

Dear Mr. Mahfood:

Thank you for the statement made on your behalf by Mr. Jerry Vineyard before the Mississippi River Commission during the public meeting in Cairo, Illinois, on March 4, 2002. In your statement you expressed concern about the future of Big Oak Tree State Park and the alignment of Corps division boundaries. You also repeated your department's request that the Mississippi River Commission travel up the Missouri River on the Motor Vessel Mississippi.

As you mentioned, the Memphis District staff has confirmed that the protective measures for Big Oak Tree State Park, which were presented in the September 2000 Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) are still a part of the St. Johns Bayou and New Madrid Floodway project. The Commission supports these measures and has been assured they will be clearly stated in the Final SEIS currently being prepared for the project.

As I stated in my verbal response to Mr. Vineyard, the Corps Division Commanders of the Mississippi Valley Division, Southwestern Division, and Northwestern Division met with Missouri Governor Bob Holden concerning the alignment of Corps division boundaries and assured him that the Corps will provide the same service regardless of boundaries.

-2-

There are always additional areas the Commission would like to see within our very limited time on the river. We will consider traveling a portion of the Missouri River in the future.

The Commission appreciates 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