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Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Mississippi River Mainline Levees and Channel Improvement: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Notice of Intent

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The United States Army Corps of Engineers (“Corps”) announced in a July 13th Federal Register notice its intent:

. . . to prepare Supplement II (SEIS II) to the Final environmental Impact Statement, Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) Project, Mississippi River Mainline Levees and Channel Improvement of 1976 (1976 EIS), as updated and supplemented by Supplement No. 1, Mississippi River and Tributaries Project, Mississippi River Mainline Levee Enlargement and Seepage Control of 1998 (SEIS I) to the 1976 EIS, to cover construction of remaining authorized work on the Mississippi river mainline levees (MRL) feature.

See 83 Fed. Reg. 32642.

The announcement was made by the Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans Corps Districts.

The acronym EIS refers to the term “Environmental Impact Statement,” which is a key component of the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”). NEPA requires federal agencies to include environmental values in the issues in their decision making process. This federal mandate is accomplished by agency consideration of environmental impacts on proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. The statute requires federal agencies in certain instances to prepare a detailed EIS. This requirement is triggered in the event of a major federal action that will significantly affect the environment.

The Corps notes in the July 13th Federal Register notice that:

. . . Over the past twenty years since the finalization of SEIS I, USACE has determined that various sections (reaches) of the mainline levee system are deficient in varying amounts, and that certain remedial measures need to be undertaken to control seepage and to raise and stabilize the deficient sections of the levee to protect the lower Mississippi River Valley against the Project Design Flood (PDF) and maintain the structural integrity of the MRL system.

SEIS II is stated to supplement and, as necessary, augment the 1976 EIS and SEIS I using the primary MR&T goals of:

1. Providing flood protection from the PDF;

2. developing an environmentally sustainable project; formulating alternatives; identifying significant resources; assessing the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to those resources; investigating and environmentally assessing potential borrow areas; developing mitigation measures; and evaluating and selecting a preferred method for the construction of necessary authorized MRL Project features, which may include but are not limited to, implementing seepage control measures and the construction of various remediation measures for deficient levee reaches to bring these reaches to the project design grade. SEIS II will evaluate the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for an array of alternatives, including a No Action alternative.

A copy of the [Federal Register notice](#) can be downloaded here.