



One of the Corps of Engineers' critical missions is to strive for environmental sustainability. The Corps recognizes the interdependence of life and the physical environment. The Corps proactively considers environmental consequences of its programs and acts accordingly. The Corps seeks balance and synergy among human development and natural systems by designing economic and environmental solutions that reinforce one another.

Regulatory Program

Under Section 10, a Corps of Engineers permit is required to do any work in, over or under a "Navigable Waters of the United States." Water bodies have been designated as "Navigable Waters of the United States" based on their past, present or potential use for transportation for interstate commerce. The Corps' regulatory programs include Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Under Section 404, a Corps of Engineer permit is required for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. Many water bodies and wetlands in the nation are waters of the U.S. and are subject to the Corps' Section 404 regulatory authority. In granting or denying permits to developers, the Corps strives to prevent environmental damage. Evaluating public interest, regulatory experts try to balance the need for economic development with environmental considerations. The St. Paul District's regulatory jurisdiction covers the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration

Section 206 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 provides authority for the Corps of Engineers to undertake restoration projects in aquatic ecosystems, such as rivers, lakes and wetlands. The Corps evaluates projects that benefit the environment through restoring, improving or protecting aquatic habitat for plants, fish and wildlife. A project is accepted for construction after an investigation shows it is technically feasible, environmentally acceptable and provides cost-effective environmental benefits. Costs for Section 206 projects are shared between the federal government (65 percent) and a non-federal sponsor or partner (35 percent), in accordance with the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. The maximum federal expenditure per project is \$5 million, which includes both planning and construction costs. The federal government will not pay the costs involved for obtaining the lands and/or easements and future operation and maintenance.

Environmental Management Program

The Environmental Management Program is intended to ensure the coordinated development and enhancement of the Upper Mississippi River system, with primary emphasis on habitat restoration and protection projects. Habitat projects include dredging backwater areas and channels, constructing dikes, creating and stabilizing islands and controlling side channel flows and water levels. In this district, the projects are located along the Minnesota River and Mississippi River from Guttenberg, Iowa, to Minneapolis, a distance of 250 river miles.

Habitat Restoration

The Corps has the authority, provided by Section 1135 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended, to plan, design and construct fish and wildlife habitat restoration measures. To be eligible for consideration, restoration measures must involve modification of the structures or operations of a project constructed by the Corps, or modification of an off-project site when it is found the Corps' project contributed to the degradation of the environment. To qualify under this program, projects must be justified – that is, the benefits resulting from constructing the project must exceed the cost incurred to design and build the project. Each separate project is limited to a total federal cost of not more than \$5 million, including studies, plans and specifications and construction.