

Dear Mr. Braudis:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in West Memphis, Arkansas, on August 20, 2002. In your statement you discussed siltation problems in the Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintenance of control structures, problematic removal of stop logs at the Big Lake (south end) control structure, and siltation and debris at an old railroad trestle in Ditch 81.

The Commission shares your concerns about the high rate of sediment deposition and its impact on fish and wildlife habitat in areas such as Big Lake. The report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service submitted to the Memphis District earlier this year will be used in the ongoing examination of head cutting and sediment deposition problems within the St. Francis Basin. To date, 20 high-priority channel stabilization sites have been identified on tributaries to the St. Francis River in Dunklin and Stoddard Counties, Missouri. Design of stabilization measures has been initiated on five of these sites, with construction of a site adjacent to the Otter Slough Wildlife Management Area scheduled this fall.

We appreciate the commitment of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to maintain the flood control structures at Big Lake. The Memphis District will continue to perform annual inspections and, as always, is available for technical assistance.

-2-

With regard to the problems associated with stop log removal at the Big Lake (south end) control structure, Memphis District has added rehabilitation of the structure, including more appropriate water level controls, to the list of maintenance issues within the St. Francis Basin. Design of the necessary repairs/changes will be scheduled based on available funding and priority of work. The Memphis District staff will keep you informed on this matter.

As you mentioned in your presentation, the Memphis District has plans to coordinate with the railroad representatives in Fiscal Year 2003 regarding the railroad trestles in Ditch 81.

Thank you again for your presentation. The Commission appreciates receiving your comments and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Don T. Riley  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
President Designee, Mississippi  
River Commission