

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: St. Johns Bayou Basin and New Madrid Floodway Project draft EIS (UNCLASSIFIED)

That this project has not been completely discarded is testimony to the criminality and complete environmental ignorance of the New Orleans District of the USACoE. How many times does the justice system have to tell you?

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: NM Levee Project (UNCLASSIFIED)

Mr. Ward,

I am in favor of finally closing this levee 100%. Although the environmental extremists have a point that the land is only farm ground, in this area, this is our main source of income. The overall savings to the tax payer is very high and possibly hidden. I'm sure crop insurance, which is subsidized by the Gov't. could be lowered if the high risk land was not rated after the closure of the levee.

This is just a quick note.

I hope you do get the project approved and the levee finally closed.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: New Madrid Floodway

Mr. Koontz

My question is will the floodway remain operational after all of the updates are made. When the floodway was utilized in 2011, Cairo IL. was not the only place that received relief from the rising rivers. As a landowner and over seer of several acres of family property along the Ohio river in southern Illinois the floodway helped prevent even more flooding. I also know that as a employee of the Tennessee Valley Authority that if the floodway had not been utilized the Shawnee Steam Plant in West Paducah Ky. would have flooded. As you are aware this would have resulted in several million dollars worth of excess damage to the equipment of the U.S. government. The Shawnee plant was not the only plant effected as there are several plants all along the Ohio and Tennessee river in both Kentucky and Illinois.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: St. John Bayou Floodway

What the hell? Whose trying to get rich? A few years ago it was a 6 million dollar project. That was "wacky tacky" then. For a 1500 foot gap? 164, 000, 000 million dollars for 1500 feet. This is a real abuse of government, and taxpayer dollars. a.k.a. welfare.

I want to know what is different about the plan. It was one gate now its two. I want to understand the cost and whose benefiting. The citizens of New Madrid, Mississippi and Scott county are not the benefactors of this project. Is the cost padded with restitution for blowing the levee and destroying crops? If so, and I believe it is, How much does the community of Pinhook receive as restitution?

I don't understand the plan/draft. For that much money coming to this poverty stricken area there has to be a direct tangible benefit to the citizens and wildlife, for they have moved to our neighborhoods.

The plans for the ecosystems is not strong enough and local jobs for about 7 years need to be a guaranteed part of the draft and final plan. We have a lot of questions about this kind of money providing no direct links to the surrounding communities. The flooding will not stop. Buy them out and let nature restore itself. Where is this money coming from and we are facing a government shut down?

Is this contractor, corporate, industrial or agricultural welfare? I think its all of the above. Green lighted by political favors. Give them 1 million dollars to close the gap and putv the rest in job creation, conservation, habitat and ecosystem restoration and Pinhook relocation. Welfare is Welfare.

We are watching and mad as hell. People are suffering down here. We want the details with justification.

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] New Madrid Floodway Project

I am strongly opposed to spending my tax dollars to close the levee gap. We have a family farm near Charleston and I am extremely familiar with the area. Yes, it would prevent flooding of farmland in the lower end of the floodway. This land is owned by a relatively few wealthy landowners who make a good soybean crop after spring floodwaters recede. In that area, you can plant beans as late as early July and still make a profit. Without flooding, which does not occur every year, maybe corn or cotton could be planted for a bigger profit. However, the average taxpayer would be furious to know that millions would be spent to help the rich get richer. Since this is backwater flooding, it does minimal damage to infrastructure, unlike the flooding after blowing the Birds Point levee. Also, when the floodway is allowed to function as the floodplain it really is, through backwater flooding, it should reduce flood heights in downstream areas. This benefit would be lost if the gap is closed. I don't believe that a truly objective cost/benefit analysis would justify this project.

Another reason I'm opposed to this project is that it is not possible, repeat NOT POSSIBLE, to mitigate for the environmental damages of this proposal. Connectivity to the floodplain and tributaries is the lifeblood of any river system. Closure of the gap will eliminate forever this vital link to the river. No amount of "mitigation" can replace something that is irreplaceable.

Thank you for the chance to comment.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Cancel the New Madrid Floodway Levee Project

August 21, 2013

Mr. Danny Ward:

I am urging you to cancel the New Madrid Floodway Levee Project. It is crucial that we as a society do everything possible to protect wildlife and habitat. Wetlands are being destroyed and need to be protected by far-sighted planners. As a citizen and a parent I feel it is imperative to focus on the sustainability of America's land.

To close the last remaining link between the Mississippi River and its floodplain in Missouri is still a bad idea. In addition to the loss of wetlands, the project increases flood risk in the surrounding area, especially in Illinois. It's a costly and unnecessary project. The current project is little changed from the prior version. It still breaks the connection between river and floodplain. Such connectivity is vital to maintaining healthy and sustained river fisheries as well as waterfowl. The Corps proposed mitigation to wetlands loss is inadequate, and would not restore the lost connection between river and floodplain.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Fw: More info (UNCLASSIFIED)

What does this do, if and when the next flood comes like the one in 2011. I presuming that this is for the people of Mo only, right. I would like to see how this is going to help IL., KY, and TN. I saw nothing in the write up that I went to. Will this be discussed at the time of the meeting. I will be sure to get a written copy from Cairo L.. and be at the meeting. I pray to God that you took in to consideration that there is more to this than farmland. There are people that have lived in this area all their lives and we are more than the sum of the project. Birds Point was designed for a reason, we thought that the Supreme Court made a decision, and cleared up all questions. Now you are going to change it. I am but a home owner but my HOME is my life. I thank you for your time.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] St. John's Bayou - New Madrid Floodway Project

Mr. Ward,

I support strengthening flood control measures in this project to prevent further economic hardship for the people of the affected regions. Thanks for your continued hard work on our behalf.



**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Against St. Johns and New Madrid Floodway Project (UNCLASSIFIED)

I am a life-long resident and businessman of the Lower Mississippi Valley. I am steadfastly opposed to any effort that would so dramatically alter the hydrology of the Lower Mississippi River Floodplain as this proposal.

The proposed St. Johns and New Madrid Floodway Project would remove an 80,000 acre floodplain from the Lower Mississippi River in the Missouri Bootheel just below Cairo Illinois. This would result in a severe disruption of the natural processes of the Mississippi River by cutting and removing the main channel from its wetlands. There is only one reason to complete this project, and that is for increased dryland farming within the floodplain and the construction of more riverbank industrial sites like power plants or steel mills.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Mississippi River: Enough is Enough

I want to go on record as opposing the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project

Before I retired to Mississippi from California 10 years ago, I had never kayaked. I'm now an avid paddler, both on the Mississippi itself and several of its tributaries. The river and its flood plain, aside from their aesthetic and recreational values, are critical habitat for scores of air, land, and water-borne species.

The Mississippi River is the cultural and geographical heart of the country. More clinically, it is the aortic artery. The Mississippi and its dependent plant and animal systems can only take so much encroachment, and we're long past the point where, as a nation, we should have stopped taking from the river and started giving back to it. The appetite of farmers, industrialists, and developers for new land is insatiable, and the line must be drawn somewhere. I suggest it be at the site of this project, in the Missouri Bootheel.

I urge the responsible decision makers to block the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] RE: The New Madrid levee

I write to oppose the unnecessary and damaging New Madrid levee; it is clearly an old and unnecessary project that has been proposed in the past. It will seriously harm the environment, destroying the last connection between the Mississippi river and its currently almost non-existent floodplain.

Unfortunately, it is an expensive project that will cost many taxpayer dollars and result in repetition of an act against the river and all the wildlife that depend upon it.

While it's true that farmers might benefit in the short run, the intense agriculture that a levee encourages is a bad practice in the long run.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: New Madrid Floodway

I am writing today to voice opposition to the St. John's Bayou - New Madrid Floodway project. Two years ago I started an organization, the Memphis River Warriors, that cleans up trash out of the Mississippi River and its surrounding tributaries. I have also canoed close to 200 miles of the River. I guess you can say I have a vested interest in the health of the river. I have seen this River at record low water and lest we forget the power of this river at record high water (it was just a few years ago). The New Madrid Floodway is needed to handle major floods. Removing this floodway option is dangerous and reckless. The River will always flood and it's not a matter of "if" but "when."

Please consider opposing this project as well.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] New Madrid Floodway

The following comments are regarding the New Madrid Floodway, and my opposition to it.

I canoed on the Mississippi River for the first time this summer, and it was an amazing experience. I never knew how beautiful it truly was. From my understanding, this New Madrid Floodway project would ruin the water trails, would ruin the natural process and ecosystem of the river. For those reasons, and many others, I am opposed to the project.

Also, where will the least tern lay its eggs? This animal is already endangered, is it not?

"The proposed St. Johns and New Madrid Floodway Project would remove an 80,000 acre floodplain from the Lower Mississippi River in the Missouri Bootheel just below Cairo Illinois. This would result in a severe disruption of the natural processes of the Mississippi River by cutting and removing the main channel from its wetlands. There is only one reason to complete this project, and that is for increased farming and industry in places that it really shouldn't be located. Hey, we can find 80,000 acres elsewhere for farming and industry. But there is nowhere as significant to the health of our nation as the floodplain of its biggest river, the Mighty Mississippi. Cairo, Illinois and everyone downstream will be effected by this closure. The waters will rise a little bit higher in each future flood as result. The US Army Corps of Engineers is asking for your input on a project called the St. Johns and New Madrid Floodway project. The defining component of this project is a new ¼ mile long, 60 ft. high levee that will sever the Mississippi River from an 80,000 acre floodplain in SE Missouri, eliminating critical fish and wildlife habitat, and putting dozen of river towns & cities downstream at increased flooding threat (including Memphis, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and everyone in between). The Dead Zone will be a little bigger every year as result of increased nutrients in the river."

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] New Madid Floodway, 80, 000 acre flood plain in Missouri Boot Heel

Dear Sir,

Don't cut off the Mississippi River from its natural flood plain. Don't increase the risk of flooding downstream by severing the river from a natural replenishing flood plain. The Corps has already made the Mississippi River too efficient so stop now.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] NO to St. Johns and New Madrid Floodway Project

Dear Sirs,

As a canoeist and friend of the Mississippi River, I write to OPPOSE the St. Johns and New Madrid Floodway Project. The reasons are so obvious that I will not delineate them. I was born in Missouri and have been proud of my origins. Please don't make me ashamed.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] ST JOHNS AND NEW MADRID FLOODWAY PROJECT.

I WANT TO GO ON RECORD AS BEING OPPOSED TO THE ST JOHNS AND NEW MADRID PROJECT.  
WE NEED TO RETAIN ALL THE FLOODWAYS AND WETLANDS WE HAVE; THEY ARE VITAL TO THE  
HEALTH OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. AS A LONGTIME PADDLER; I APPRECIATE THE MISSISSIPPI  
RIVER AND DO NOT WANT TO SEE IT DAMAGED IN THIS WAY.



**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] St Johns Bayou & New Madrid floodway project

Please help stop the madness of this project.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] St. Johns and New Madrid floodway project

Dear Mr. Horchum, I am very concerned about the St. Johns and New Madrid floodway project and how it may affect increased flooding in river towns along the Mississippi. I'm also concerned about its potential affects on wildlife and our ecosystem and adding to the size of the infamous 'Dead Zone' area where nothing lives.

The powerful lobbying forces of industry shouldn't have priorities over our wildlife, our ecosystem, and the rest of us. Without the first two things, the third thing cannot sustain itself.

I appreciate your concern on this important issue.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project

Dear Mr. Koontz

I want to go on record as opposing the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project

I have been kayaking now for 10 year and just paddled with 7 ohters from Cairo, IL to Memphis. Wow.....what a wonderful river. It's truly the "mighty Mississippi" and I would hate to see this change made. The river and its flood plain, aside from their aesthetic and recreational values, are critical habitat for scores of air, land, and water-borne species.

The Mississippi River is the cultural and geographical heart of the country. More clinically, it is the aortic artery. The Mississippi and its dependent plant and animal systems can only take so much encroachment, and we're long past the point where, as a nation, we should have stopped taking from the river and started giving back to it. The appetite of farmers, industrialists, and developers for new land is insatiable, and the line must be drawn somewhere. I suggest it be at the site of this project, in the Missouri Bootheel.

I urge the responsible decision makers to block the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] New Madrid Floodway

I would like to state that I strongly oppose the new St Johns and New Madrid Floodway. I am an avid outdoorsman, kayaker, and bird photographer and strongly oppose any more floodway projects that would damage the already fragile ecosystem of the Mississippi River. I urge you to please do what you can to block the new floodway.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] floodway project

I am writing as a concerned citizen about the proposed St.. John's Bayou/ New Madrid Floodway Project. The benefits of wetlands are undisputed in flood control, wildlife habitat, and recreational enjoyment. To lose this valuable environment would be a shame for the general public who would be cut off from this area. I hope that forward thinking will prevail and that this project will not go forward.

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] WORRIED

I was devastated by the 2011 flood. I lived at the same house since 1981 and we survived several floods during that time. I'm worried because the birds point levee wasn't breeched like it was suppose to during the flood of 2011. I know that if all the money and time is put into this project that for sure it will not be blown again. If the US Army Corp of Engineers would have blown the levee when they were suppose to, we would not have got 29 inches of water in our house at 26109 State Highway 3 and our business at 26215 Highway 3 got 48 inches of water and as soon as the levee was blown I watched the water recede and go away. Because you didn't follow the planned structure of the birds point process of blowing the levee at the desired water level. I suffered along with many others a devastating loss of over \$100,000.00 of farm supply parts for Massey Ferguson equipment and small engine parts for lawn tractors and equipment. I lost the building structures that were damaged and I'm in the process of taking the buyout from FEMA and others to help me get out of all this mess that was caused by not blowing the levee. The water would not have topped over Highway 3 at Olive Branch and we would have held it like we have done so many times before. We lost our home and our business due to the flood of 2011, our home was declared condemned over 50% damaged and our business at 65% damaged. I worked hard for what I had and I lost it all and we didn't have any flood insurance. We did get some help for our home from FEMA but we couldn't rebuild due to it being 58% damage so we bought another house out of the flood plain about 3 miles from where we started and raised our kids at. We are still paying insurance and property taxes on the flooded house and business and now we have a mortgage on the house we live in no. I don't like to point fingers but just look at our situation and see what has happened to us and I'm sure there are a lot more stories just like mine that has happened to other people during the flood of 2011. We are still waiting on the buyout and we hope we can restore our lives and go forward. I'm now 52 years old and hope we get our fair share from FEMA and the appraisers that are suppose to be coming in the near future to help us out of this mess that we are in. Thanks for your time and I hope for only the best in all areas.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] re New Madrid/St john's Bayou (UNCLASSIFIED)

Would like you to know that I think that the New Madrid/St. John's Bayou project sounds like a bad idea. This project will close off the remaining link between the river and the floodplain. Is it a fair use of moneys to pay for this huge project to help out a few already successful farmers? I think not. Missouri has little floodplain left , it is vital for our river fishery and waterfowl populations as well as migrating birds that we keep the connection between the river and it's floodplain. Be careful with public monies. Be careful with our state's environment. Thanks,

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Please cancel the New Madrid Floodway Levee Project & scale back the St Johns Basin Project

I'm writing to urge you to cancel the New Madrid Floodway Levee Project and scale back the St. John's Basin Project.

As someone who regularly visits that area and also participates in the annual Big Oak Tree Christmas Bird Count, I understand the importance of levees but also have a clear understanding of the need to keep a bit of a release valve for the Mighty Mississippi River.

There needs to be somewhere for the Mighty Miss to spill into to relieve flood pressure. We've channelized the Mighty Miss to the point that it is always just one flood season away from a levee breach. Many Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri towns and cities sit in precarious locations along the Mississippi River, many of which existed prior to the massing levee system was installed. I doubtfully need to remind you as to how vulnerable to flooding cities like Cairo, Metropolis, Wickliffe, Hickman, and Paducah are, recent history has shown us. It is possible that Olive Branch might have avoided flood devastation if the Corps could have blown the Bird's Point Levee sooner than they did. Flood water must have a place to go and always finds a way. It's apparent, when viewing the Bird's Point Levee blow area, that the Mississippi must be allowed into the floodplain before it reaches a depth where the velocity blows out the levee on it's own with catastrophic results.

In the project area, places like Ten Mile Pond, Big Oak Tree State Park, and surrounding wetlands are feed by the direct access to the Mississippi. These areas provide a major resting place for thousands of migratory birds, ducks, geese, shorebirds, wading birds, and even short-eared owls. These areas provide recreation opportunities for hunters, fishermen, birdwatchers, hikers, and other nature enthusiasts...taxpayers all.

Please uphold the courts decision made in the National Wildlife Federation's lawsuit. Please cancel your plans to connect the levee inthe New Madrid Floodway / St. John's Basin area. This is a case where the need of the many (the birds, animals, folks living in towns along the Mississippi, and taxpayers) outweighs the need of the few farmers who seek to row crop more floodplain bottomlands.



September 6, 2013

I am sending my thoughts on the proposed St. Johns and New Madrid Floodway project. The need for natural wetlands ecosystems along the Mississippi River should take precedence over additional farm land. Through the farm bill we are currently paying for farmland to be retired to wetlands and conservation. Why then do we need to remove 80,000 acres from the natural ecosystem of the river system? These acres experience the natural flooding and drying cycles associated with being in a river flood plain. Sediments accumulate in this flood plain creating a unique habitat for wildlife and plants. The sediments removed during flooding incidents keep downstream navigation channels and the estuary systems from filling so quickly. Why send more sediment downstream where it is not needed? The natural river system should be preserved as much as possible at this point. These types of flood plain habitats are already limited. I am very much opposed to this project.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: Protect Missouri Floodplain (UNCLASSIFIED)

I just became aware of the plan to close a one-quarter-mile opening in the levee system on the Mississippi River, that which is a designated relief area for floodwaters. At risk are about 1,100 acres of wetlands fed by the present opening; as you well know, Missouri has already lost 88% of its pre-settlement wetlands, which are critical habitat for fish and wildlife. Therefore, this project to close the last remaining link between the Mississippi River and its floodplain is a very bad idea: besides losing wetlands it would also increase the risk of flooding in the surrounding area.

Please drop this harmful project.

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project, Public Comment

I am a prior member of the "Upper Mississippi Flow Frequency Study Citizens Group" and an original board member of Greenway Network in St. Charles. Greenway is celebrating our 20th year as an all volunteer non-profit group which is a very unusual accomplishment for a dedicated group of volunteers, Our Mission is "to conserve natural resources, encourage sound management of the watersheds, and protect the quality of life for the residents of the St. Louis Region." We do that by creating a network of communication and consensus among citizens, government leaders and other organizations which share our goals. Greenway did a EPA funded study of non-structural measures to reduce flooding and had General Gallway present at a conference on the Corps barge after the 1993 flood in St. Charles, Unfortunately many of the issues the White House Task Force suggested have not been take to heart by the Corps, including this ill proposed levee replacement.

Although I cannot speak for our organization and these comment are my own; they reflect Greenway's "mission". This proposed plan of the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project is like a serious sickness that will just not go away!

Climate extremes are now the norm and the Army Corps has ignored this changing climate science. Its estimates of 100 year events are not valid compared to reality. It floods more frequently and drought is also more frequent. Warm air holds more water. He dikes and levee's reduce conveyance and increase velocity. This major Mississippi Watershed is sick, the sickness is expressed in the many small invertrebrates who never have a opportunity to spawn because there is no slow healthy spawning back water needed to feed the ecosystem. The river sediments which use to supply the rich alluvial flood plane soils during periodic flooding for the last billion years have been in the last 100 years largely confined to the narrow irrigation/transportation ditch which is now the Mississippi River system. Our Gulf is also toxic and ill. The continued building and blasting of the levees reducing the connection to these last vestiges of a somewhat normal flood plain is also an embarassment; perhaps the logical thing to do this time if you blindly rebuild again the blown levee would be to place the charge to destroy the levee as it is being constructed! At least then you would not have to get your feet wet placing the charges.

I feel very strongly that the US Army Corps should design instead a wide controlled release area with a gradual slope drop to the flood way at a determined "flow line" at the top of the Birds Point Levee. This area could have large rip rap to offset the velocity and a gradual slope down to reduce erosion. A large gate valve could be designed downstream within the system to then later gradually return the stored water which has been given a shot of health back to the river system. Will we forever be blasting it apart and rebuilding this structure at a major cost to the taxpayers? A "flood way" is just that and to continually attempt to divert the major Mississippi River System from it historic pattern is sheer" folly" on our part. This is especially true with our changing extreme weather patterns, a major flood followed by a major drought followed by a major flood. Blasting a levee to reduce the flood height followed by then blasting bedrock which has been there for millions of years. How smart is that.

Professor Criss quoted "Recent floods on major Midwestern rivers have set all-time record levels at numerous sites, prompting great overuse of the terms "100-year", "200-year" and "500-year" floods. This overuse is not trivial because the posited "100-year" flood levels have regulatory significance and affect property values. Statistical methods prove that the calculated flood levels for extreme events are much too low, particularly because population stationarity has been assumed in official calculations, even though many factors such as climate change and in-channel structures are causing flood levels to rise. New methods are

proposed for the estimation of future flood levels that take secular changes into account. These methods show that the official "100-year" levels are too low by 1 to 3 feet at many locations, and suggest that average levels attained by extreme floods will continue to rise by about an inch per year."

(Robert E. Criss (PhD Caltech 1981) is Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. Following his dissertation studies in Geochemistry Bob was a geologist with the United States Geological Survey, then Professor of Geology at UC Davis. He is author of Principles of Stable Isotope Distribution (Oxford, 1999) and co-editor of several books including At the Confluence: Rivers, Floods, and Water Quality in the St. Louis Region (MBG Press, 2003). Bob's research embodies the quantitative explanation of huge data sets on diverse natural systems, typically involving the development of original mathematical formulae. His published papers and editorial commentary encompass many disciplines and have appeared in 38 different scientific journals, several government publications, numerous books and 4 newspapers.)

Back to my comments:

The city of Cairo IL. should be simply "bought out" and perhaps moved, much like like Vallmeyer IL. to a more logical location. Cairo's present location will be a flooding problem into eternity. This logical type of move was also strongly suggested in the Gallway Report

A GIS 3D layered imaging using LiDAR elevations could be used to also locate additional sites along the Missouri/Mississippi/Ohio River systems to drop the surge crest using other location for a controlled release and hold with later return to the system. Flow lines at site specific locations could be used to locate controlled release areas. The GIS could then be used to quantify the volume of held water within various levee systems and this could be used to measure compensation to the local farmers for the use of their land to reduce risk especially to infrastructure within the watershed.

I feel that the Missouri Boot heel should be at least in part returned to the health diverse wetland it use to be before the major drainage ditches and levee projects constricted the river and reduced it's conveyance. The few farmers, Army Corps Engineers and barge operators who benefit from the removal of the wetlands and the high levee protection have harmed the health of the biodiversity of the River and Gulf, The drain tiles, monocrop GM farming, over use of fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides have polluted the River and Gulf and the biodiversity is in need of a wetland doctor. The Pick Slone Act has proven to be the biggest land grab since the Louisiana Purchase. Don't take the Bootheel wetland much needed medicine away from the sick and dying Mississippi River System and Gulf. Our aquatic invertrebrates need a voice! If we ignore them the true cost of our folly willl haunt us with irrefutable harm and escalating economic costs as we attempt to do CPR on the once great diverse healthy river our native Americans loved and cared for. Jehovah told us to "care for and extend his garden" not to choke it's dissolved oxygen, take away the spawning grounds of it's macro invertrebrates and kill off the coral reefs. These are a result of continued rip rap controls, dredging, surface water reduction levee building and reduced much needed river conveyance. I appose the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project on all these grounds.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] St John's Bayou New Madrid Floodway Project

I would like to comment on the Memphis Districts St John's Bayou New Madrid Floodway Project. Josh this is as bad an idea today as it was every other time the Corps has proposed and worked on it. I can not help but believe that the Memphis District's commander and employees also understand what a bad project this is. It is bad for the Corps image, wildlife, and less affluent communities both upstream and downstream of the proposed project.

I would think that the flooding along the Mississippi this spring and especially the blowing of the Bird's Point levee in 2011 would have secured the Corps position of the need for the floodway. Closing off the lower end of the floodway would have lessened the benefits to Cairo during the 2011 flood and may have flooded the city. This closure will have impacts on many levee systems in your district and surrounding Corps districts, have these cumulative impacts been assessed? Do the surrounding levee districts know about the added pressure your closure will place on their levees or the added costs they will incur to repair future damage or to reenforce their levees to compensate for the closure?

I realize that most of the wetlands to be impacted by this project are not pristine swamplands, that used to occur in the Mississippi floodplain, but they have value none the less. I do think that there are some high quality wetlands that should not be impacted by this project and that the Corps should have to mitigate for the entire acreage of impacts as determined by the EPA and any additional compensatory mitigation they deem necessary. The federal government, Corps, should not have special treatment when mitigating for wetland loss.

The mitigation suggested at Big Oak Tree State Park should be carried out, if this project is completed over the protests of many concerned citizens. However, the Big Oak Tree acreage for mitigation should be secured before the impacts are finalized. This would be standard if the Corps was being treated as a regular 404 applicant. Wal-Mart is not allowed to say we will purchase credits from a mitigation bank if a bank exists, but this similar to the Corps mitigation plan at Big Oak Tree State Park.

This is a bad project that should not be completed. It does not pass the "red face" tests, looks like the Corps pandering to big Ag, jeopardizes the economically disadvantaged in surrounding communities, and proposes mitigation that most likely will never be completed. Please consider all of the impacts and cumulative impacts of this action on the environment and surrounding human environments.

To: Reviewing Officials

Date October 18, 2013

Subject: Comment to Public meeting concerning the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway

After attending the public meeting in Cairo, Illinois and making a cursory review of the I would like to make two comments. First I need to state that this is not an official policy statement. Experts should be available from federal, state agencies and private producers and consultants. However I did attend the program and believe my comments could be useful.

The planting crop date of April 15 for corn to be used as the bench mark for managing water levels may not be accurate. If no-till was the principle planting method used in the subject area the April 15 date is within the planting window for Scott County producers I talked to. However the producers in the subject floodway appear apply crop inputs earlier in the season starting March 1 to March 15. Therefore the April 15 date to keep water levels high would hamper conventional tillage and fertilizer application. My review of the appendixes for the environmental report did not contain an agronomic section where these detail would be discussed. I believe this is an important oversight, as demonstrated in the report's economic section assessment:

**Economics:** *Key assumptions are missing from the economic analysis for a flood reduction project, such as injuries avoided and lives saved from flooding. In addition, the Consolidated NEPA Document states that current agricultural production is suboptimal and that the project will add benefits. However, there is inadequate evidence presented that current production is suboptimal. The agricultural benefits are almost the sole driver of the project, unless other types of benefits are brought into the analysis, so the agricultural benefits must be clearly calculated, convincing, and large for the project to have a benefit-cost ratio that is greater than one, especially as some analysts may question the use of a 2.5% discount rate.*

The start of 'spring field work' date would be supported by an agronomic section. Details important to supporting this date would be found in a crop calendar, crop rotations, soil texture types, tillage methods, crop inputs and the economic comparisons of these methods, and accompanying crop budgets. As it stands, if the April 15 date is used, the most suitable cropping system would be continuous soybeans. The economic opportunity cost of not providing the option of using a corn-soybean; corn-soybean-soybean or corn-wheat-soybean rotation should be factored. In addition it would be reasonable to figure the cost of potential crop productivity losses from increased crop pests when a single crop is used over several years.

The second concern identified during the public presentation at Cairo was the single agency approach to working with the public in the floodway. There appears to be a potential duplication of effort by the proposed plan. The USDA has existing public programs with similar goals already being implemented in the general region. See attached pdf file Wetland and USDA programs. Also the 2005 memo found at: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NWMC/USACE/USDA-USACE%20MOA.pdf> and the Partnering Guide for DOD Environmental Mission, IWR, USACE, Fort Belvoir, VA found at: <http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/> & <http://wmc.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/partnerships/COE/partnerships.html> References to these or other de-conflicting procedures were not found in the report.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Comments on the St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Floodway Project EIS

I am writing to oppose the Proposed New Madrid Floodway Project which would sever the last remaining connection between the Mississippi River and its floodplain. Not only would this put at risk dozens of cities and hundreds of miles of other levees and agricultural lands along the river, but it would destroy significant wetlands just to protect private interests in cropland that was known to be in the floodway when purchased. In fact the EPA has said that the project "could potentially have the largest negative impact on wetlands and streams of any project ever proposed in Region 7". This project simply is not justified.

On the other hand there is some merit in a St. John's bayou-only project because it would have the benefit of protecting major highways and three cities with 35,000 residents.

In a time of across the board budget cuts this hugely expensive project is especially egregious.

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Withdraw "St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee" project

I urge the Army Corps of Engineers to immediately withdraw the "St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee" project, and to select the "No Action" Alternative. This project would cause a biological catastrophe for the floodplain-connected fisheries and wetlands along an entire reach of the Mississippi River, by destroying the last connection between the Mississippi River and its floodplain in Missouri.

The Department of Interior has already concluded correctly that this project is not in the public interest, as it will eradicate our precious and scarce wetland ecosystems for an anachronistic, inefficient, brittle, and counterproductive flood control project that contributes nothing to the health or welfare of America. Decades of hydrological science has shown that the control of periodic flooding is to provide a buffer zone consisting of the very floodplains and wetlands that the Levee project would destroy, not to confine the river between fixed levee walls that must be continually rebuilt and elevated to confront an ever more violent and stochastic climate. To seriously consider of the Levee project is to pretend that the past century of hydrological science have taught the Corps leadership nothing.

These levees would destroy one of the last great wetland ecosystems remaining in America. Tens of thousands of acres of floodplain-associated swamps, bayous, and marshes will vanish, making a blatant mockery of repeated promises by this and prior Administrations to staunch the loss of our wetlands. For the past 20 years, successive Administrations have declared a "no net loss of wetlands" goal, and to even contemplate the Levee project demonstrates that the Corps leadership does not take seriously this goal, and has not internalized the value of our wetlands. The New Madrid Floodway and its wetlands are an integral part of the Mississippi River ecosystem. This Levee project would amputate tens of thousands of acres, leaving them to shrivel and die. This act of biological genocide must be withdrawn from consideration immediately.

The federal government is on record as acknowledging these impacts. In, 2011 Department of the Interior stated, "Altering the hydrologic regime of the floodway produces a suite of complex and unsolvable challenges in providing adequate mitigation for the wetland, fishery and floodplain impacts." The FWS stated in 2006 that the Mississippi River-New Madrid Floodway "connection is absolutely vital to maintaining a healthy, sustainable fishery in this section of the Mississippi." These assessments should have been the end of any consideration of the Levee project, as they identify clearly the overriding public interest. The selfish, parochial complaints of Senator Blunt and Congresswomen Emerson are to be expected from politicians defending their acquisitive seizure of public resources, but bear no relevance to the Corps' assessment of the public interest.

The Levee project exemplifies the very worst of parochial engineering projects on behalf of narrow agricultural interests, making the Corps an ancillary, subsidized engineering service to floodplain farmers, not a truly public agency. This project serves no purpose but to make additional floodplain land available for production of more of the commodity crops from which America is already suffering a gross overproduction, and for which the USDA is paying



additional subsidies to make such overproduction economically viable, on top of the outrageous cost of the Levee project itself. The Corps is ostensibly an agency of the federal government working on behalf of the public interest, not an entity that destroys American ecosystems, and squanders American public money, to facilitate an expansion of subsidized farming.

Again, I urge you to immediately withdraw the "St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee" project, and to select the "No Action" Alternative. The public interest in maintaining these wetlands, and the right of the plants and animals to retain their homes in these wetlands, supersedes the avaricious, petty interests of agricultural interests in claiming a publicly subsidized production zone. Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] New Madrid levee

I oppose the levee project. Reconsider the natural issues.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Mississippi River

To whom it may concern,

I oppose the New Madrid Levee because I value fish and wildlife habitat and don't want to increase flood risk!

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] The Levee

I oppose this development because of the damage to wildlife.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] New Madrid flood plain

As a newly trained Missouri Master Naturalist, I am more aware than ever of the inter-connectedness of rivers, floodplains, bird migration, and fishing and hunting.

This proposed damming off of some of the Mississippi River by New Madrid is NOT a good plan. The river needs room to expand during flooding, and towns and people can be at risk.

Please reconsider this. Our tax money should be used for long-term benefits. Surely there are much better ways to use our funding!

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] pls select NO ACTION on the New Madrid Levee

I urge the Corps to abandon the destructive and wasteful St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee project, and select the "no action" alternative in its final EIS.

This project will cut off one of the last remaining connections between the Mississippi River and its floodplain in Missouri, eliminating tens of thousands of acres of now-productive fish and wildlife habitat. The Fish and Wildlife Service says it will cause significant losses of nationally important fish and wildlife resources and could collapse the entire fishery in this portion of the river. Even worse, the amount of impacts to important wetlands and floodplain will be nearly impossible for the Corps to provide full compensation and replacement.

The Department of Interior says this project is not in the public interest. Independent scientific experts agree this will be a destructive project. More illogical is that it goes against federal policy, by making unwise use of floodplains.

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. Additionally, as a Kentucky resident, it worries me that this project may result in greater flooding to communities on the Kentucky side of the river.

But maybe the most frustrating thing to understand is that the federal government made one-time payments for flood easement rights to landowners in this area over 70 years ago to use the land there as a flood-reducing measure for the Mississippi River. Why would the government now waste millions of taxpayer dollars to prevent that land from functioning as it was intended (and as paid for) many years ago, and functioning more as it should naturally? Why would the Corps succumb to political pressures and lobbyists? Why would the Corps manage the River in irresponsible ways?

This project is bad for wildlife, people and taxpayers and should be abandoned by the Corps. If the Corps does not abandon this destructive project, the Environmental Protection Agency should stop it once and for all by using its Clean Water Act section 404(c) authority to veto the project.

Thank you for an opportunity to comment.

**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: New Madrid Floodway Project comment

**Importance:** High

As a farmer in Alexander County, Illinois, I fear that the proposed New Madrid Floodway Project would cause additional flood damage to our local crops. In other words, while the project would be helpful to Missouri agriculture, it would be harmful to Illinois agriculture.

Please enter my opposition to the New Madrid Floodway Levee project in your records.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] ATTN: PM-E(Koontz)

Dear Mr. Koontz:

.....I was born and raised in Cairo, Illinois, as were my parents, as were my father's parents.

.....After the catastrophic flood of 1937 (during which, incidentally, my father worked for the Corps of Engineers), the federal government purchased what were termed "flood control easements." These consisted of the right, in future, to relieve the pressure on urban-protective levées, such as surround Cairo, by flooding some nearby farmland to which the easements applied. I am not aware that anyone was evicted from the land in question, but ... BUT anyone who farmed, or otherwise improved, the land in question after selling the easement did so with his eyes wide open. The purpose of the easements from the get-go was to allow the affected land to be used exactly as it was used during the late flood situation.

.....If the effect of rebuilding the earthworks (that were demolished for the protection of Cairo, Illinois, during the late flood) is going to be the encouragement of the periodic resettling of the flood plain area to which those easements apply, then I oppose such rebuilding – particularly at public expense. The term "flood plain" is a warning, not to be taken lightly.



**Koontz, Joshua MVM**

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Comments New Madrid Levee and Big Oak State Park

I am opposed to the New Madrid Levee project which would destroy a huge amount of wetlands and sever the Mississippi from it's floodplain. This is a very bad idea.

The Corps should cooperate with the Missouri DNR on restoration at Big Oak Tree park as had already been agreed upon, and not tie cooperation to what happens with the New Madrid levee project.

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Reject the New Madrid Floodway Levee

I am writing to urge you to reject the New Madrid Floodway Levee Project because of the devastating effects this project will have on critical wetlands in the great Mississippi Flyway, and because of its overwhelming flood risk to surrounding communities. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the project "will result in significant losses of regionally and nationally important fish and wildlife resources which cannot be adequately mitigated." The anticipated environmental damage is so extensive that the Corps of Engineers will never be able to mitigate for the critical fish and wildlife habitat, and wetlands and floodplain areas which would be destroyed or altered by this project. The project also increases flood risk by closing off a designated floodway, one that was specifically designed by Corps' engineers to provide a relief valve to protect surrounding human communities--such as Cairo, Illinois--during times of extreme flooding. Despite periodic high water in the floodway, agriculture thrives in the area. The Corps admits the levee will only provide additional benefits to a few existing farmers by enabling more intensive agriculture. This small benefit will never outweigh the significant environmental damage and increased flood risk of the project. This project specifically puts the interests of a few wealthy landowners above the national interest. The Corps should reject building the New Madrid Floodway levee and choose the "No Action" alternative.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Stop the levee at the New Madrid Floodway -- St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement

I urge the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to abandon the destructive St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee project, and select the "no action" alternative in its final Environmental Impact Statement.

"Our duty to the whole, including to the unborn generations, bids us to restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wildlife and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose and method."  
-- Theodore Roosevelt

This project 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 Fish and Wildlife Service says it 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.

"As we peer into society's future, we--you and I, and our government--must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering for our own ease and convenience the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without risking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow."  
-- Dwight D. Eisenhower

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.

"Every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and of wild life, should strike hands with the farsighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish--indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore--from wanton destruction. Above all, we should realize that the effort toward this end is essentially a democratic movement."  
-- Theodore Roosevelt

This project is bad for wildlife, people, and taxpayers, and should be abandoned by the Corps. If the Corps does not abandon this destructive project, the Environmental Protection Agency should stop it once and for all by using its Clean Water Act section 404(c) authority to veto the project.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."  
-- Aldo Leopold

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.

**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee project

I urge the Corps to abandon the destructive and wasteful St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee project, and select the "no action" alternative in its final EIS. This project will cut off one of the last remaining connections between the Mississippi River and its floodplain in Missouri, eliminating tens of thousands of acres of now-productive fish and wildlife habitat. The Fish and Wildlife Service says it will cause significant losses of nationally important fish and wildlife resources and could collapse the entire fishery in this portion of the river. Even worse, the amount of impacts to important wetlands and floodplain will be nearly impossible for the Corps to provide full compensation and replacement.

The Department of Interior says this project is not in the public interest. Independent scientific experts agree this will be a destructive project. It goes against federal policy, by making unwise use of floodplains. 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. Additionally, as a Kentucky resident, it worries me that this project may result in greater flooding to communities on the Kentucky side of the river.

The federal government made one-time payments for flood easement rights to landowners in this area over 70 years ago to use the land there as a flood-reducing measure for the Mississippi River. Why would the government now waste millions of taxpayer dollars to prevent that land from functioning as it was intended (and as paid for) many years ago, and functioning more as it should naturally? Why would the Corps succumb to political pressures and lobbyists? Why would the Corps manage the River in irresponsible ways?

This project is bad for wildlife, people and taxpayers, and should be abandoned by the Corps. If the Corps does not abandon this destructive project, the Environmental Protection Agency should stop it once and for all by using its Clean Water Act section 404(c) authority to veto the project.

## Koontz, Joshua MVM

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**Subject:** FW: [EXTERNAL] Please Stop the St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee Project!

I urge the Corps to abandon the destructive and wasteful St. Johns Bayou New Madrid Levee project, and select the "no action" alternative in its final EIS.

This project will cut off one of the last remaining connections between the Mississippi River and its floodplain in Missouri, eliminating tens of thousands of acres of now-productive fish and wildlife habitat. The Fish and Wildlife Service says it will cause significant losses of nationally important fish and wildlife resources and could collapse the entire fishery in this portion of the river. Even worse, the amount of impacts to important wetlands and floodplain will be nearly impossible for the Corps to provide full compensation and replacement.

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But maybe the most frustrating thing to understand is that the federal government made one-time payments for flood easement rights to landowners in this area over 70 years ago to use the land there as a flood-reducing measure for the Mississippi River. Why would the government now waste millions of taxpayer dollars to prevent that land from functioning as it was intended (and as paid for) many years ago, and functioning more as it should naturally? Why would the Corps succumb to political pressures and lobbyists? Why would the Corps manage the River in irresponsible ways?

This project is bad for wildlife, people and taxpayers and should be abandoned by the Corps. If the Corps does not abandon this destructive project, the Environmental Protection Agency should stop it once and for all by using its Clean Water Act section 404(c) authority to veto the project.

Thank you for an opportunity to comment.