

Dear Mr. Reid:

Thank you for your presentation during the public meeting of the Mississippi River Commission in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on March 6, 2002. In your statement you discussed Mississippi River restoration strategies.

You mentioned two studies in your comments, the upper river Environmental Management Program (EMP) and the Lower Mississippi River Resources Assessment (LMRRA). Both have significant potential for beneficial ecosystem management. The Commission agrees that the level of effort and commitment to the environmental aspects of these two projects are very important, particularly in light of the newly released Environmental Operating Principles (EOPs) used to guide the Corps in all of its work. The EOPs were formally announced on March 26, 2002, and a copy is enclosed for your information. You may also access these principles at the Corps' web page at www.hq.usace.army.mil.

The Corps' commitment to the environment is strong; however, the funding levels for these projects are limited, with many interests competing for the Federal dollar. The EMP on the upper Mississippi River has not been funded to the authorized levels since its inception. The LMRRA project, while authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, is not yet funded. We have received letters of intent from all states involved to share costs on the LMRRA when a Federal interest is identified.

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Thank you again for your presentation and support. We appreciate receiving your views and will be pleased to hear from you at our future public meetings.

Sincerely,

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

Enclosure