

Milestone ceremony set for St. John's project

A ceremony to celebrate the completion of requirements for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project is scheduled for 10 a.m. on October 10. The ceremony will begin at the St. Johns Bayou Outlet Structure on Highway WW east of New Madrid, then move to Big Oak Tree State Park for a ceremonial tree planting and catfish luncheon.

Mr. Lee Brownlee, Under Secretary of the Army, Missouri Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond and U.S. Representative Jo Ann Emerson are expected to attend the event.

"This is a historic day for folks in southeast Missouri who have waited for generations to be permitted protection from flooding," stated Senator Kit Bond. "I thank the Corps for bringing this process to conclusion. I congratulate the citizens of Pinhook, East Prairie, New Madrid and the surrounding area for their perseverance and patience. I congratulate Cong. Emerson for her tireless leadership, and I know that the original champion for these people, Bill Emerson, is high in the heavens celebrating in spirit with his brave constituents."

Representative Jo Ann Emerson also extended her congratulations. "I join the residents of Scott, New Madrid and Mississippi Counties when I say

I am proud of all the hard work put in to this point, as well as the work yet to come, that will protect people, property and habitat from the devastation of floods."

Completing the NEPA requirements clears the way for resuming construction of the project. Its overall purpose is to protect the region from backwater flooding from the Mississippi River and to reduce headwater flooding in the vicinity of East Prairie. This project also allows for the management of natural and recreational resources.

More than 8,300 acres of land will be purchased and managed for fish and wildlife. Most of this acreage will be cropland that will be reforested. Seasonal ponding for waterfowl will occur on up to 6,400 acres and 2,000 acres will be allowed to flood during the spring fish spawning and rearing season.

The St. John's Bayou New Madrid Floodway Project (SJNM) represents an intense effort by the Corps to address ecological and environmental concerns, while also reducing regional personal and economic suffering caused by frequent agricultural and urban flooding. The Corps coordinated with the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), Missouri Department of Conservation and local interests to add innova-

tive measures to address concerns regarding environmental impacts.

For example, through a cooperative effort with MDNR and other resource agencies, the plan will preserve the old growth bottomland hardwood forest in the Big Oak Tree State Park by purchasing additional lands to enlarge the park. The plan also provides, a source of surface water for seasonal flooding.

In keeping with the Corps' environmental operating principles, the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project seeks balance and synergy among human development activities and natural systems by offering an environmentally sustainable solution that supports and reinforces the needs of both. The Corps is proud to be part of a national team of federal, state, local and private organizations dedicated to meeting the nation's needs.

we are elated construction will soon be underway," said Representative Emerson. "The St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Floodway Project is a necessity for flood protection in Southeast Missouri.