



# News Release

**US Army Corps  
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St. Paul District

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**Public Affairs**

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## Corps of Engineers to propose new Mississippi Headwaters' reservoir operating plans in 2008

SAINT PAUL, MINN. –The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, plans to complete the Headwater's Reservoir Operating Plan Evaluation, or ROPE study, this year.

The ROPE study is being used to update the water management practices for each of the Headwaters' reservoirs, which include Cass, Winnibigoshish, Leech, Pokegama, Big Sandy, Cross (Whitefish chain) and Gull. The study is being conducted in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, which manages the dam on Cass Lake. As part of the study, the Corps and the Forest Service are considering revising the timing of fall draw-downs, operating bands, "normal" lake levels, minimum releases and more.

The existing operating plans were developed more than 40 years ago and have only been "tweaked" slightly during the years to maximize benefits for flood damage reduction and recreation. Little consideration has been given to how the operation affects other interests including environmental resources. Public input has been gathered and used throughout the study to develop reservoir operating plans that best benefit all users of the system.

Limited funding for the study has slowed progress in the last couple years but work is nearly complete on the refinement and analysis of the proposed plan. A draft Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, describing the effects of the plan will be released for public review this spring. Following the release of the draft EIS, a series of public meetings will be held to gather additional public input. Comments on the draft will be used to develop the final EIS, which is scheduled for release this summer. It is anticipated that operation under the new plan would begin this fall.

For more information on the ROPE, please visit the Corps' ROPE website at <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/rope/>, or contact Steve Clark, Corps of Engineers, at ([steven.j.clark@usace.army.mil](mailto:steven.j.clark@usace.army.mil) or 651-290-5278), or Chantel Cook, U.S. Forest Service at [cmcook@fs.fed.us](mailto:cmcook@fs.fed.us) or 218-335-8662.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, serves the American public in the areas of environmental enhancement, navigation, flood damage reduction, water and wetlands regulation, recreation sites and disaster response. It contributes around \$126 million to the five-state district economy. The more than 625 employees work at more than 40 sites in five upper-Midwest states. For more information, see [www.mvp.usace.army.mil](http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil).