



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
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CECW-MVD

14 August 2020

MEMORANDUM THRU COMMANDER, MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION

FOR COMMANDER, ST. LOUIS DISTRICT

SUBJECT: Mississippi River between the Ohio and Missouri Rivers (Regulating Works Project) – Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Response to Independent External Peer Review (IEPR)

1. An IEPR was conducted for the subject project in accordance with Section 2034 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, Engineer Circular (EC) 1165-2-217, and the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (2004).
2. The subject IEPR report and the Corps responses have been coordinated with the vertical team and the enclosed document contains the approved final written responses to the issues raised and the recommendations contained in the report. As required by EC 1165-2-217, the IEPR report and the Corps responses will be posted on the internet.
3. Questions regarding this matter may be directed to Ms. Katie Williams, Deputy Chief, Mississippi Valley Division Regional Integration Team, at (202) 761-0315 or [kathleen.a.williams@usace.army.mil](mailto:kathleen.a.williams@usace.army.mil).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alvin B. Lee".

ALVIN B.LEE  
Director of Civil Works

Encl

**Mississippi River between the Ohio and Missouri Rivers  
(Regulating Works Project)  
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement  
FINAL  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Response to  
Independent External Peer Review**

Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) was conducted for the subject project in accordance with Section 2034 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-114), Engineer Circular (EC) 1165-2-217, and the Office of Management and Budget's *Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review* (2004).

The goal of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Civil Works program is to always provide the most scientifically sound, sustainable water resource solutions for the nation. The USACE review processes are essential to ensuring project safety and quality of the products USACE provides to the American people. Battelle Memorial Institute (Battelle), a non-profit science and technology organization with experience in establishing and administering peer review panels for the USACE, was engaged to conduct the IEPR for the Mississippi River between the Ohio and Missouri Rivers, referred to in the IEPR Report as the Middle Mississippi River (MMR), Regulating Works Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. Battelle identified potential candidates for the Panel in the following key technical areas: Civil Works planning/economics, biological resources and environmental law compliance, and river engineering. Battelle made the final selection of the three-person Panel.

Battelle issued its Final IEPR Report on February 2, 2017. Overall, five comments were identified and documented by Battelle. All five comments were identified as having medium-low significance.

USACE concurred with all 5 comments, and adopted 5 of the 7 recommendations. The following discussion presents the USACE Final Response to the five comments.

**1. IEPR Comment – *Significance* -- Medium/Low. It is not clear why impacts of future river training structure construction and the associated compensatory mitigation requirements were not evaluated in more detail with respect to specific locations in the MMR.**

This comment includes two recommendations, one was adopted, and one was not adopted.

**Recommendation 1:** Develop a programmatic plan for future river training structure construction projects. Use the existing dredging priority list to predict the potential locations of future river training structure construction sites. Prepare preliminary designs and impact assessments for the example construction sites.

**USACE Response: Not Adopted**

**Action Taken:** A programmatic plan for future river training structure construction was used to estimate the scale of impacts in the SEIS. A description of this plan, including the methodology of how it was developed, is included in the SEIS. This higher level of detail will be included in the tiered site-specific environmental assessments (SSEAs).

**Recommendation 2:** Document updates of the programmatic plan for river training structure construction projects as new information is obtained in SSEAs.

**USACE Response: Adopted**

**Action Taken:** The specific types of structures to be used at each location will be detailed in future SSEAs along with an accounting of the magnitude of impacts at the site-specific and cumulative level.

- 2. IEPR Comment – *Significance* -- Medium/Low. The project description for the proposed action does not describe the decision-making process that will be employed for identifying new river training structure construction sites.**

This comment includes one recommendation, which was adopted.

**Recommendation 1:** Add a description of how future river training structure construction projects will be evaluated and identified, tools to be used (such as the dredging priority list and how it is developed), interagency coordination, and any other pertinent factors.

**USACE Response: Adopted**

**Action Taken:** More information on the specific decision-making process used in identifying potential construction sites was added to Section 1.1.2, Process for New Construction under the Regulating Works Project, of the Main Report.

- 3. IEPR Comment – *Significance* --Medium/Low Significance. The SEIS does not clearly describe the project construction features within the main report such that a link between the project and the level of impacts can be easily compared.**

This comment includes one recommendation, which was adopted.

**Recommendation 1:** Move the descriptions of the river training structures from Appendix F to the description of alternatives in Chapter 2 of the main SEIS.

**USACE Response: Adopted**

**Action Taken:** The river training structure descriptions were moved to a table in Section 3.2.2, Geomorphology, of the Main Report.

- 4. IEPR Comment – *Significance* --Medium/Low. A lack of detailed information on the sediment load entering the MMR limits the understanding of the overall effort needed to achieve the project’s stated purpose of providing an economical, regulated, and dredged navigation channel.**

This comment included two recommendations, one was adopted, and one was not adopted.

**Recommendation 1:** Place a sediment data set in either SEIS Chapter 3 – Affected Environment, Section 3.2.2, Geomorphology – or in an appendix.

**USACE Response: Adopted**

**Action Taken:** A sediment data set was added to Chapter 3 of the Main Report to promote a better understanding of the sediment characteristics of the MMR.

**Recommendation 2:** Develop an engineering appendix that consolidates Sedimentation, River Engineering, and Potamology into one place.

**USACE Response: Not Adopted**

**Action Taken:** The sedimentation, river engineering, and potamology information in the Main Report provides needed context to the analyses contained in the document in each respective section. Because any information included in an engineering appendix would duplicate, and not replace, information that is found elsewhere, this separate appendix would be redundant.

- 5. IEPR Comment – *Significance* --Medium/Low. Several concerns noted in the Public Comments on the MMR Regulating Works SEIS have not been documented in sufficient detail.**

This comment includes one recommendation, which was adopted.

**Recommendation 1:** Conduct additional analyses and investigations and provide documentation on the issues noted in the Basis for Comment.

**USACE Response: Adopted**

**Action Taken:** In addition to including responses to the public’s comments with the SEIS documentation, clarifying revisions were made to Chapter 1, Appendix A, and the Supplement to Appendix F.