

Dear Mr. Norman:

Thank you for your presentation before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Alton, Illinois, on August 15, 2002.

The Corps of Engineers appreciates the cooperative effort of the Kaskaskia Group of the Sierra Club and other organizations in working towards a healthy sustainable system on the Kaskaskia Watershed.

We thank you for your support and comments relative to the continued work towards completion of the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) System Navigation Study. The UMR-IWW System Navigation Study has been restructured to give equal consideration of fish and wildlife resources and navigation improvement planning consistent with recommendations from the National Research Council and the Federal Principals Group. The restructured study will ensure the UMR-IWW system continues to be a nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant commercial navigation system as designated by Congress. The restructured study will address the navigation efficiency needs of the UMR-IWW, the ongoing cumulative effects of navigation, and the ecosystem restoration needs with a goal of attaining an environmentally sustainable navigation system. The full economic and environmental evaluations necessary to support a potential recommendation for construction of navigation improvements and implementation

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of ecosystem restoration measures will be completed by October 2003. These potential plans will be presented at a series of public meetings beginning in October 2003 to gain public input prior to making a final recommendation. The final feasibility report is currently scheduled for completion in 2004. For more information and details concerning the UMR-IWW System Navigation Study, please refer to the Rock Island District website: <http://www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/umr-iwwsns/>.

Balancing the interests within the Mississippi Valley remains a challenge, and the Corps will continue its efforts to meet the flood control, navigation, and environmental needs

of all. The Commission appreciates receiving your views 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