

**DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**WITH**

**UNSIGNED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

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**MAINTENANCE OF NAVIGATION POOL AT ELEVATION 368.8 FEET (NGVD)**

**KASKASKIA RIVER NAVIGATION PROJECT, ILLINOIS**

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**Draft  
Supplemental Environmental Assessment**

**Maintenance of the Navigation Pool at Elevation 368.8 Feet (NGVD)  
Kaskaskia River Navigation Project, Illinois**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) addresses the environmental impacts of making permanent the temporary pool elevation deviation implemented in March 1989. That deviation permitted maintaining the maximum regulated pool at Kaskaskia Lock and Dam at elevation 368.8 feet, referenced to the National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD). The original approved maximum regulated pool elevation at Kaskaskia Lock and Dam was 368.0 feet. This document is a supplemental EA. The purpose of a supplemental EA is to identify significant changes to the project since 1993, which could affect the assessment determination, and to update outdated sections of the original EA. As such, most of the background information is incorporated by reference only. The original EA and signed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be found on the St. Louis District Website at the following link, <http://mvs-wc.mvs.usace.army.mil/>.

### **1.1. PROJECT LOCATION**

The Kaskaskia River originates in east central Illinois and flows approximately 270 miles in a southwesterly direction to the Mississippi River in southwest Illinois. The basin covers about 5,840 square miles. Major impoundments include Lake Shelbyville at RM (river mile) 112.6 and Carlyle Lake at RM 94.5. The Kaskaskia River Navigation Project is located on the lower Kaskaskia River in the Illinois counties of St. Clair, Monroe, and Randolph. It includes the Kaskaskia River from the Mississippi River upstream to Fayetteville, Illinois. The navigation project shortened the Kaskaskia River between its mouth and Fayetteville from 50.5 to 36.2 miles (Fig. 1). Meanders were left as remnant channels, much of the channel excavated, and flow partially regulated by a lock and dam near the river mouth. Dredged material was placed in disposal areas along the channel. Of the 18,000 acres of land and water associated with the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project, the majority consists of bottomland forest, dredged material disposal areas, cultivated land, channelized river, and remnant channels.

### **1.2. PROJECT NEED AND BACKGROUND**

In June 1992, the St. Louis District requested approval from our Division office in Vicksburg, Mississippi to extend the temporary deviation to the approved water control plan for the Kaskaskia River Navigation Pool. Approval for extension was granted on 18 August 1992. The temporary deviation (originally granted on 6 March 1989) permitted maintaining the maximum regulated pool at the Kaskaskia Lock and Dam at elevation 368.8 feet, referenced to the National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD). The first deviation remained in effect until the August 1992 deviation superseded it. The approved maximum regulated pool elevation is 368.0 feet, as specified in the water control plan. The request for the deviation in March 1989 was

made in response to severe local drought conditions. Its main objective was to make lockage possible; however, there were other benefits, including improved fish access to backwater habitats, improved recreational fishing opportunities, and a more dependable water supply for water intake devices.

In September 1992, the St. Louis District completed an EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the temporary water level deviation from 368.0 feet to 368.8 feet. The FONSI was signed by the St. Louis District Engineer in February 1993. Since 1989, the St. Louis District has operated under a temporary deviation elevation of 368.8 feet.

Drought conditions do not presently exist within the Kaskaskia River basin, and consequently the water level deviation is no longer needed to ensure dependable lockages. Consistent with the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project approved project purposes of fish and wildlife restoration and recreation, the deviation has been continued since 1992. Continuation has provided fish and wildlife benefits that include increased backwater habitat, improved fish and wildlife access to the remnant channels and backwater areas, and recreation benefits, which include greater access to off channel areas for fishing and hunting, recreational boating, and swimming. The purpose of this supplemental EA is to examine the effects of making the temporary deviation permanent.

### 1.3. PROJECT AUTHORIZATION

The Kaskaskia River Navigation Project (KRNP) was initially authorized for development by the Rivers and Harbors Act (PL85-500) of 3 July 1958, House Document No. 232, 85<sup>th</sup> Congress and subsequently authorized for construction, operation and maintenance by the Rivers and Harbor Act of 23 Oct. 1962, Senate Document No. 44, 87<sup>th</sup> Congress. The purpose for the project was to provide a commercial navigation channel from the mouth of the river (at Mississippi River mile 117.8) upstream to Fayetteville, IL (River Mile 36). The project became operational in 1974. The navigation project consists of approximately 36 miles of canal (minimum 9 feet deep, 225 feet wide), a lock and dam at Kaskaskia River mile 0.8 near the confluence with the Mississippi River (single lock is 600 feet long by 84 feet wide, a dam that is 130 feet long, and a gated spillway with two 60 feet wide control gates), a rock grade control structure at the head of the navigation canal (RM 35.9) to reduce upstream head cutting, and 2900 acres of fee and operational easement lands and 5600 acres of flowage easement lands.

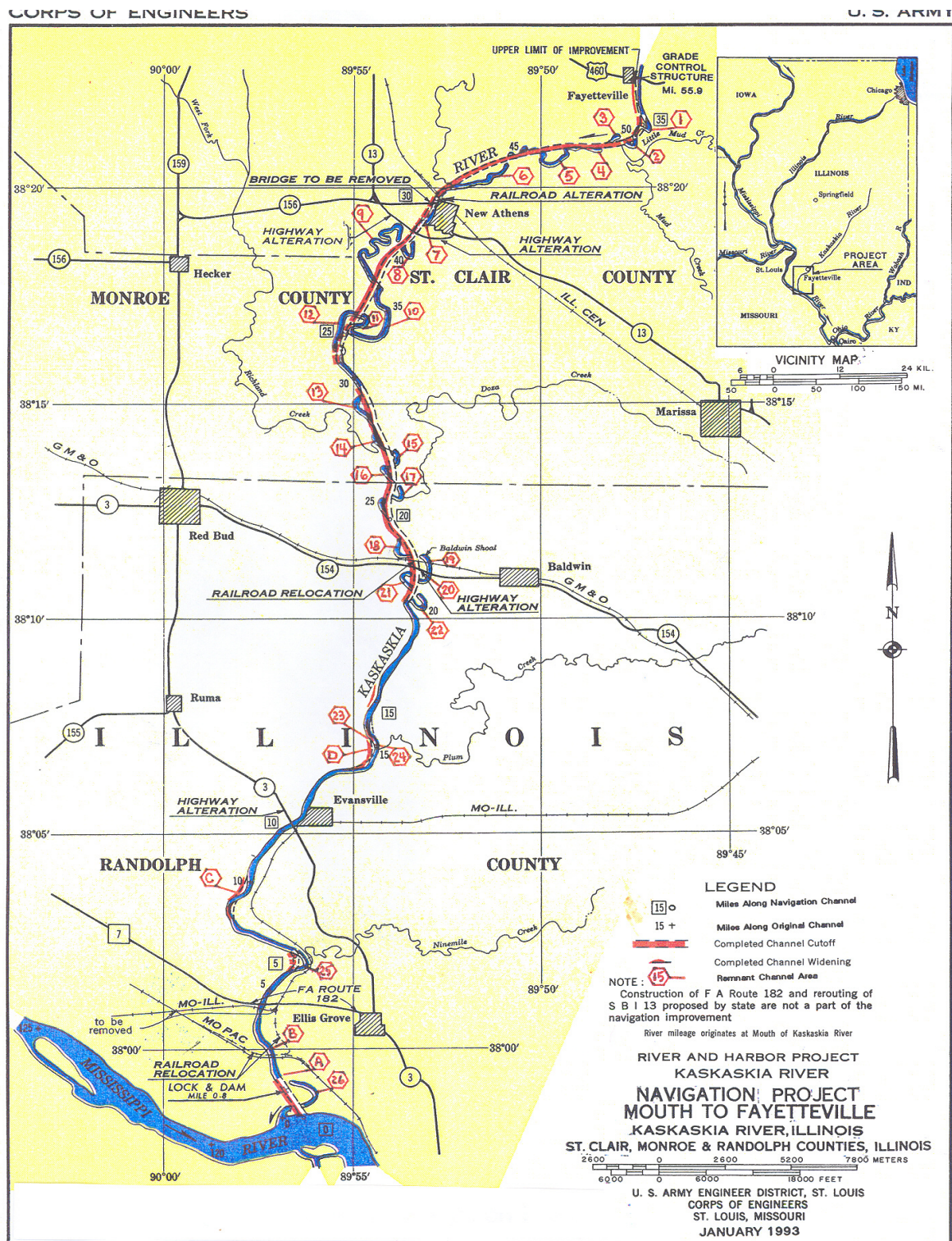
In 1996, Congress expanded the KRNP's project authorities to include Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration. The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996, Section 321, Kaskaskia River, Illinois, states "The project for navigation, Kaskaskia River, Illinois, authorized by Section 101 of the River and Harbor Act of 1962 (76 Stat. 1175), is modified to add fish and wildlife habitat restoration as project purposes." The Water Resources Development Act of 2000, Section 311 states "the project for navigation, Kaskaskia River, Kaskaskia, Illinois, authorized by section 101 of the River and Harbor Act of 1962 (76 Stat. 1175), is modified to include recreation as a project purpose."

#### 1.4. MAJOR ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The FONSI for the temporary deviation was signed in February 1993. Since then several impact actions have occurred or are planned. Those include:

- In 1996 Congress (WRDA 1996) expanded the KNRP project purposes to include fish and wildlife habitat restoration.
- In 1999 a Record of Environmental Consideration was prepared and signed by the St. Louis District to continue the pool deviation.
- In 2000 Congress (WRDA 2000) added recreation to the KNRP project purpose.
- Since 1999 the mouths of 6 oxbows (remnant channels) have been dredged, some on more than one occasion, to improve access.
- Contingent upon available funding, dredging to re-establish the navigation channel will be completed between New Athens and Fayetteville.
- Contingent upon available funding, a micro-model is planned to look at a more permanent solution to sedimentation problems in the remnant channels and oxbows.

Figure 1. Vicinity map for Kaskaskia River Navigation Project



## **2.0 RECOMMENDED PLAN AND ALTERNATIVES**

### **2.1. RECOMMENDED PLAN**

#### **2.1.1. PERMANENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEMPORARY DEVIATION FROM A MAXIMUM REGULATED POOL ELEVATION OF 368.0 FEET TO AN ELEVATION OF 368.8 FEET.**

This plan would make permanent the existing temporary deviation from maximum regulated pool elevation 368.0 feet NGVD to an elevation of 368.8 feet NGVD. The Kaskaskia Navigation pool has been operating, under the temporary deviation, at an elevation of 368.8 feet, since 1989. This is the preferred alternative because:

- It will continue to provide fisheries benefits through deeper passage between the main channel and seasonal important backwater areas including spawning, nursery, rearing and over-wintering habitat.
- The slightly elevated water levels areas will continue to create larger backwater areas, which benefit both fish and wildlife, including migratory waterfowl.
- It will continue to provide improved access to off channel areas for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits.
- During periods of drought would provide safe lockage conditions for both navigation and recreational traffic.

### **2.2. OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

#### **2.2.1. NO ACTION**

The “No Action” alternative would be to return to the original maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.0 feet NGVD. The alternative would decrease access to off channel areas by fish and recreational users and would cause an overall decrease in backwater habitat in the channelized portion of the Kaskaskia River. This alternative is unacceptable because of its negative fish, wildlife, and recreation consequences.

### **2.3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PLAN**

The original deviation from a maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.0 feet to 368.8 feet was implemented on the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project in response to drought conditions in the late 1980’s. Low inflows and loss of water through both recreational and navigation lockages made it impossible to maintain a maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.0 feet. The loss of storage from the pool resulted in less than full navigation depths. To make lockages possible during the drought conditions, the navigation pool elevation was maintained at 368.8 feet. Aside from navigation benefits, substantially fish and wildlife benefits were expected by increasing depth in connected off-channel areas and improving access to these



areas by fish. The Kaskaskia River Navigation Project has been operating under this temporary deviation, or extensions of the original deviation, since 1989. Drought conditions no longer exist in the Kaskaskia River Basin. Since 1996 continuation of the deviation has been solely for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and recreation. The proposed plan would make the deviation to maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.8 feet permanent.

### **3.0. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PLAN**

The following Section of the EA focus primarily on the recommended plan. A description of the affected environment and an assessment of the environmental impacts were completed in the 1992 EA, which is available online at <http://mvs-wc.mvs.usace.army.mil/>. In most cases there are no new impacts as a result of the proposed plan. What follows is a reassessment of conditions in cases where the affected environment has changed, or where new or previously un-discussed environmental impacts exist.

#### **3.1. TERRESTRIAL ENVIRONMENT**

##### **3.1.1. PHYSIOGRAPHY-TOPOGRAPHY:**

A description of the physiography and topography is provided in the 1992 EA. The physiology and topography have not changed significantly since 1992. No new impacts to the physiography and topography are expected as a result of the recommended plan.

##### **3.1.2 BOTTOMLAND HARDWOOD FOREST**

A description of the bottomland hardwood forest resources is contained in the 1992 EA. The 1992 EA concluded no impacts to bottomland hardwood forest. Not included in the 1992 EA was an assessment of the impact of the increase in the water table, as a result of the increase to 368.8 feet, on bottomland hardwood forests. Potential impacts could include changes in species composition, reduced regeneration of hard mast trees, and stressed trees. There has been no monitoring of the effects of the temporary deviation. Any impacts associated with increased water levels most likely occurred with the construction of the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project. Additional impacts of increasing the maximum regulated pool by 0.8 feet to 368.8 feet are unknown, but presumed to be minor.

#### **3.2. AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT**

##### **3.2.1. WATER QUALITY**

A description of the water quality and the impacts of maintaining a water level of 368.8 feet were discussed in the 1992 EA. No significant changes in water quality were expected and none have been identified since 1992, while water levels have been held at 368.8 feet. No new impacts are expected.



### 3.2.2 NAVIGATION CHANNEL

Maintaining a maximum regulated pool of 368.8 feet has resulted in a slightly deeper channel. The 1992 EA concluded that the slightly deeper water would benefit most aquatic species. It is expected that reverting to a maximum regulated pool of 368.0 feet would decrease main channel border habitat presently available to aquatic species. No new impacts are expected with the recommended plan.

### 3.2.3 REMNANT CHANNELS

There are 26 remnant channels in the project area, with the majority located above river mile 18. All except two of the 26 remnant channels are closed at the upstream end; all were left open at the lower end to allow access. The remnant channels form the majority of the backwater habitat still connected to the river in the navigation project. As such, the remnant channels are critical ecological components of the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project. They provide a quiet backwater habitat used by many species for wintering, feeding, and reproducing. They also serve as nurseries for developing sunfishes and other species. Several sport fish, including bluegill, largemouth bass, white bass, and yellow bass, are abundant in the remnant channels. These remnant channels are also heavily used by boat fishermen.

The 1992 EA concluded that the most serious problem facing the remnant channels was sedimentation. Most of the sedimentation in the remnant channels is occurring near their mouths. Thus, many of these backwater areas are gradually becoming more and more isolated from the main channel. The 1992 EA concluded that maintaining a maximum regulated pool of 368.8 feet would benefit fish through deeper passage and greater access to these backwater areas, resulting in greater fish reproductive output and winter survival.

All 26 remnant side channels still exist. Since 1992, six of the remnant side channels have been dredged, including two that have been dredged on more than one occasion. Dredging has occurred near the mouth of the side channels where sedimentation rates are the greatest. The average dredge cut has been six feet deep, 245 feet long, and 215 feet wide. Dredging at the mouth may be only a temporary solution, as the side channels appear to be silting closed again after dredging. Sedimentation may have been exacerbated by several high water events since 2000.

As indicated in the 1992 EA, operating the pool at higher elevations is not a permanent solution for backwater sedimentation within the remnant side channels. Future work calls for the completion of a hydraulic micro-model of the side channels to determine if an engineering solution exists which can reduce or prevent future sedimentation and deposition. If an engineering solution exists, future work will still require funding and, potentially, a cost share partner. Continued dredging the mouths of the side channels is contingent upon future funding.

One of the main intended consequences of the recommended plan would be to continue to maintain the improved access to the remnant side channels provide by operating the pool at a maximum regulated elevation of 368.8 feet. A return to a maximum regulated pool elevation of

368.0 feet would have the negative impact of diminishing existing access to the side channels for both fish and recreational boaters.

#### 3.2.4. WETLANDS

The 1992 EA describes affected wetland habitat and addresses impacts to wetlands as a result of maintaining a maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.8 feet. The EA concluded that impacts to wetlands would be slightly beneficial, due to the slightly elevated water table level, which would create slightly longer periods of standing water and greater water surface area. These benefits would likely be limited to low water periods. No new impacts are expected as a result of the recommended plan.

### 3.3. AIR ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.3.1. AIR QUALITY

No air quality impacts are expected as a result of the recommended plan.

#### 3.3.2. NOISE

No noise impacts are expected as a result of the recommended plan.

### 3.4. BIOTIC ENVIRONMENT

#### 3.4.1. TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE

No negative impacts to terrestrial species are expected as a result of the recommended plan.

#### 3.4.2. AQUATIC ORGANISMS AND FISHERY RESOURCES

The recommended plan is expected to continue to benefit the local fisheries community. Maintaining a maximum regulated pool level of 368.8 feet will continue to benefit fish by providing a deeper passage between the main channel and remnant channels and sloughs. The improved access by riverine fish to the remnant channels should have positive effects on the local fish community, during all life stages. The 1992 EA concluded that because backwater areas are used by many fish species for spawning and nursery areas, the rise in maximum regulated pool from 368.0 feet to 368.8 feet would result in an increase in fish reproductive output. River connected backwaters are also important to riverine fish, particularly to young-of-the-year fish, as wintering sites. Continuing to maintain an improved access to some of the deeper remnant channels should continue to improve fish survival during winter months and improve the population structure of local fish communities. Adopting the No Action plan, and returning to a maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.0 feet, will decrease the access to these off-channel areas by fish, and is expected to negatively affect the fisheries community. Continued benefits to native fish from maintaining a maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.8

feet, and the negative effects of reverting to a pool elevation of 368.0 feet, were major components of the selection of the recommended plan.

Since 1992, there has been an introduction of three Asian carp species to the Upper Mississippi River basin, the silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molotrix*), the bighead carp (*H. nobilis*) and the black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*). Two species, the bighead and silver carp, occur in the Kaskaskia River. These two species are filter-feeders, consuming mostly zooplankton and phytoplankton, likely in competition with most native fish, which utilize zooplankton during at least part of their life cycle. Improved access to off-channel areas for native fish has also improved access for the Asian carp species. Measures to control these new exotic species have not yet been developed. Actions which would limit Asian carp access to off-channel areas, like reverting to a maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.0 feet, would at the same time be detrimental to native fish. There is not a consensus among the scientific community on how to counteract the potential impact of the Asian carp species on native species. It is thought that by improving the numbers and robustness of native populations, through things like increased spawning, nursery, and over-wintering success, that you improve their ability to compete with the Asian carp species.

### 3.5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESOURCES

#### 3.5.1. REGIONAL ECONOMY

The Kaskaskia River Navigation Project passes through portions of Randolph, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in southwestern Illinois. The economy of the immediate region surrounding the navigation project is primarily a rural agricultural based one. However, it is within the direct zone of influence of the St. Louis metropolitan area. Numerous small towns in the region provide retail services, recreational and tourism opportunities, light and heavy manufacturing, and mining and energy industries. Coalfields are extensive in the project area and coal mining was probably the most significant industry in the area other than agriculture until the Federal Clean Air Act of 1990 made the mining and use of high sulphur coal environmentally and economically unfeasible. Loss of a vibrant coal industry has had a significant negative economic effect on the region and reduced commercial navigation tonnage on the KRP as well. However, in the past few years coal mining is making a comeback with improved technology, policy revisions to Federal Clean Air standards, and increased State incentives to improve profitability of Illinois coal.

#### 3.5.2 NAVIGATION

Since 1974 the KRP has handled approximately 55,000,000 tons of commodities valued at over \$2 billion dollars. In 2003, KRPD facilities and sponsored businesses handled approximately 550,000 tons of bulk commodities valued at \$100,000,000. Of this total, 450,000 tons of grain was shipped through the lock worth approximately \$75 million dollars. This grain originated from over 6000 farming operations in the basin.

The navigation system also handles approximately \$2 million worth of inbound fertilizer and \$20 million worth of processed steel annually. The Kaskaskia River is home to a number of grain and steel port facilities. The recommended plan will not negatively impact navigation or the existing facilities. If drought conditions return to the Kaskaskia River Basin, the recommended plan is expected to benefit navigation through the ability to continue lockages.

### 3.5.3 WATER SUPPLY

The Kaskaskia River Navigation Project regulated pool for navigation also ensures water supply and water quality requirements for numerous communities and industries in the region. Nearly 24 million gallons are utilized per day in the navigation pool. Water supply from KRP waters has an annual estimated value of \$40 million dollars. All the existing facilities function were designed to function within the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project water control parameters. The recommended plan will not negatively affect existing water supply facilities.

### 3.5.4. RECREATION

The Kaskaskia River Project lands and waters offer a variety of recreational resources. Today over 20,000 acres of public lands exist along the Kaskaskia River. Due to the proximity of the lower Kaskaskia River basin to the St. Louis Metropolitan area, there has always been a significant demand on the area for outdoor recreational use. Fishing, hunting, and camping were high participation activities in the lower basin, even before the construction of the Navigation Project. With the construction of the Navigation Project and establishment of an elevated slackwater navigation pool, recreational boating on the lower Kaskaskia River has increased dramatically. Due to the project's recreational importance, the addition of recreation as an authorized purpose for the Navigation Project was mandated by the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000. The Kaskaskia River Navigation Project portion of the river is used heavily for motor boating along with other water-oriented pursuits such as water-skiing, fishing, and swimming.

Corps visitation surveys and traffic counts documented that 2,978,920 recreation visitor hours (392,318 visits) occurred from 4 major boat ramp locations on Kaskaskia River during 2003. This does not fully account for use generated from the marina, private docks/ramps and some dispersed public access points. The percent distribution of public use by recreational activity on public lands and waters is estimated to be: Boating-95%; Fishing-62%; Swimming-8%; Water skiing-6%; Sightseeing-5.5%; Picnicking-3%; camping-2.3%; and Hunting-2.2%.

Total visitation in Kaskaskia River Project was 392,318 (person-trips) in 2003. Recreational visitors in the area spent \$8.67 million on trips within 30 miles of the KRP. 70% of this spending was captured by the local economy, yielding \$6.09 million in direct sales to tourism related firms. These sales generated \$2.10 million in direct personal income and supported 85 direct jobs. Through multiplier effects visitor spending resulted in \$9.51 million in total sales, \$3.34 million in total personal income, and supported 120

total jobs.

Implementation of the recommended plan is expected to continue to benefit recreational users of the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project, through increased water surface area for boating, fishing, swimming, and water skiing. The recommended plan will also continue to provide greater sport fishing access to the high quality off-channel fishing areas. Implementation of the no action plan, and reverting to a maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.0 feet would have negative impacts to recreation users of both the navigation pool and the off-channel areas. It is anticipated that implementation of the No Action plan, would be met negatively by most recreational users of the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project.

### 3.5.5. AESTHETICS

No major impacts to aesthetic resources are expected as a result of the recommended plan. Implementation of the No Action plan would limit access to off- channel areas and the aesthetics associated with those areas.

### 3.6. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The 1992 EA addressed cultural resources impacts associated with raising the maximum regulated pool elevation to 368.8 feet. No impacts were expected. Concurrence was received from the Illinois State Historic Preservation Agency in 1992. No new impacts are expected as a result of the recommended plan.

### 3.7 SECTION 404 ASSESSMENTS

The proposed project will not involve the placement of dredged or fill materials into waters of the United States and consequentially assessment under sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act are not required.

### 3.8 PRIME FARMLAND

Impacts to prime farmland were addressed in the 1992 EA. Critical factors in the designation of floodplain soils as prime farmland are flood protection and drainage. Based on the 1992 analysis of soil survey maps, less than 5 percent of the land within the Kaskaskia Navigation Project qualified as prime farmland. All or most of those areas were above 390 feet NGVD. As such, maintaining a pool of 368.8 feet is not expected to impact prime farmlands. Continuing to maintain the higher pool could cause some minor impacts on drainage of low-lying agricultural lands, but there have been no complaints related to field drainage since the original deviation in 1989. The 1992 EA concluded no impacts to prime farmland. No new impacts are expected with the recommended plan.

#### **4.0. FEDERAL ENDANGERED, THREATENED, AND OTHER RARE SPECIES: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

##### **4.1. FEDERAL THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

In compliance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers requested the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to provide a listing of Federally threatened or endangered species, currently classified or proposed for classification, which may occur in the vicinity of the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project. In an e-mail dated 30 April 2004, the USFWS indicated that six listed species (bald eagle, Indiana bat, small whorled pogonia, decurrent false aster, pallid sturgeon, and least tern) may occur in the vicinity of the proposed project areas. The pallid sturgeon and the least tern were not covered in the 1992 EA. Two species examined in the 1992 EA, the loggerhead shrike and the Bachman's sparrow, are no longer proposed for listing. One species, the running buffalo clover is now extirpated. The Biological Assessment in the 1992 EA concluded no affect to endangered species as a result of the change in maximum regulated pool elevation to 368.8 feet. In a letter dated 30 November 1992 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife concurred with that determination. No new impacts to endangered species are expected as a result of the recommended plan. The two species which were not examined in the 1992 document, the pallid sturgeon and the least tern are discussed below.

##### **4.1.1. PALLID STURGEON**

The pallid sturgeon, *Scaphirynchus albus*, is listed as endangered and occurs in the Mississippi River near the mouth of the Kaskaskia River, in Randolph County. It is not known to occur in the Kaskaskia River. Maintaining a permanent maximum regulated pool elevation of 368.8 feet is not expected to have any impacts on the Mississippi River. Implementation of the recommended plan will not affect the pallid sturgeon.

##### **4.1.2. INTERIOR LEAST TERN**

The interior least tern, *Sterna antillarum*, is currently listed as an endangered species by the USFWS. It is known to occur within the Mississippi River basin. Its range can include the lower Kaskaskia River, and there are anecdotal reports of least tern being spotted near the Baldwin, Illinois power plant. The species prefers riverine nesting areas that are sparsely vegetated sand and gravel bars within a wide unobstructed river channel. They nest on dike fields along the Mississippi River, at sand and gravel pits, ash disposal areas of power plants, along the shores of reservoirs and at other manmade sites. There may be some potential for migrating terns passing through the counties within the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project. It is expected that continuing to maintain a maximum pool elevation of 368.8 feet will not affect the least tern.

## 5.0. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

### 5.1. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Maintaining the maximum pool elevation at 368.8 feet will continue to provide benefits to both fish and wildlife. There is the potential that future environmental work can and will be done within the Kaskaskia River Navigation Project. It is expected that any future efforts will be enhanced or complemented by the higher pool elevation.

### 5.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESOURCES

In combination with any future recreational development in the lower Kaskaskia Basin, the proposed project should continue to have positive impacts to the area's socio-economic resources.

### 5.3. CULTURAL RESOURCES

No adverse cumulative impacts to cultural resources are anticipated.

## 6.0. RELATIONSHIP OF PLAN TO ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

Table 1. Relationship of Plan to Environmental Requirements

Environmental Act/Executive Order	Compliance
Bald Eagle Protection Act, 42 USC 4151-4157	FC
Clean Air Act, 42 USC 7401-7542	FC <sup>1</sup>
Clean Water Act, 33 USC 1251-1375	FC <sup>1</sup>
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, 42 USC 9601-9675	FC
Endangered Species Act, 16 USC 1531-1543	FC <sup>1</sup>
Farmland Protection Policy Act, 7 USC 4201-4208	FC
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 USC 661-666c	PC <sup>1</sup>
Food Security Act of 1985, 7 USC varies	FC
Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, 16 USC 460d-4601	FC
National Environmental Policy Act, 42 USC 4321-4347	PC <sup>2</sup>
National Historic Preservation Act, 16 USC 470 <i>et seq.</i>	PC
Noise Pollution and Abatement Act, 42 USC 7691-7642	FC
Resource, Conservation, and Rehabilitation Act, 42 USC 6901-6987	FC



Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act, 33 USC 401-413	FC
Water Resources Development Acts of 1986 and 1990	FC
Floodplain Management (EO 11988 as amended by EO 12148)	FC
Prevention, Control, and Abatement of Air and Water Pollution at Federal Facilities (EO 11282 as amended by EO's 11288 and 11507)	FC
Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality (EO 11991)	FC
Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment (EO 11593)	FC
Protection of Wetlands (EO 11990 as amended by EO 12608)	FC

FC = Full Compliance, PC = Partial Compliance

1. Full compliance will be attained upon completion of any permitting requirements or coordination with other agencies.

2. Full compliance will be attained upon public review.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District.

## 7.0. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PREPARERS

The St. Louis District staff members responsible for preparing this document are as follows:

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Experience: 24 yrs, Design Branch

Role: Structural Engineering Considerations

## 8.0. COORDINATION, PUBLIC VIEWS, AND RESPONSES

The St. Louis District has coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and IDNR during the preparation of this document. A public notice will be published in the local newspapers notifying the public that a copy of the Draft Environmental Assessment and Unsigned FONSI will be posted on the St. Louis District's web page at <http://mvs->

wc.mvs.usace.army.mil/ for a 30-day public comment period. All associated letters, comments, and responses will be filed with this document. All comments should be sent to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Attn.: Brian Johnson (PM-E)  
1222 Spruce Street  
St. Louis, MO 63103

The Draft Environmental Assessment and Unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact was sent to the following elected officials, agencies, organizations, and individuals for review and comment:

Mr. Thomas Skinner Regional Director, Region V U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 77 W. Jackson Blvd. Chicago, Illinois 60604	Mr. Erwin Red Becker Village of Fayetteville P.O. Box 287 Evansville, Illinois 62242
Mr. Robert Schanzel, Permit Program Manager Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Review and Coordination One Natural Resources Way Springfield, IL 62702-1271	Mr. Vic Hammer Illinois Department of Natural Resources 10981 Conservation Road Baldwin, IL 62217
Mr. Jerry Costello U. S. House of Representatives 155 Lincoln Place Court Belleville, Illinois 62221	Ms. Teresa J. Savko Illinois Department of Agriculture Bureau of Land and Water Resources P.O. Box 19281, State Fairgrounds Springfield, IL 62794-9281
Richard Durbin 332 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510	Ms. Joyce A. Collins U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 8588 Route 148 Marion, IL 62959
Peter Fitzgerald 555 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510	Ed Weilbacker Southwestern RC &D, Inc. 406 East Main Street Mascoutah, Illinois 62258
Leonard Vasquez 2356 Beckman Road Lenzburg, Illinois 62255	Mr. Dan Reitz Illinois Representative 116 <sup>th</sup> 128A West Main Street Sparta, Illinois 62286
Mr. Dan Reitz Illinois Representative 116 <sup>th</sup> 128A West Main Street Sparta, Illinois 62286	Mr. Michael Kuhn, President Lower Kaskaskia Stakeholders, Inc. P. O. Box 100 Red Bud, Illinois 62278
Mr. Mike Bost Illinois Representative 115 <sup>th</sup> 300 East Main Street Carbondale, Illinois 62901	Mr. George Andres, Manager Kaskaskia Regional Port District 154 South Main Red Bud, Illinois 62278
Senator Dave Luechtefeld Illinois Senate 58 <sup>th</sup> 700 North Front Street Okawville, Illinois 62271	Ms. Margaret Fertally Illinois Environmental Protection Agency 2309 West Main Street Marion, Illinois 62959
Senator John O. Jones	Mr. Scott Flood

Illinois Senate 54 <sup>th</sup> 2929 Broadway Mt. Vernon, Illinois 62864	Illinois Department of Natural Resources 4521 Alton Commerce Parkway Alton, Illinois 62002
Mr. Terry Lueher Randolph County Board #1 Taylor Street Chester, Illinois 62233	Mr. Randy Sauer, Streams Biologist Illinois Department of Natural Resources 20100 Hazlet Park Road Carlyle, Illinois 62231
Mr. Dallas Funk Village of Fayetteville 2212 Main Avenue Fayetteville, Illinois 62258	Mr. Jack Norman 906 North Metter Avenue Columbia, Illinois 62236
Mr. Jerry Phillips 8204 White Elm Drive New Athens, Illinois 62264	Mr. Norm Rieso 4600 Bremmer Freeburg, Illinois 62243
Mr. Roger Shields 6504 Amberwood Lane Red Bud, Illinois 62278	Mr. Randy Holbrook Illinois Department of Natural Resources 4521 Alton Commerce Parkway Alton, Illinois 62002
Mr. Kevin Voges The Material Works 11105 Obst Road Red Bud, Illinois 62278	Mr. Dennis Breithaupt Village of New Athens 1027 Spotsylvania Street New Athens, Illinois 62264
Mr. Bruce Brown Southern Illinois Transfer P. O. Box 262 Chester, Illinois 62237	

## DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### MAINTENANCE OF NAVIGATION POOL AT ELEVATION 368.8 FEET (NGVD) KASKASKIA RIVER NAVIGATION PROJECT, ILLINOIS

**I.** I have reviewed and evaluated the documents concerning the proposed permanent change of the Kaskaskia Navigation Pool, located in Randolph, St. Clair, and Monroe counties, Illinois, from 368.0 feet (NGVD) to 368.8 feet (NGVD).

**II.** As part of this evaluation, I have considered:

- a. Existing Resources and Future without Authorized Plan (No Action) Alternative.
- b. Impact to Existing Resources with Recommended Plan (Action Alternative).

**III.** The possible consequences of these alternatives have been studied for physical, environmental, cultural, social and economic effects, and engineering feasibility. Significant factors evaluated as part of my review included:

- a. The recommended plan would make permanent the existing temporary deviation from maximum regulated pool elevation 368.0 feet NGVD to an elevation of 368.8 feet NGVD. The Kaskaskia Navigation pool has been operating, under the temporary deviation, at an elevation of 368.8 feet, since 1989.
- b. The recommended plan will continue to provide the fisheries benefits resulting from the temporary deviation.
- c. The recommended plan will continue to create larger backwater areas which benefit both fish and wildlife, including migratory waterfowl.
- d. The recommended plan will continue to providing improved access to off channel areas for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits.
- e. During periods of drought the recommended plan would provide safe lockage conditions for both navigation and recreational traffic.
- f. There would be no degradation to the physical environment (e.g., noise, air quality, and water quality).
- g. Federally listed endangered and threatened species will not be adversely impacted.
- h. Navigation, port facilities, and water supply facilities would not be negatively impacted.

- i. There would be no adverse impacts to cultural resources.
- j. The "No Action" alternative was evaluated and determined to be unacceptable due to the negative fish, wildlife, and recreation impacts.

**IV.** Based on my analysis and evaluation of the alternative courses of actions presented in this Environmental Assessment, I have determined that making permanent the existing temporary deviation from maximum regulated pool elevation 368.0 feet NGVD to an elevation of 368.8 feet NGVD will not have significant effects on the quality of the environment. Therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared prior to proceeding with this action.

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Date

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C. Kevin Williams  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
District Engineer