

Dear Mr. Ourth:

Thank you for your attendance at the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission on August 15, 2001, in Keokuk, Iowa.

We welcome hearing various viewpoints on the many attributes of the Mississippi River. The varied missions of the Corps of Engineers reflect the public interest as determined and authorized by Congress. The Civil Works mission of the Corps includes navigation, environmental restoration, flood protection, and recreation. Generally, our greatest challenge is the equitable balancing of these missions among the diverse interests of the citizens of the upper Mississippi Valley.

On August 2, 2001, the Director of Civil Works instructed the Corps of Engineers to resume the Upper Mississippi River- Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study. The refocused study will develop a plan to be used as a framework for the environmental sustainability of the river's navigation system, ecosystem, and flood plain.

We recognize that sedimentation is considered by many to be the most severe environmental problem on the Upper Mississippi River System. The Corps of Engineers is working closely with State and Federal agencies to address this complex problem. The Rock Island District will provide you a copy of the recently completed Habitat Needs Assessment report that highlights sedimentation problems as well as other topics of concern within the Upper Mississippi River Basin.

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Your interest in Mississippi River Commission activities is appreciated. We look forward to hearing from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
President Designee,
Mississippi
River Commission