



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

NOTICE OF STUDY INITIATION AND PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

August 2002

STUDY INITIATED AND OPEN HOUSES SCHEDULED

The St. Paul, Rock Island, and St. Louis Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have initiated the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan Enhanced Reconnaissance Study. The purpose of this study is to develop a systemic flood damage reduction plan for the floodplains of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. In developing the plan, both structural and nonstructural flood damage reduction alternatives will be evaluated. In addition, various system needs associated with flood damage reduction, such as floodplain habitat restoration and recreation needs, will be considered.

As part of the study's public involvement program, periodic newsletters will be distributed to keep all interested persons informed of the study's progress. The purpose of this initial newsletter is to announce the study's initiation and to invite you to attend one of four public open houses to be held this September. Further information about the open houses is provided on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.

STUDY BACKGROUND AND AUTHORITY

The "Great Flood of '93" resulted in significant losses of life, property, crops, and natural resources throughout the Upper Mississippi River basin. Since that flood event, several more major floods, affecting various reaches of the system, have occurred. The economic, social, and environmental impacts of these events have clearly demonstrated the need to systemically and comprehensively evaluate structural and nonstructural flood damage reduction alternatives. Although many studies and coordination efforts intended to address various floodplain issues have been completed or initiated since the 1993 flood, none has produced a systemic comprehensive flood damage reduction plan.

The Water Resources Development Act of 1999 authorizes the Corps of Engineers to conduct the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan Study. In compliance with the Act, the Corps will work closely with other Federal agencies, State agencies, interest groups, and the general public in developing the plan. The Act is quoted below:

SEC. 459. UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- (a) *DEVELOPMENT.* —The Secretary shall develop a plan to address water resource and related land resource problems and opportunities in the upper Mississippi and Illinois River basins from Cairo, Illinois, to the headwaters of the Mississippi River, in the interest of the systemic flood damage reduction by means of—
- (1) *Structural and nonstructural flood control and floodplain management strategies;*
 - (2) *Continued maintenance of the navigation project;*
 - (3) *Management of bank caving and erosion;*
 - (4) *Watershed nutrient and sediment management;*
 - (5) *Habitat management;*
 - (6) *Recreation needs; and*
 - (7) *Other related purposes.*
- (b) *CONTENTS.* —The plan under subsection (a) shall—
- (1) *Contain recommendations on management plans and actions to be carried out by the responsible Federal and non-Federal entities;*

- (2) Specifically address recommendations to authorize construction of a systemic flood control project for the upper Mississippi River; and
- (3) Include recommendations for Federal action where appropriate and recommendations for follow-on studies for problem areas for which data or current technology does not allow immediate solution.
- (c) **CONSULTATION AND USE OF EXISTING DATA.** —In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall—
 - (1) Consult with appropriate Federal and State agencies; and
 - (2) Make maximum use of data in existence on the date of enactment of this Act and ongoing programs and efforts of Federal agencies and States in developing the plan under subsection (a).
- (d) **COST SHARING.** —
 - (1) **DEVELOPMENT.** —Development of the plan under subsection (a) shall be at Federal expense.
 - (2) **FEASIBILITY STUDIES.** —Feasibility studies resulting from development of the plan shall be subject to cost sharing under section 105 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (33 U.S.C. 2215).
- (e) **REPORT.** —Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report that includes the plan under subsection (a).

The initial authorizing language fixed the study duration to 3 years from the date of authorization. This was subsequently amended in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, Section 404, to tie the duration to the receipt of initial appropriation.

Section 459(e) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 (113 Stat. 333) is amended by striking “date of enactment of this Act” and inserting “first date on which funds are appropriated to carry out this section.”

Approval to initiate the study was received from the Corps of Engineers’ Headquarters in Washington, DC, in December 2001. This 3-year study is expected to be completed in December 2004 with a Report to Congress.

STUDY AREA

The authorizing legislation defines the geographic area of consideration for this study as “the upper Mississippi and Illinois River basins, from Cairo, Illinois, to the headwaters of the Mississippi River.” This area encompasses nearly 189,000 square miles (see the map at the end of this newsletter). In order to maximize the value of final study products, the study will focus primarily on flood damage reduction planning for the 500-year (.2% chance) floodplains of the reach of the Upper Mississippi River between Anoka, MN, and Thebes, IL, and the reach of the Illinois River that lies between its confluence with the Mississippi and the confluence of the Kankakee and Des Plaines Rivers.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ENCOURAGED AT SEPTEMBER OPEN HOUSES

You are invited to attend any or all of the four open houses that will be held in September 2002. Corps of Engineers representatives will be present at each open house to meet with you on a one-to-one basis to discuss the scope and purpose of the study. Study displays and a comment area will be available at the open houses.

Your input is needed to help us further identify floodplain problems, needs, and opportunities and to help refine the list of potential flood damage reduction measures and alternatives that will be considered during the study.

The open houses will be scoping meetings and will fulfill the National Environmental Protection Act’s scoping requirements. Comments received from the public will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement. A comment sheet has been attached to this newsletter for those who are unable to attend one of the open houses. The comment sheet must be returned to the address shown on the bottom of page 3, ATTN: CEMVR-PM-A (Jackson), by October 15, 2002.

The open houses will be held at the locations shown below. Each open house will be held from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. and each session will be identical. You are welcome to attend an open house *at any time* during the open house hours.

September 9, 2002

Ramada Inn St. Louis Airport
3551 Pennridge Drive
Bridgeton, Missouri

September 10, 2002

Rivers Edge Hall
1231 Bonansinga Drive
Quincy, Illinois

September 11, 2002

Holiday Inn Brandywine
4400 North Brandywine Drive
Peoria, Illinois

September 12, 2002

Dubuque Five Flags Center
405 Main Street
Dubuque, Iowa

A summary of the open houses and the comment sheets will be included in the next study newsletter.

OTHER PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

An Interagency Study Collaboration Team and four geographically defined Regional Focus Groups will be established as part of this study. Input from the Collaboration Team and the Regional Focus Groups, as well as from the public, will be invaluable in developing a high quality, broadly supported plan that will be recommended to Congress at the conclusion of this study. Further information about the Study Collaboration Team and the Regional Focus Groups will be provided in the next study newsletter.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about the study can be found on the study's website at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/UMRCP/>.

COMMENTS?

Your comments are important to us. If you have comments or questions about the study, please contact Mr. Jerry Skalak, Project Manager, at 309/794-5605 or by email at jerry.a.skalak@usace.army.mil. You also may write to Mr. Skalak at the following address:

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

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. Sue Simmons at 309/794-5573 or at suzanne.r.simmons@usace.army.mil.

We welcome your input.

Upper Mississippi River Basin



Figure 1. UMR Basin and approximate study reaches map.



**US ARMY CORPS
OF ENGINEERS**

**UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
STUDY COMMENT SHEET**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

1. What do you see as problems and opportunities needing to be addressed by the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan systemic flood damage reduction study?

2. What methods for reducing flood damages within the floodplain area (between riverbank and bluff) do you think should be investigated as part of this comprehensive study?

3. What do you feel are the major environmental concerns in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers floodplain areas?

4. Are there any flood damage reduction measures you feel would have an effect (positive or negative) on the ecosystem of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers?

5. Please provide any additional comments, concerns or suggestions you have regarding this study.

Privacy Act Statement: In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (Authority: Chapter 5, ER 1105-2-100), routine uses of the information obtained from this form include compiling official mailing lists for future informational publications and recording additional views and public participation in studies.

By including your name and address above you will be added to the study mailing list.