

Dear Mr. Flentje:

Thank you for your comments during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission on August 13, 2002, in Davenport, Iowa.

In order to maintain the 9-foot navigation channel, maintenance dredging is performed at various locations in the reach of the Upper Mississippi River. Within the Rock Island District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this reach of the river extends approximately 314 river miles from Lock and Dam No. 10 at Guttenburg, Iowa, to Lock and Dam No. 22 just downstream from Saverton, Missouri. The area is divided into 12 pools by navigation dams. The present navigation system was initiated when Congress passed the River and Harbor Act on July 3, 1930, which authorized funds for its development. This legislation provided for a navigation channel 9 feet deep and 400 feet wide to be established by constructing a series of locks and dams and maintained by dredging. One of the most chronic dredging areas has been the Buzzard Island area, located along your levee and drainage district at river mile 348.0-349.6.

During the 1960's through the 1980's, the Corps placed dredged material from this cut on our stockpile site along your main-stem levee at river mile 348.9-349.3. The Corps has placed more than 770,000 cubic yards of dredged material at this site. Over time, this stockpile had grown and expanded to encroach further into the bottomland hardwood forest, as well as onto a portion of your levee. Because of this, other placement alternatives were evaluated in order to reduce further expansion of this site. Options included thalweg placement (open-water placement into the deepest portion of the navigation channel) and promotion of beneficial use removal of dredged material

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from this stockpile. That is the reason for developing road access to the stockpile site. This road has been in place since 1986, and beneficial use removal has been nominally successful so far.

The Corps prepared a Dredged Material Management Plan (DMMP) for the placement of dredged material for the Buzzard Island dredge cut in 1995. The process of identification and development of DMMPs ensures that all practicable and reasonable alternatives for the placement of dredged material

are fully considered on an equal basis. This includes the placement of dredged material in the least costly manner, at the most practicable location, and consistent with engineering and environmental requirements.

The Corps understands the concerns about the potential for recreational abuse, and we do all we can to reduce this potential, including local coordination. However, maintenance of the levees is the responsibility of the local drainage and levee district. The Rock Island District staff has agreed to meet with you and others at your district office in November to discuss the methods that have been used at other locations to control recreational traffic and any potential solution that may help at the Buzzard Island stockpile site.

I hope this information satisfactorily explains the current position of the Corps on maintenance dredging. If you desire further details on this matter, you may call Mr. Mike Cox of the Technical Support Branch of the Rock Island District, at (309) 794-5558.

Thank you again for your presentation before the Commission. We appreciate the support you have shown and look forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

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