

Dear Mr. Rutledge:

Thank you for your statement before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Helena, Arkansas, on April 3, 2001. In your statement you discussed how the White River Navigation project would provide an economical benefit to the White River Valley. Additionally, you expressed your view that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is actively campaigning against the project with no scientific information to back up the allegations.

The Commission recognizes the need for the navigation improvements along the White River and supports the timely completion of the reevaluation of the authorized project. However, as you are probably aware, the President's budget request for Fiscal Year 2002 does not include any funding to complete the reevaluation. Given the large backlog of funding needed to complete construction projects already underway, the budget focuses on completing these ongoing projects.

In regard to your assertion concerning the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service efforts, you may be assured that the Corps of Engineers will continue to work with all resource agencies to present the project facts and benefits. Once the reevaluation report is completed, a public release of the project findings will be made.

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

Sincerely,

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