What Corps of Engineers can do . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Corps' role is more one of hydrologic manipulation to control the rate of flow, etc., rather than pollution abatement, which is the province of other agencies. Proposals primarily involving land acquisition will not be pursued, because a simple change in land ownership does not restore or rehabilitate the ecosystem.

What authorities does the Corps have for these projects?

They can be authorized in several ways, much the same as harbor and flood damage reduction projects. These are the major authorities:

General Investigations – Individual study authorities enacted by Congress, congressional resolutions, or favorable reconnaissance studies under Section 216 of the River and Harbor and Flood Control Act of 1970. (Section 216 is for modifying the structures or operation of completed Corps projects when changed physical or economic conditions make the changes advisable.

Continuing Authorities – These studies do not require specific authorization by Congress. They generally deal with projects smaller than General Investigations studies and can be completed in less time. Two such authorities are described in the following paragraphs.

- Section 206 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1996, Aquatic Ecosystem – Restoration. This new authority is for projects with a Federal cost below $5 million, including study costs. The Federal Government pays 65 percent of the feasibility study costs, design, and construction costs, with the sponsor paying the rest.

- Section 1135 of WRDA 1986, Modifications of Corps Projects To Improve the Quality of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. These projects must modify the structure or operation of an existing Corps project. The Federal cost is limited to $5 million, and planning studies, design, and construction are paid 75 percent by the Federal Government.

Other authorities may apply, including Section 204 of WRDA 1992, beneficial use of dredged material.

How does the process start?

We may begin an ecosystem system study after we receive a written request from the prospective sponsor and obtain approval and funding from our Division office. A sample letter is included in this brochure. This request, and any further inquiries about an ecosystem project, should be made to:

U.S. Army Engineer District, Alaska
ATTN: Dave Martinson, EN-CW-PF
P.O. Box 6898
Elmendorf AFB, AK 99506-6898

Fast Facts about Sections 1135 and 206

	Section 1135	Section 206
Project purpose	Restore fish or wildlife habitat impacted by a Corps project	Restore aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife (not necessarily related to a Corps project)
Who may sponsor?	Public agency, some private interests, or large nonprofit organization	Same as Sec. 1135
Maximum Federal cost	$5 million, including planning studies	Same as Sec. 1135
Sponsor's responsibilities	Acquire needed land, easements, etc, Operate and maintain project. Willing and able to provide non-federal cost share.	Same as Sec. 1135
Cost sharing	75% Federal, 25% non-federal	65% Federal, 35% non-federal

October 23, 2003

Sample letter to request a study

Send your letter to the District Engineer at the address on this brochure.

Salutation:

We are writing this letter to seek your assistance in planning and designing a project for ecosystem restoration at _____ (Briefly describe the potential project, why it is being requested, its approximate size, the time requirement if any, and any specific problems or needs. If you are requesting the project under a certain Corps authority, mention the authority.)

We are aware that Corps projects require non-federal sponsors to share costs of the feasibility study, design, and project construction. We understand that we would be required to provide the local cost sharing prescribed by the authority used for our project, and we are willing and able to do so, if an acceptable plan is developed.

We appreciate your consideration of our request. Please contact (name, address, telephone, e-mail if applicable) for more information.

Sincerely,
(Name and Title)

U.S. Army Engineer District, Alaska
ATTN: Dave Martinson, EN-CW-PF
P.O. Box 6898
Elmendorf AFB, Alaska 99506-6898

Sections 1135 and 206

Ecosystem Restoration

What problems are eligible for a Corps restoration project?

The project should restore degraded ecosystem functions and values (including hydrology and plant and animal communities, or portions of them) to a less degraded ecological condition Examples might be enabling salmon to reach blocked spawning grounds, enhancing nesting territory for waterfowl, or restoring flow to a river oxbow cut off by an earlier project. Although linkage to an existing Corps' project is not required, budgetary priority goes to those cases where a Corps' project contributed to the degradation or where modification of a Corps' project is the most cost-effective means of restoring the resources.

Engineering solutions are most appropriate for Corps' projects. The Corps focuses on activities directly associated with or dependent on the hydraulic regime of the ecosystem and watershed. Generally, activities on upland sites not closely linked to water resources are not appropriate for the Corps. Regarding water quality, the

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