



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
St. Paul District

Public Notice

**Environmental Assessment and 404(b)(1) Evaluation:
Embankment Rehabilitation, Maintenance, and
Environmental Restoration, Upper Mississippi River,
River Mile 753.**

Date: June 12, 2006

In Reply Refer to: Environmental and Economic Analysis Branch

Project Proponent. St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers, 190 Fifth Street East, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1638.

Project Background. This Notice of Availability is for an Environmental Assessment and appended 404(b)(1) Evaluation for maintenance and modifications to the Lock and Dam 4 embankment, River Mile (RM) 753 of the Upper Mississippi River (UMR). The proposed activities are to construct a terraced berm extending off of the embankment.

Project Authority. The River and Harbor Act of July 3, 1930, which authorizes the 9-foot channel navigation project on the Upper Mississippi River, provides Federal authority for the project.

Project Purpose. The purpose of these modifications is to provide erosion protection to the embankment using environmentally preferred alternatives to rock. The project will provide environmental benefits at the embankment, while also providing beneficial use of dredged material.

Project Location. The Lock and Dam 4 Embankment extends west from Lock and Dam 4 on the Minnesota side of the floodplain, about seven miles downstream of Wabasha, MN.

Proposed Action. The proposed action includes placement of two permanent berms extending upstream off of the existing embankment. These two berms would be placed between the existing culverts at the embankment. The berms would include four terraces at various elevations. The lowest two terraces would be planted with trees, and the upper two terraces planted with grasses. Sand for the construction would come from the Teepeeota point dredged material placement site. Fine material for capping the berms would come from either a wetland scrape two miles north-east of the embankment; or from dredging of Clear Lake (Finger Lakes) immediately downstream of the embankment.

Alternatives. The No Federal Action alternative assumes no changes in providing erosion protection along the embankment. Currently, erosion protection is provided by rock that was originally placed in the 1930s. Although this site is not critical for immediate action, the rock that currently provides protection is becoming weathered and will require eventual replacement.

Alternative combinations of both berms and islands immediately upstream of the embankment were considered. However, coordination with State and federal resource agencies identified the proposed action as the preferred alternative. The Corps is also considering multiple construction methods for the proposed action. The benefits and effects of these alternative construction methods are discussed within the EA.

Schedule. The EA is provided to the public for review and comment. the comment period for the EA will end on 14 July. **There will also be a public meeting to present this plan. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on July 13th at the American Legion Club, 100 N Sheppard St, Kellogg, MN 55945. A presentation will be given at 7:00.** Following the EA review period, the District will address comments.

The District hopes to begin construction later this summer or fall. Construction schedule is dependent upon funding, and may take multiple years to complete.

Summary of Environmental Impacts. Implementation of the preferred alternative would have minimal adverse environmental effects. The action would affect a footprint area of about 10 acres adjacent to the embankment, most of which is aquatic habitat. Much of this area would be converted from backwater lake to bottomland forest type habitat. The location of where fine material would be obtained is uncertain, but would either be a wetland scrape (about 2 acres) or hydraulic dredging from Clear Lake (less than 5 acres). Both the scrape and hydraulic dredging would be a habitat benefit within their respective areas. No Federal or State listed threatened or endangered species would likely be affected. Construction activities could result in short-term increase of noise and safety effects at and near the embankment.

Coordination. The District has closely coordinated this proposal with State and Federal agencies. Those involved include the Corps of Engineers; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Departments of Natural Resources from Minnesota and Wisconsin; and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Sites were selected that encouraged minimal adverse effects. Environmental interests generally support the project.

Comments. Any interested parties that may be affected by the proposed action are invited to submit to this office comments, facts, arguments, or objections to the Environmental Assessment and appended 404(b)(1) by 14 July 2006.. These statements should bear upon the adequacy of plans and suitability of locations and should, if appropriate, suggest any changes considered desirable. Statements should indicate that they are in response to this Public Notice.

Public Hearing. Any person also may request, in writing, within the comment period specified above, that a public hearing be held to consider the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) evaluation appended to the Environmental Assessment. Requests for a public hearing shall state, in detail, the reasons for holding a public hearing. A request may be denied if substantive reasons for conducting a hearing are not provided, or if there is otherwise no valid interest to be served.

Send Comments or Requests. All replies should be addressed to the District Engineer, St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers, ATTN: PM-E, 190 Fifth Street East, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1638. The Environmental Assessment may be obtained electronically at <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil>. Mr. Elliott Stefanik, telephone number (651) 290-5260 and email Elliott.L.Stefanik@usace.army.mil, can be contacted for additional information or to obtain a hard copy of the Environmental Assessment.



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