. Protect known cultural resources and practice good stewardship to reduce impacts from natural erosion and management actions; seek funding and update project Historic Properties Plan; and identify cultural sites with high significance and having the highest risk of degradation.

### *3.1.2 Recreation Resource Objectives*

1. Improve and modernize day use and campground facilities through addition of amenities, including, but not limited to: sewer hook ups, increased electrical service, concrete RV pads, wireless internet access, amphitheaters, fish cleaning stations, restrooms, trails and improved park entrance complexes.

2. Improve and expand opportunities for passive recreation such as hiking, birding, biking and nature study by providing and maintaining high quality trails and wildlife viewing stations.
3. Improve interpretive services through collaboration with partners, construction of amphitheaters and other facilities conducive to group gatherings, and through community outreach programs.
4. Enhance the recreation experience by promoting and protecting water quality, promoting non-consumptive use to protect the resource from overuse, maintaining facilities in a safe, attractive condition, and avoiding private and exclusive use unless otherwise authorized.
5. Carefully monitor public hunting activities to ensure public safety and resource protection.
6. Work toward universal accessibility in all aspects of the recreation mission. Provide access opportunities that contribute to the quality of life for all ages, ethnic backgrounds and for those with physical limitations.
7. Provide and maintain river access, where feasible and efficiently managed, by providing adequate boat ramp and parking facilities in designated areas.
8. Proactively manage recreation opportunities for efficiencies and focus resources to recreation areas with the most benefit to the public. Define the recreation opportunities and manage accordingly to the visitor use.

### **3.2. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OBJECTIVE PRIORITIES**

Mississippi River Project faces many challenges in the execution of resource objectives. The Project is geographically challenging with access logistical restraints; large portions of the Project are only accessible by boat. Limited staffing and budget require constant prioritization and focus to areas with the most resource need of action and greatest return to government cost. Coordination is vital, however, very time involved with multiple agencies co-managing General Plan lands under directive of the cooperative agreement. Priorities are carefully weighed with allowing appropriate time and resource needs; guidance to resource priorities are prioritized from the Upper Mississippi River Systemic Forest Stewardship Plan.

The linear footprint of the Project and miles of shoreline are extremely fragmented from private to public ownership. The fragmented nature of the Project is rooted from the process of acquisition. That process provided a legacy of complicated boundary management of the project. Additionally, areas along the river that were once considered to be rural are now a more urban setting. Increased urbanization and population has caused conflicts and encroachments on the Project lands. Priority will be in continuing boundary inspections to reduce the impacts degrading the resources.

The highest objective priorities are compliance with all pertinent laws, regulations and policies. Corps Regulation ER 1130-2-550, Chapter 2, establishes the policy for the administration and management of USACE recreation programs and facilities (*see Appendix F.7*). Corps Regulation ER 1130-2-540, Chapter 2, establishes the policy for the administration and management of natural resource activities (*see Appendix F.6*). The rules and regulations governing public use at USACE water resources development projects are published as Title 36 CFR Chapter III, Section 327.0 – 327.30 and enforced by USACE personnel with Title 36 citation authority (*see Engineer Pamphlet 1165-2-316, Appendix F.10*).

### **3.3. RECREATION OBJECTIVE PRIORITIES**

Recreation falls within two categories and can be identified as either land or water-based recreation. Management objectives for each type vary depending on the location, safety hazards, and the intensity of use. In this master plan, general objectives are provided regarding the work necessary to meet the public's needs for land and/or water-based recreation, while maintaining stewardship to the resource. Implementation of these objectives will be dependent upon budget, manpower, time, and mother-nature.

Land-based recreation activities include camping, picnicking, biking, hiking, shore fishing, hunting, bird and wildlife watching, cross country skiing, sledding, snowmobiling, horseback riding, geo-caching, sightseeing, etc. on or adjacent to Project land. Land-based recreation areas include campgrounds, picnic areas, overlooks, boat ramps, land access points, and wildlife management areas. Facility types typically found within these recreation areas include campsites, picnic shelters, picnic sites, playgrounds, disc golf courses, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, ball fields, hunting areas, and hard and soft trails. These recreation areas are managed by several entities, which include Corps, USFWS, state agencies, county conservation boards, city governments and private entities. Land-based recreation objectives will be to continue modernizing and rehabilitating existing recreation areas and providing a justified level of service.

Water-based recreation activities occurring on Corps water managed areas include pleasure boating, fishing, waterfowl hunting, sailing, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, water skiing and tubing, wind surfing, parasailing, paddle boarding, etc. The majority of water-based recreation is managed by Corps with assistance from the USFWS, state and local agencies and Coast Guard Auxiliary. The management objective is to ensure public safety, while providing recreation opportunities on the water. This objective will involve promoting water safety, studying recreation carrying capacity vs. current use patterns, zoning requirements for no-wake or restricted areas, and areas to remain open for public recreation.

Recreation activities should be quality outdoor experiences enjoyed by a diverse public to the largest extent possible, but these activities must respect and ensure public safety and promote a healthful environment that protect natural resources. An objective priority should be to increase the public's opportunity for high quality recreation experiences.

Corps recognizes the need to continue to modernize recreation facilities in accordance with Corps recreation facility standards. Improving facilities and amenities will increase visitor

satisfaction and quality of their experience. With diminishing funding and work force in future years, this objective is extremely sensitive to time, manpower and budget.

Future funding may make accomplishing these goals and solving these issues challenging, requiring creative solutions. Partnering and technological innovations should be expanded and explored as methods to attain these goals.

Implementation of these objectives is based upon time, manpower, and budget. The objectives provided in this chapter are established to provide high levels of stewardship to USACE-managed lands and resources while still providing a high level of public service. These objectives will be pursued through the use of a variety of mechanisms such as: assistance from volunteer efforts, partnership agreements, hired labor, contract labor, permit conditions, remediation, and special lease conditions. In all management actions USACE will strive for a reasonable and pragmatic approach to the management of resources.