



US Army Corps of
Engineers
St. Paul District

McMillan Island, Mississippi River Channel Maintenance

Location/Description

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began excavating the historically used dredged material placement site, McMillan Island, which is located adjacent to the main channel of the Mississippi River in pool 10 near Guttenberg, Iowa in August 2002. The purpose of the excavation project is to restore capacity at the site, making it available to receive channel maintenance dredged material in the future.



This project is part of the Corps' long-term channel maintenance planning effort. The dredged material will be transferred to a permanent location, the Buck Creek placement site near the intersection of Iowa County Highway X-56 and Buck Creek Road, about 3 miles north of Guttenberg.

The project consists of dredging 70,000 cubic yards of material from the main channel and 170,000 cubic yards of material previously dredged and placed at the McMillan Island transfer site. The Corps uses 'transfer sites' as interim holding areas for dredged material until they are filled and material can be removed economically and transferred to 'permanent sites.' A transfer site provides an efficient location for routine maintenance when direct placement to a permanent site is too time consuming and/or costly. For this project, the transfer site is McMillan Island and the permanent site is known as the Buck Creek placement site.

Work is being completed under contract using a small hydraulic dredge. The contractor's dredge will transport excavated material from the McMillan Island transfer site and the main river channel through a sealed pipeline to the Buck Creek placement site in a sand-water mixture. The sand-water mixture is approximately 25 percent sand and 75 percent water. The pipeline route will travel from the McMillan Island transfer site or main river channel across an open backwater area adjacent to Essman Island, upland across the Fish and Wildlife Refuge and follow the riverbed of Buck Creek until reaching the Buck Creek placement site.



The total pipeline length from the dredge to the placement site will vary from approximately 11,000 feet to 14,500 feet. The pipeline will be submerged and buried, where necessary, to avoid interfering with river recreational and commercial traffic or motor vehicle traffic. The pipeline will be removed following project completion.

The Buck Creek placement site will be diked to contain the sand-water mixture pumped from McMillan Island and the main channel. The sand will settle out and stay at the site, but the water will be returned to Buck Creek and then eventually to the Mississippi River once it has reached acceptable water quality levels.

Buck Creek Site

The material placed into the Buck Creek placement site will have two uses. Material placed at the northern 4-acre end of the site, the Heitman property, will remain as a permanent landfill. This 4-acre area will be developed into a wildlife view area by the landowner.

The material on the southern 6-acre end of the site will be used for 'beneficial use' and will be available for free to the public. The Corps will continue to use the McMillan Island site for placement of routine channel maintenance material. On the basis of historical averages, the island site will once again require pumping over to the Buck Creek placement site within 15 to 25 years.

Status

A contract to accomplish the dredging and material transfer was awarded in December 2001. The contractor began work in August 2002 and is scheduled to be finished in December 2002.

For more information

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<http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil> Last Update: 26-SEP-07