

July 25, 2013

Project Management Branch

ATTN: Ward

167 N Main St

Room B-202

Memphis, TN 38103-1894

Dear Sir:

After reading the article in the Southeast Missourian newspaper regarding the impact statement recently released by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, I am responding as requested.

I am a farmland owner in the area that can be affected by the Mississippi River backing up through the 1500 feet opening in the levee at New Madrid.

The impact environmental statement outlines a plan to close the 1500 feet opening in the levee with a benefit-to-cost ratio of 2:1. This is an excellent return on the costs.

The statement by Bruce Morrison, general counsel for the Great Rivers Environmental Law Center, calls the project absurd and a misuse of public funds. He further states the levee does not protect any infrastructure, which would be different, but it's all farmland.

Mr. Morrison does not say anything about the damages done to the land or to the crops damaged or destroyed, damaged fences, ditches, buildings, farm equipment, etc. It is obvious that Mr. Morrison does not take into consideration the farmland is some of the most fertile soil in the state and produces some of the best food in the USA.

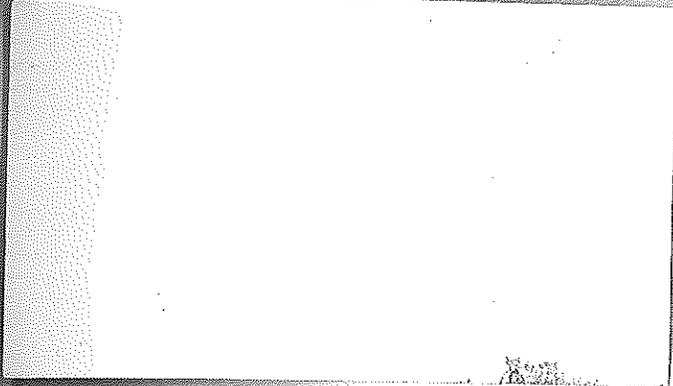
The Corps, a few years back, started work on closing the levee and installing pumps. This work was derailed by a judge in Washington DC. His reasoning was based on a paid so-called expert witness. The fact that concrete box culverts would be installed for the pumps to function, according to the so-called expert, would restrict the movement of fish from the river because of the fish thinking the box culverts would eat them, a sorry basis to rule on.

There are box culverts in place along the river many years old, and many, many other places in the United States, none of which has any effect on fish life.

Let us not have a repeat of starting a truly worthwhile project and have environmental people with no personal knowledge of the area getting involved in having the project killed with stupid claims.

Many of us landowners have worked over 50 years to get the Corps, DNR, EPA, and Conservation people to approve the project. They now all approve.

May I have your reply?



Statement for Floodway Public Meeting

August 27, 2013

East Prairie, MO

To the United States Army Corp of Engineers:

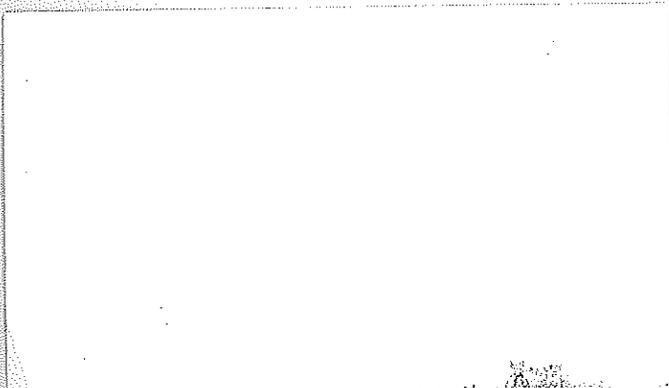
We are fifth generation farmers in Mississippi County, Missouri. Our families have worked and owned land in Mississippi County since 1854. Each subsequent generations continued the stewardship of the land and forests. Today, we feel the same attachment and responsibility to the caring and protection of the land, and because of our commitment to the future of the land, we submit the following statements.

Statement One: We are not in favor of closing the gap with the installation of pumps at the south end of the floodway in New Madrid County.

Statement Two: We are in favor of allowing the natural overflow of water at 60 feet at Bird's Point at the north end of the floodway.

Statement Three: We are not in favor of using explosives at any point on the levee system.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.



September 9, 2013

NEPA Coordinator:
Mr. Joshua Koontz
Upper Delta Environmental Compliance Branch
167 N. Main Room B-202
Memphis TN. 38103

RE: Corps of Engineers Environmental Impact Study
for the St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Floodway Project

Dear Mr. Koontz,

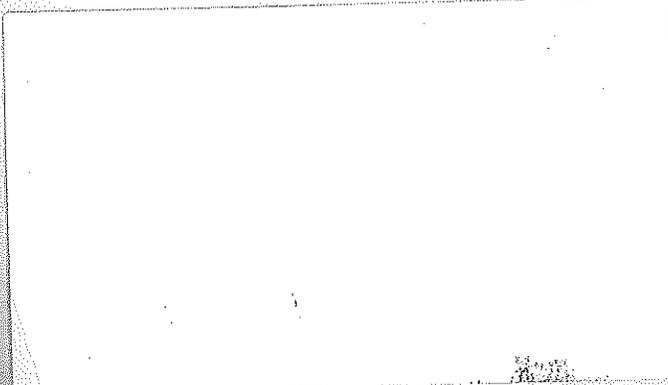
I wish to make a written comment on the above Environmental Impact Study.

I attended the public hearing on August 27, 2013 in East Prairie, Mo.

The public comments almost all took exception to adding additional mitigation acres to this project thus taking them out of production. There were also several comments addressing the fact that the impact study only focuses on fish and wildlife and other ecology issues but failed to include any human cost or effect i.e., the effect on those living in the affected area and the infrastructure that supports them.

To the foregoing I would like to add my comments. Over the past several decades the United States has lost most of its manufacturing to foreign countries for various reasons. One of our last positive export industries is agriculture. Can you imagine what a predicament our country would be in if the EPA and other environmental forces cause our agriculture industry to move overseas. I can just imagine the sympathy from foreign countries in a short crop year and we are begging to buy agriculture products to feed our nation. And I can just hear the wailing of hungry environmentalists. We need to protect our agriculture industry made up of thousands of independent operators who feed our nation and a lot of the world but who have to compete with foreign governments who run or highly subsidize their agriculture.

In conclusion this project should be completed with no further mitigation costs.



September 2, 2013

Mr. Danny Ward, Project Management Branch
167 N. Main, Room B-202
Memphis TN 38103-1894

Dear Mr. Ward:

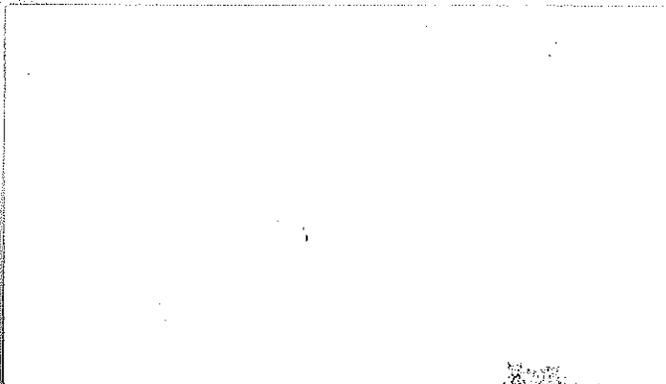
I am writing to you to express my opposition to the proposed New Madrid Levee Project. I had thought the argument for this project had been decided in 2007 when the federal court stopped the project for being out of compliance with the Clean Water Act.

Such a project is still a bad idea. If built, it would close the last remaining link between the Mississippi River and its floodplain. Closing the opening would destroy wetlands that are needed for river fishery health and for shorebirds and waterfowl in general. It is environmentally wrong.

I think there is no question that closing this opening would increase the flood risk to communities in Illinois and Kentucky. We are experiencing more and more unpredictable weather with climate change. We need to work with nature rather than against it. We have changed the flow of the Mississippi River too much already. Keeping wetlands is the most effective way to avoid flooding.

The second part of the project, St. Johns Bayou drainage proposal, is also opposed since it also impairs wetlands. Alternatives should be used instead to assist with drainage issues that occur largely from rainfall. Instead other lower impact alternatives could be used.

Let's focus instead on keeping existing floodways open and existing levees in good repair.



November 5, 2013

Mr. Danny Ward
Project Manager
Upper Delta Environmental Compliance Branch
167 N. Main, Room B-202
Memphis, TN 38103-1894

RE: St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project Draft EIS .

I am writing to urge the Corps to abandon the St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee project and select the "no action" alternative in its final EIS. This is a destructive project that will cut off the last connection between the Mississippi River and its floodplain in Missouri, eliminating tens of thousands of acres of now-productive fish and wildlife habitat.

The proposed New Madrid Levee would cut off the beneficial floodway from the river and damage over 50,000 acres of Mississippi River wetlands. Loss of this natural connection could cause a collapse of the entire fishery in this portion of the Mississippi River.

The Fish and Wildlife Service says the plan will cause significant losses of nationally important fish and wildlife resources, and could collapse the entire fishery in this portion of the river.

The Department of Interior says this project is not in the public interest.

Independent scientific experts agree this will be a destructive project.

The project will also make it harder to use the New Madrid Floodway to protect communities from major Mississippi River floods. The best way to reduce damages from smaller floods is to use low impact solutions that work with nature, not against it.

The proposed levee would cut off the river from the wetlands preventing the Mississippi River's seasonal flooding from nourishing its floodplain wetlands. This natural connection is critical for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife. It will also make it much harder to protect river communities in Missouri, Kentucky, and Illinois from major floods along the Mississippi River.

Despite the expert opinions and statements by federal agencies, special interests continue to push the Army Corps to build this environmentally-destructive levee.

I ask the Corps to abandon this project because it is bad for wildlife, people and taxpayers. A few influential agribusinesses should not benefit at the cost of hundreds of species of fish and wildlife and thousands of people in nearby communities.

November 20, 2013

United States Army Corps of Engineers
ATTN: PM-E (Koontz)
167 North Main Street
Room B-202
Memphis, TN 38103-1894

Dear Mr. Koontz:

I am a resident of Cairo, Illinois located in Alexander County. I lived here during the 2011 flood when the Corp of Engineers failed to follow the rules established for the Birds Point Floodway in its establishment. The Corps' two day delay in complying with criteria for "blowing the Birds Point Levee" which was established to relieve stress on levees north and northeast of that point, brought about catastrophic flooding. I am, therefore, expressing to you my strong opposition to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposed New Madrid Floodway Levee project ("the project"). Not only is the project misguided but it is a gross misuse of tax dollars.

More seriously, this project, as proposed, continues to place in jeopardy my safety and well-being along with that of many of the same neighboring communities and thousands of acres of highly productive farm lands flooded in 2011. Please recognize that farm land and homes in southern Illinois are just as valuable to our farmers as are the acres to farmers in Southeast Missouri and should receive the same respect as those who have come to assume a "false right" to control flood waters in the Birds Point area which continue to be earmarked as a Flood Way. Cutting off the Mississippi River from its floodplain in Missouri ignores the importance of the River's connection to the floodplain for the safety of neighboring communities, including Cairo, Metropolis, and Olive Branch in Illinois, and Paducah in Kentucky. The Mississippi River flood of 2011 showed that we need more connections between the Mississippi River and its floodplain, not fewer. These connections, which include the connection at New Madrid, provide critical relief valves during floods.

Further, history shows that constructing the New Madrid levee will make it more difficult to activate the floodway to save communities during the next big flood. The Corps' delay in 2011 caused great hardship to many Illinois residents. In 2011, Missouri sued to stop use of the floodway, and the resulting delay has been implicated in the flooding of Olive Branch, Illinois. (After the floodway was activated in 2011, water levels at Cairo dropped 2.7 feet in just 48 hours.) Before that, in 1983, a lawsuit was filed that enjoined use of the floodway until April 1984. And before that, in 1937, the National Guard had to be called in to quell armed opposition to the floodway's use.

In the draft impact statement the Corps has tried to show that the project will have little impact on flood heights. However, the Corps hasn't looked at the flood impacts of constructing the New Madrid levee on neighboring communities in almost twenty-five years. The only study it carried out on this was completed in 1989. Further, that outdated study used a 1950s era physical model to estimate the increase in water levels. The Corps needs to analyze the project's flood impacts using a modern model with modern data before it places neighboring communities in harms way.

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The New Madrid Levee project threatens to put me and my neighbors in jeopardy. I urge the Corps to abandon its efforts to build the New Madrid Levee.

Sincerely,

Thomas Robinson



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167 North Main Street
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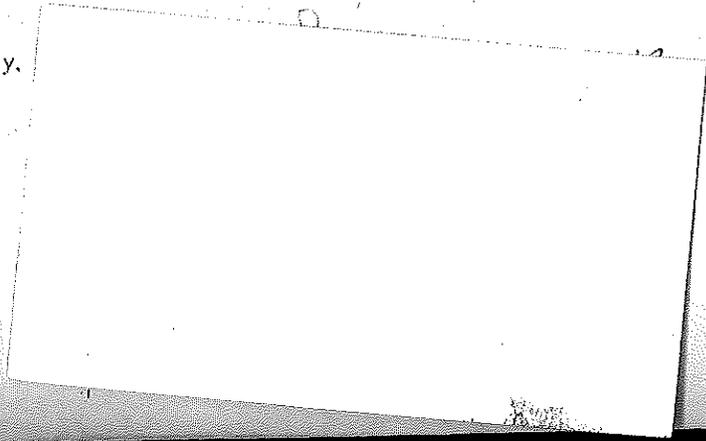
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