



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District

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# **Scoping Document**

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## **Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam and Lock and Dam 1 Section 216 Disposition Study**

May 2023

U.S. Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District  
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**NOTICE:** The following report reflects scoping activities through May 2023 for the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Lock and Dam 1 Disposition Study, initiated in October 2022. As the study continues, study scope may be further refined and this document may be supplemented.

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# Scoping Document

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# 1 Introduction

This Scoping Document summarizes the scoping activities undertaken, issues, potential alternatives, and information identified during those scoping activities for the Lower St. Anthony Falls (LSAF) and Lock and Dam 1 (LD1) Disposition Study in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN metropolitan area. The scoping activities for the LSAF and LD1 Disposition Study were conducted in October and November 2022. As the study progresses, study scope may be further refined, and this document may be supplemented.

This study evaluates if there is continued federal interest at LSAF and LD1, two locks and dams and the associated federally authorized navigation channel. Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970 (33 U.S.C. § 549a), authorizes the Corps of Engineers (Corps) to evaluate existing projects to determine whether they continue to serve their authorized purpose(s). The Corps uses an early and transparent process to determine the scope of key issues for the study. The Disposition study is anticipated to include an Environmental Assessment (EA) to fulfill responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

This Disposition study will produce a decision document in the form of an integrated feasibility report and associated NEPA document in accordance with the Corps of Engineer's Planning Guidance Notebook (ER 1105-2-100), Interim Guidance on the Conduct of Disposition Studies dated August 22, 2016, and the Project Management Plan.

This Disposition study was originally initiated by the Corps along with study of Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam (USAF) but subsequently separated, discussed in 1.3 of this report. Scoping activities for the combined disposition study were conducted in 2018. This scoping document addresses both comments received during the present scoping effort and incorporates the results of the prior scoping efforts discussed in Appendix E. Comments received after scoping was concluded for the 2018 combined study but before scoping was initiated for the LSAF and LD1 study in 2022 are included in this report. Comments submitted after the publication of this document may be included in a supplemental appendix or in the integrated report.

## 1.1 Lower St. Anthony Falls and Lock and Dam 1 Background

Navigation improvements on the Upper Mississippi River began in the nineteenth century. Twin Cities leaders worked to extend upper Mississippi River commercial navigation (barges and tow boats) to the city of Minneapolis. Congress originally authorized the construction of LD1 on March 3, 1899. Over the next decades and several additional acts by Congress, the Corps constructed three locks and dams in the Twin Cities: LD1 in 1917, LSAF in 1956, and USAF in 1963. LD1 was later modified in 1929 for the 9-foot navigation channel. These three locks and dams combined with other channel infrastructure and dredging a 9-foot deep channel in the Mississippi River, collectively part of the Nine-Foot Navigation Project, were necessary steps in bringing water-borne commerce to the Minneapolis Upper Harbor.

LSAF and LD1 are located in Minneapolis, Minnesota at river miles 853.3, and 847.9, respectively (Figure 1). Each of the sites consist of a dam that traverses the entire Mississippi River and a lock located on the right descending bank. The navigation channel in this associated reach extends from river mile 843.8 to 857.6 (Figure 2). The associated navigation channel is periodically dredged by the Corps to maintain a 9' channel, although it has not been dredged upstream of the confluence with the Minnesota River since 2014 when Congress

directed the closure of USAF. Historically, dredge material was placed temporarily at designated beneficial use sites for local use. Other navigation infrastructure or lands under Corps' jurisdiction in this reach may include mooring structures, easements, and fee title land. The Corps built the projects and continues to operate and maintain these sites in accordance with laws and regulations.



Figure 1. Corps of Engineers Locks and Dams at USAF, LSAF, and LD1.

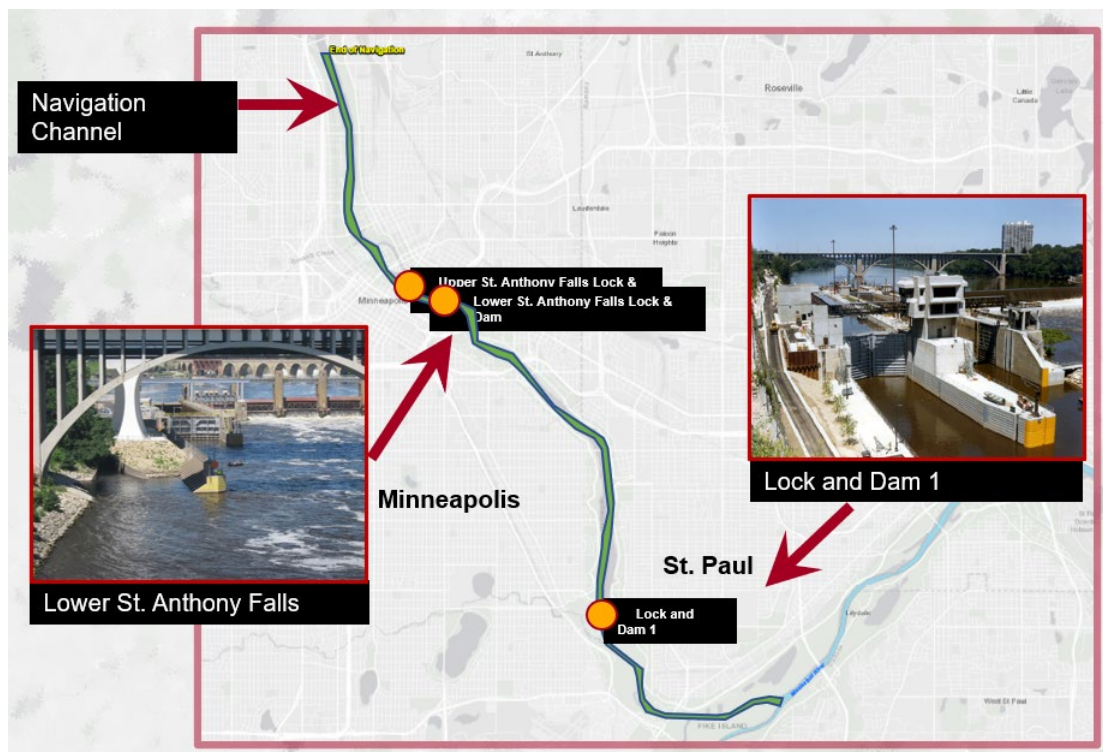


Figure 2. LSAF and L/D 1 Disposition Study Project Area.

## 1.2 Closure and Disposition Purpose of this Disposition Study

The LSAF and LD1 Disposition study's focus is on whether Federal interest exists to retain these sites for their authorized purposes (navigation and recreation). The study will evaluate and compare the benefits, costs, and impacts (positive or negative) of continued operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation, or lack thereof, of the sites over the next 50 years, as well as evaluate whether de-authorization and disposal of the associated real

property and Government-owned improvements is warranted. The purpose of the Disposition Study is not to determine the best future non-federal use of the site.

### **1.3 Congressional Actions**

In 2014, Congress directed that USAF be closed within one year (WRRDA 2014<sup>1</sup>), apart from emergency lock operations at USAF as necessary to mitigate for flood impacts. However, the associated navigation channel still remains authorized. On June 9, 2015, the last lockage was made at USAF, cutting the commercial navigation connection between the Minneapolis Upper Harbor and downstream reaches of the upper Mississippi River. This closure also affected recreational navigation.

In 2016, the Corps began studying the disposition<sup>2</sup> of the three Twin Cities locks and dams. The purpose of a disposition study is to determine whether there is Federal interest in continuing to own and operate the lock and dams. Disposition may be warranted if the sites are deemed to no longer serve a Federal interest. The current authorized purposes at LSAF and LD1 are navigation (primary purpose), and recreation (secondary purpose). If there is no longer a federal interest, the Corps is then directed to identify a viable disposal alternative such as transferring lands and the structures to a different local, state, or federal agency or other entity. Before the locks and dams could be disposed to another agency, Congress would need to deauthorize the project, ending the navigation mission at the lock and dam project sites and associated channel.

In 2018, Congress directed the Corps to study the disposition of USAF first and separately from LSAF and LD1 (WRDA 2018<sup>3</sup>). A draft Disposition Study for USAF was completed in December 2020, recommending deauthorization and disposal of the federal navigation project at USAF. In December 2020, Congress separately directed that real property adjacent to the USAF lock and dam be conveyed to the City of Minneapolis or its designee, but did not deauthorize the USAF. It further required the Corps to retain ownership of the lock and dam and to retain all rights necessary for operation and maintenance of the lock and dam. The Corps is working with the City of Minneapolis, and its agent non-profit Friends of the Falls, on conveyance activities. Further efforts regarding the conveyance are ongoing. A final disposition study report and recommendations, if any, will be prepared after the parameters of the conveyance are better defined.

### **1.4 Other Federally Authorized Projects in the Study Area**

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) is located within the study area. MNRRA represents a nationally significant historical, recreational, scenic, cultural, natural, economic, and scientific resource that has a national interest in the preservation, protection and enhancement of these resources for the benefit of the people of the United States. MNRRA was

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<sup>1</sup> Section 2010 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA 2014), dated June 10, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970 (PL 91-611) authorizes the Secretary of the Army to review operations of completed projects, when found advisable due to changed physical, economic, or environmental conditions

<sup>3</sup> Section 1168 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018 (WRDA 2018), dated 24 October 2018, directed the Corps in carrying out a disposition study to consider removing the project or a separable element of the project



designated by Congress in 1988 (Weller and Russell 2017)<sup>4</sup>. The National Park Service (NPS) has management oversight of MNRRA with the goal of “preserving unimpaired” its natural and cultural resources and values.

Under the Federal Power Act, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has issued hydroelectric licenses for the Twin Cities Hydroelectric project (LD1) and Lower Saint Anthony Falls Hydroelectric project (LSAF). The Twin Cities Hydroelectric project license is for 30 years set to expire in 2034. The Lower Saint Anthony Falls Hydroelectric project license is for 50 years set to expire in 2056.

## **1.5 Level of Environmental Review**

Unless significant impacts are identified during the study, the Corps anticipates that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will satisfy the environmental review requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An EA is a written document under NEPA that assesses the environmental consequences of a Federal action. The purpose of an EA is to determine the significance of the proposal’s environmental outcomes and assess alternatives. EAs also provide sufficient evidence and analysis to conclude an environmental impact (EIS) statement should be completed or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI).

This Disposition study will include an integrated EA and will examine alternatives for LSAF, LD1 and the federal navigation channel in the study area. Additional details on scenarios that are anticipated to be evaluated in the EA can be found in Section 3.2.1.

## **1.6 Disposition Study Scoping**

This Scoping Document, based on written input from individuals, federal, state, Local Government Organizations (LGOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and hydropower interests, describes the scope of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be studied in the EA and identifies the environmental issues that will be assessed in detail in this study, as well as those that are not significant or that have been covered elsewhere. This scoping document will also address environmental issues that would need to be covered under future Corps studies.

Scoping is a vital part of the NEPA process and is one of the first steps undertaken. Scoping:

- ...is an “...early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action” (40 CFR 1501.7).
- ...provides agencies with a method to determine the scope of analysis in an EA, meaning the nature of the actions, the alternatives, and the impacts to be analyzed.
- ...helps agencies to “...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review” (40 CFR 1501.7).
- ...involves Federal, State, and local agencies, affected Indian tribes, the proponent of an action, and other interested persons (40 CFR 1501.7).

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<sup>4</sup> Weller, L. and T.A. Russell. 2016. State of the River Report 2016. National Park Service and Friends of the Mississippi River.

- ...is one of the 17 methods of reducing excess paperwork, and one of the 12 methods for reducing delay, as outlined in the regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500.4 and 1500.5).

A total of 7 of meetings were held with agencies, NGO's, interested parties and members of the public. Information about the Disposition study process and timeline was provided in paper and digital formats. Section 2 of this report describes the meetings and information in further detail.

## **2 Scoping and Meeting Information**

### **2.1 Purpose of Meetings**

As part of the 2022 scoping process, a series of meetings and open houses were conducted at community events in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The purpose of these events, held October 2022, was to facilitate early public and agency involvement in the study. The goals of public outreach at this early scoping stage were: (1) to introduce the study by describing the sites under consideration, and (2) explain the disposition study purpose, process, and timeline. Details on how to submit comments was provided at each meeting. Comments were accepted verbally at in-person events, by post mail and email. Public and agency attendees, whether virtual or in person, were asked to help identify any issues associated with the alternatives under consideration. These meetings served to fulfill part of the Corps' scoping requirements under NEPA.

### **2.2 Corps Scoping Efforts**

The details for each in-person or web-based events for the 2022 scoping are shown on table 1. Additional details and information materials from these meetings are provided in Appendix A. Sign in sheets for each event are on file with the Corps and available upon request.

Table 1: 2022 In-Person or Web-Based Scoping Meetings for the USAF Lock and Dam Disposition Study.

Date	Time	Location	Audience	Estimated # of Attendees <sup>a</sup>
October 13	6:00 – 8:00 pm	Highland Middle School, 975 Snelling Ave, St. Paul, MN	Public	26
October 14	2:00 – 6:00 pm	Lock and Dam 1, 4801 South Minnehaha Drive, Minneapolis, MN	Public	83
October 15	10:00 am – 2:00 pm	Lock and Dam 1, 4801 South Minnehaha Drive, Minneapolis, MN	Public	112
October 18	9:00 – 11:00 am	Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E1500, St. Paul, MN	Agencies	22
October 18	1:00 – 3:00 pm	Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E1500, St. Paul, MN	Local Governments	6
October 20	1:00 – 2:00 pm	Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E1500, St. Paul, MN	Hydropower Interests	4
October 25	6:00 – 8:00 pm	Dowling Elementary School, 3900 West River Parkway, Minneapolis, MN	Public	67
<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>320</b>

<sup>a</sup> Not including Corps of Engineers staff.

### 2.2.1 In-person Community Events

Four public scoping in-person events were held in October 2022 for this effort. Two of these public open houses were held in local schools. The format consisted of a short powerpoint presentation followed by an open-house to facilitate engagement between the public and various subject matter experts. The Corps held the other two open house events at LD1 to increase awareness of the disposition study and lock and dam operations.

### 2.2.2 Local and Federal Government Meetings

Three meetings were held in October 2022 with local government organizations (LGOs) and federal and state government agencies directly involved at LSAF and LD1. The meeting format generally involved a providing a PowerPoint presentation of the Disposition study purpose, process and timeframe. questions/answer session, and roundtable discussion. A summary of meeting dates and times are shown in Table 1. Additional details and information materials from these meetings are provided in Appendix A.

### 2.2.3 Consultation with Indigenous Communities

The Corps continues consulting with 31 Indigenous communities under the Disposition Study. Engagements include regular communication (in-person calls, emails, and other notices) on public meetings and events, individual and group meetings, group meetings with agencies and other partners, separate meetings upon request, tours, and various written correspondence.

#### **2.2.4 Language Outreach**

The factsheets and some website materials were translated into Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. These languages were selected as the most-dominant languages in the study area (after English).

#### **2.2.5 Virtual Scoping Materials**

In addition to in-person meetings, the Corps developed a public-facing website which included videos, an GIS-based storymap, and factsheets. These materials were developed to inform persons unable to attend in-person events and to provide additional information for those submitting comments.

Powerpoints developed for the public open houses were posted on the website (<https://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/LSAF/>). Videos of the real estate at LSAF and LD1 were also posted on the website. Lastly an interactive webmap/storymap was developed to walk people through the history of the sites, current study, and affected environment (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/127c89d36ae2432ebffe941eb00b2f94>)

The Corps does not track web traffic via the public facing website so engagement numbers for virtual scoping cannot be provided.

#### **2.2.6 Non-Corps Disposition Education Efforts**

Community reporting and outreach events, not initiated by the Corps' occurred and may have increased public awareness of this disposition study and submittal of public comments. These efforts do not substitute for the Corps' NEPA scoping efforts but are noted below as they positively impacted the public's awareness of the LD1 a disposition study.

Macalester College coordinated an education and outreach effort supported by the Friends of the Mississippi River in the summer 2022<sup>1</sup>, prior to the Corps official study kick off. The Corps kicked off the Lock and Dam disposition studies October 2022. Community members whom participated in Macalester College's earlier educational outreach efforts provided more meaningful input and conversations to occur early in the scoping effort. Additionally, these efforts identify a demand for in-person engagement during early study scoping. In-person engagement was valuable for agency staff and appreciated by the public as it improved understanding of Lock and Dam operations and purpose early in the study.

In addition, there were multiple instances of local newspapers articles and radio station reports informing the public about the disposition study and the open public comment period.

### **3 Scoping Summary**

The following section summarizes the intended scope of the Corps LSAF and LD1 Disposition study based on early public, agency, local, and business scoping as well as internal agency knowledge.

#### **3.1 Geographic Scope of Analysis**

The geographic scope of analysis for the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives includes the Upper Mississippi River from river mile 843.8 to 857.6 (Figure 2). The

extent of the scope on the lateral extent of the Mississippi River is generally the ordinary high water mark elevation on the left and right riverbanks for most resources. This geographic scope includes LSAF and LD1 as described in Table 2.

Table 2: Disposition Study – Site Description and Extent.

Site	Major Features	Extent of Site Reach (RM)
LSAF	Primary lock, auxiliary lock (partial), gated spillway, dam, access road, parking lot, shop, guide wall, control station, hydropower <sup>a</sup>	853.4 – 853.6
LD1	Primary lock, auxiliary lock, dam, spillway, access road, shop, parking lot, control station, retaining wall, hydropower <sup>a</sup>	847.4 – 847.8
Navigation channel	Authorized Nine-Foot Channel for navigation and associated infrastructure including mooring structures, flowage easements, fenders, fee title lands	843.8 – 857.6

<sup>a</sup> Operated by Brookfield Renewable Power

## 3.2 Scope of Alternative Scenarios

### 3.2.1 Alternative Scenarios

Five alternative scenarios, including: no action, complete deauthorization/disposal, and partial deauthorization/ disposal, dam removal, and a new purpose will be evaluated at each dam location Alternative scenarios for the navigation channel will include no action and deauthorization. Evaluation of potential combinations of alternatives will be evaluated in an EA, in accordance with the Corps' guidance for Disposition Studies. The evaluation process will likely result in screening of alternatives prior to a detailed analysis.

The alternative scenarios that will be considered in the study for LSAF and LD1 are:

1. **No Action:** This is the base condition upon which other alternatives are to be compared for the environmental assessment under NEPA. No action would mean the locks and dams would remain authorized federal projects, the United States would continue to own property at the lock and dam sites and the Corps would continue standard operations and maintenance including both routine and major maintenance. Operation and maintenance would include routine maintenance, current operations, and occasional major maintenance as required for safety or to meet the authorized project purpose. Those actions would be funded with federal appropriations consistent with budgeting and Corps funding priorities. The associated channel would remain authorized for navigation and the Corps would retain maintenance responsibilities such as occasional dredging or repairs to mooring structures. The Corps would continue to grant temporary real estate permits for compatible uses. The cooperation with FERC would continue. This is the future without-project condition (FWOP).
2. **Full Deauthorization/Disposal:** Congress would deauthorize the locks and dams and the navigation channel. All activities associated with maintaining commercial navigation by the Federal government at the site(s) would cease. The Corps would no longer have maintenance obligations for the projects and would not dredge the channel. The dam

site(s) and all associated features in their entirety would be disposed of to a willing entity through the General Services Administration (GSA).

3. **Partial Deauthorization/Disposal:** Some activities associated with maintaining commercial navigation by the Federal government at the site(s) would cease AND/OR portions of the dam site(s) and associated features would be disposed of to a willing entity through the General Services Administration (GSA). The associated channel, or segments of it, would be deauthorized for navigation with no maintenance activities of associated infrastructure. Under this scenario, alternative authorized water resources purposes could be considered. Partial deauthorization and disposal requires thorough evaluation of the potential future uses of the site under multiple ownerships. The Corps would retain responsibility for operation and maintenance of any elements remaining in Corps ownership or not disposed of to another entity. Thorough evaluation would be required to ensure compatibility with new ownership and use of portions the site and the remaining areas required by the Corps for ongoing access to perform operations and maintenance activities.
4. **Dam Removal:** As required by WRDA 2018 Section 1168, dam removal will be considered in the disposition study.
5. **Potential Opportunities for a New Purpose:** Locks and dams would be considered for a new purpose such as ecosystem restoration or recreation, which would require subsequent, additional study and assessments in addition to the disposition study. The implementation guidance for WRDA 2018 Section 1168 states that the disposition study should “consider modifications that would improve the overall quality of the environment in the public interest, including removal of the project or separable element of a project, when conducting a disposition study. When modification of a project or removal of project features and improvements is likely to be more costly than continued operation and maintenance but may be justified based on ecosystem restoration benefits, the Corps will continue to follow existing guidance in reference 1a. That guidance allows modifications to projects, including removal of project features and improvements, for ecosystem restoration purposes to be further investigated in a feasibility study if a non-Federal interest is willing to share in the study costs.”

### 3.2.2 Key Disposition Study Assumptions

The following assumptions will guide the evaluation and analysis of alternatives in this disposition study:

- Under No Action, the navigation channel will remain authorized. Periodic dredging of designated cuts along this reach may occur because of the responsibility to maintain a navigation channel, despite the lack of commercial navigation. This is contingent upon funding and need. Though it is uncertain how often this would occur, it will be significantly less than prior to closure of the USAF lock in 2014, likely on the order of once every decade. Not doing so could result a tipping point where severe actions would be needed to regain a functional navigation channel for barge traffic.
- If deauthorization of all or some site elements is recommended, the Federal government will no longer own, operate, or maintain the identified physical properties or the associated 9-foot navigation channel. Under these deauthorization alternatives, a

number of critical assumptions will inform the scope of analysis to evaluate, compare, and select a recommended plan. These assumptions are detailed below.

- The Federal action is limited to immediate deauthorization of the site(s) or portions thereof along with transfer out of Corps management. The study will identify potential future owner(s) if known and generally describe potential future uses of the site but will not evaluate potential impacts of future uses in detail as those are not within the Federal action.
- If deauthorization is recommended, future regulatory actions would be required to ensure compliance with applicable laws and statutes, including evaluation of potential impacts of any future modifications to the site.
- If deauthorization occurs, the site(s) would be eligible for disposal to a willing entity through the GSA. Disposition generally requires identification of a non-Federal or other Federal entity to take over the ownership of the site(s) and pay for a share of any immediate repair and rehabilitation cost and all future operation, maintenance, repair, restoration, and rehabilitation expenses. The receiving entity would incur all other responsibilities, risks, and liabilities of the site(s).
- Modifications or repairs to the sites may be a requirement for sale. However, the requirement for modifications has not been confirmed and costs of such repairs are not included in the economic evaluation used to inform selection of the recommended plan. Throughout the study process, as alternative scenarios are considered and developed, such modifications may be included as part of an alternative and parametric costs may be developed.
- Commercial barge traffic through the LSAF's or LD 1 locks will not resume in the future.
- Limited operations would continue for the sites until they are formally disposed of by GSA. If deauthorization and disposal is recommended, it is assumed that normal operations will continue for no more than two years and limited operations (i.e., caretaker status) will occur for no more than eight years.
- Hydropower operations will continue until the sites are formally disposed of by the GSA. Regardless of who owns and operates the locks, FERC licenses will stay in place until the end of their term, unless both parties agree to the terms of early termination.
- Hydropower operations are dependent on dams remaining in place.

### **3.3 Scope of Issues**

The following issues have been identified in scoping process through public, agency, local organization, individual, and business comments will be addressed in the EA Compliance with other laws will be addressed in the integrated report and EA as appropriate. Examples of identified issues that will be addressed in the study due to other legal requirements (law, executive order, regulation, treaty, or other agreement) are cultural resources, historic properties, and threatened or endangered species.

The LSAF and LD1 are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Congressional deauthorization of the facilities would have no immediate effect on these historic

properties. However, transfer the facilities from Federal ownership, without protective conditions, is considered an adverse effect under the National Historic Preservation Act.

In addition to the issues identified through scoping comments received, the Corp will address other topics in the study including long term Operation and Maintenance requirements, a qualitative assessment of a willing entity's ownership capabilities, and lessons learned from the ongoing USAF Disposition Study and property conveyance activities. The study will explore and define what long term maintenance may be or may not be required as long as the lock and dam structures remain in place. Under a partial disposal scenario, the study will assess compatible future uses to ensure Corps access to perform ongoing operations and maintenance to the portion(s) of the sites(s) not disposed of to another entity. Additionally, under a partial disposal scenario, alternative authorized water resources purposes may be considered.

The scoping process resulted in written comments submitted by members of several groups recognized as follows: the general public, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), local government organizations, Agencies, and hydropower entities. Comments were organized in terms of major themes, and the following summaries are organized as such (i.e., first by group, then by theme). The major themes are shown in Figure 3.

Excerpts of scoping comments considered representative for each theme are also provided. The identification of themes and selection of representative comments were subjective efforts, and the Corps recognizes major overlap of themes and subthemes, which could affect the reporting below. These issues will be evaluated and summarized in the disposition study.

Common topics identified during scoping have been translated into questions for which the Corps has provided responses to in the "Frequently Asked Questions" paper dated April 2023 (Appendix B).

Across all groups, the Corps received a total of 310 letters, emails, or comment cards with over 1,100 comments in the 2022 scoping effort (Table 3; Appendix C). This scoping effort included comments received after conclusion of the combined USAF, LSAF, and LD1 scoping process. Comments from the combined disposition scoping in 2018 have been summarized and are included as an appendix to this document (Appendix E). All major issues from earlier scoping overlap with that of the 2022 scoping.

Table 3. Summary of Scoping Comments.

Group	Number of Commenters	Number of Comments	Major Themes
Public	297	956	Ecosystem, Dam Removal, Study Scope, Recreation, Keep Locks and Dams (Status Quo).
NGOs	5	71	Study Scope, Dam Removal, Communications, Ownership, Infrastructure, Recreation, Navigation, Hydropower.
LGOs	5	44	Infrastructure, Study Scope, Recreation, Ownership, Dam Removal, Social, Communications, Ecosystem, Indigenous Nations.
Agencies	2	30	Study Scope, Dam Removal, Ownership, Ecosystem.
Hydropower	1	11	Hydropower, Ownership, Historic/Cultural
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>1,112</b>	



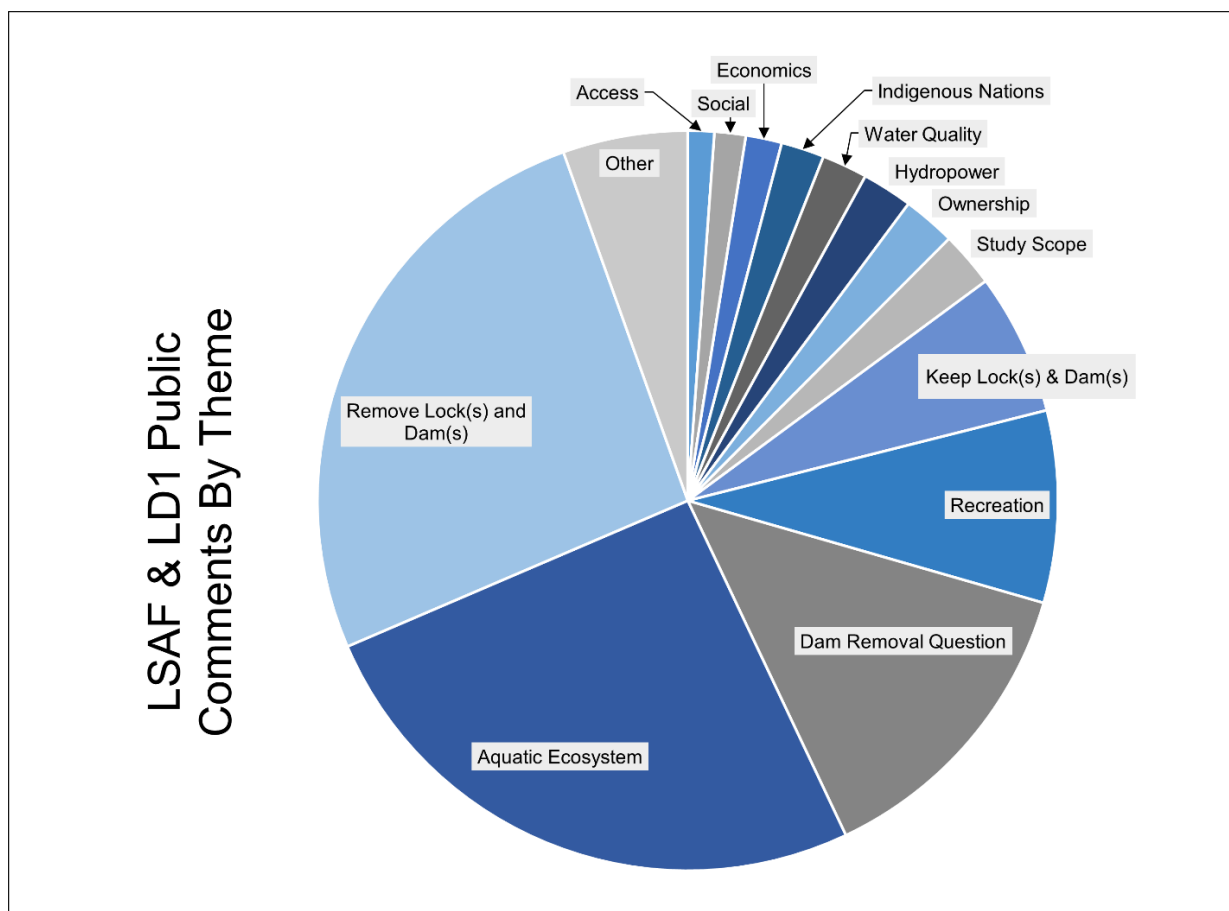


Figure 3. Info-graphic With Major Themes of Scoping Comments.

### 3.3.1 General Public

Members of the public were able to submit comments through the project website or at public meetings. The Corps received comments from 297 individuals. This includes 59 individuals who submitted comments using a template form.

The Corps identified a total of 956 comments from individuals.

Major themes of the comments, in order of frequency included: ecosystem, pro dam removal, questions or concerns about study scope or process, recreation, and keep locks & dams. Subthemes were also noted. Major subthemes, in order of frequency are: ecosystem benefits, sediment contaminants, invasive species, economics, habitat and species preservation, and rowing access concerns. The themes of the template form submitted by 59 individuals included ecosystem, recreation, invasive species, and sediment contaminants. Additional details on common themes and concerns from public comments are described in the following sections.

#### 3.3.1.1 Pro lock and dam removal & pro keep locks and dam

Most public commentors gave their perspective on whether LSAF and/or LD1 should or should not be removed. They shared their visions of what the future of this section of river corridor could look like in the future.

Commentors who are in favor of dam removal list ecological benefits, recreation, and a desire to see a return to pre-colonial conditions as reasons for dam removal.

*“The time is ripe to take a bold step forward towards a new vision of the Gorge that removes the environmentally damaging features of a 150-year-old industrial plan, restores the natural flow and character of the river, rehabilitates habitat for fish and wildlife, and promotes compatible recreation and business opportunities.”*

*“I believe that the removal of the two dams would bring enormous value to the community and would be of critical importance to the ecological systems that depend on the river. The dams certainly have served their purpose and helped to make the twin cities and greater Minnesota the successful region it is. However, the same purposes are no longer being served, and it is time for Minnesotans to lead the nation when it comes to prioritizing our environment and ecological systems that we find much pride in.”*

Commentors who are in favor of keeping the structures in some capacity cited pool level, impact to recreation activities such as rowing, preservation of ecosystem, and disturbance to status quo and current infrastructure as reasons to keep the locks and dam.

*“I think the lake-like river gorge created by the dam offers access and recreation to more people than a free flowing river would. At this point restoration of a free flowing river are too uncertain to offer any benefit to wildlife.”*

*“Though the locks and dams no longer serve their original authorized purpose, I feel that it is in the federal government's best interest for the Corps to continue operating and owning them. We should rather focus on trying to see what can be improved and think about our relationship with the river now, not reimagine what it could be.”*

### 3.3.1.2 Ecosystem

Concerns over potential impacts, both positive and negative, to the ecosystem were a significant theme from public commentors. Those who described potential ecosystem benefits of dam removal listed increase in biodiversity and improved connectivity. Many comments expressed concern over how ecosystem costs and benefits would be measured and weighted with respect to other considerations in the study.

*“Is it true that the removal of the dam would be beneficial to many species of fish that require migrations to spawn? As well, the increase of biodiversity, including 50+ rare or endangered species, would be great for the health of the river both north and south of the dam.”*

*“For the past 100+ years, the river's ecology has been impacted by these facilities. The opportunity to restore the river's natural ecology can now be anticipated. How can these sites become places to conduct and study river restoration?”*

*“The Mississippi River was home to more than 90 fish species before the structures were built. Today we have fewer than 30 species and only in small numbers. Please analyze how removal could improve the restoration of native species in the river and whether there would be any impacts on the spread of invasive species.”*

### 3.3.1.3 Invasive species

Concern over the spread of invasive species with increased connectivity of the river was a major theme from public commentors. Public comments called for an in-depth study weighing the pros of ecosystem benefits against the impacts of the potential spread of invasive species. Carp were the most commonly named invasive species in public comments.

*“Wildlife and native plant ecosystems should be fully considered as important stakeholders. Please consider the expansion of invasive species and weigh it against increased habitat and restoration for native species”*

*“My main concern is the issue of invasive Carp. It is vital that the best ways to deal with the problem of invasive Carp be considered.”*

### 3.3.1.4 Sediment Contaminants

Concerns about the contents of the soil upstream of the dams were brought forward by over 100 public commentors. Those concerned about sediment contaminants were either in favor of not removing the locks and dams or requested extensive study of the contents of sediment build up and where that sediment would spread upon removal.

*“How much sediment is built up between Lower St. Anthony Falls and Lock & Dam No. 1 and is it polluted? What would happen to this sediment if the dams were removed? How much would it cost to address that?”*

*“Should the Army Corps decide to remove the dam, please do a thorough study on the amount of sediment and study the sediment for toxic waste/chemicals and cost of demolition before removing.”*

### 3.3.1.5 Economics

Comments concerning economics were varied. Some commentors wrote that the continued operation and maintenance of the LDs is too costly. Others expressed that removing the infrastructure and constructing something else would not be economically beneficial. Other comments in this theme were concerned with the economic future of the metro area with or without the locks and dams.

*“The Army Corps needs to ensure that such an investment is the best use of public funds, and be transparent about the costs of lock and dam removal, as well as its long term effects.”*

*“Dam removal will require a sizable up-front cost, but it will end up saving taxpayers more money in the long term.”*

*“Structures above the dam could be negatively impacted by dam removal. There is a high cost to remove the dam.”*

### 3.3.1.6 Ownership

Many public comments were concerned about future ownership of the locks and dams. Commentors had questions regarding if and how the public would be involved in decision

making regarding the locks and dams should ownership change from the Corps to another federal agency or public or private entity.

*“If either lock & dam is turned over to a private entity, how would the public’s interest be represented and ensured?”*

### **3.3.2 Non-Government Organizations**

The Corps received a total of five letters from NGOs that included American Rivers (AR), Macalester College, American Native Fishes Association (NANFA), Friends of Pool 2 (FOP2), University of Minnesota (UoM). The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), Friends of the Mississippi River (FOM), and American Rivers (AR) also submitted a joint letter.

The Corps identified a total of 71 comments with the following major themes, in order of frequency: study scope, dam removal, communications, ownership, infrastructure, recreation navigation, and hydropower. Single comments were also observed for economics, water quality, status quo, endangered species, ecosystem, and climate change.

#### **3.3.2.1 Study Scope**

*“For the first time in over a century, we have an opportunity to reimagine the future of the Mississippi River and the Twin Cities’ national park, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (Corps) disposition study for the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam (LSAF) and Lock and Dam 1 (LD1) is a critical step toward determining what the next century will bring. Will these structures remain in place or be removed and a free-flowing river restored?”*

*“The Corps must calculate the ecosystem services lost and gained by converting the riffle-pool rapids habitat of the Gorge to flat-water reservoirs. This calculation must look back to when the dams were constructed and track how the ecosystem services have been impacted by impoundment, compared to the historic ecosystem-type that would have existed had the dams never been built and would be restored if the dams were removed.”*

*“The Corps should more clearly state the problem. Based on the above text, it seems that the problem is that “limited lock size, shifting transportation needs, and declining public interest in commercial navigation have caused a precipitous drop in use of the federal infrastructure.” As a response to this problem, “the Corps is conducting a Disposition Study to determine the best future use of the site.”*

*“The Corps must initiate an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Corps’ procedures for implementing NEPA state that an EIS is required when the Corps considers “[p]roposed major changes in the operation and/or maintenance of completed projects.” The very nature and purpose of the Disposition Study is to consider a “major change in the operation and/or maintenance of a completed project.” As such, the Corps must automatically initiate the Environmental Impact Statement process.”*

*“[Our] ... main concern is that this Disposition Study is proceeding without knowing the potential costs. How can the COE make any decision on turning over the property when the cost of any entity assuming ownership/control is unknown.”*

### 3.3.2.2 Dam Removal

*“The Corps must complete an examination of the ecosystem services tradeoffs between impoundment and dam removal and restoration...”*

*“If any party would take on the ownership of Lock and Dam 1 and want to remove it, there is a potential cost of sediment removal being \$200 million dollars... [Our organization] wants to be assured that the approximate 2 million cubic yards of potentially contaminated sediment does not end up washing down into Pool 2.”*

*“Participants also told us what they thought the benefits and drawbacks to dam removal might be. This information can help the Corps understand what to prioritize in their public communication about lock and dam removal. ... participants listed “Healthy Ecosystems,” “Increased Recreation,” and “Greater Accessibility” as a few of the benefits they saw for dam removal. They suggested “Loss of Recreation,” “Release of Harmful Toxins,” and “Removal Expense” as potential drawbacks to lock and dam removal.”*

### 3.3.2.3 Communications

*“We also urge the Corps to adhere to documented best practices for future public engagement on the disposition study...”*

*“We recognize that the Corps has the power to make important decisions about lock and dam infrastructure that will significantly impact surrounding communities for generations. It is vital that public engagement at this stage be as widespread and inclusive as possible.”*

*“We suggest the Corps take steps to make it easier for the public to understand what a Mississippi River without these locks and dams would look like, including providing visual representations of future scenarios. The use of augmented and virtual reality could be particularly powerful in helping residents imagine a restored river.”*

*“Engaging diverse communities in the Corps’ disposition studies would ensure that Congress receives a recommendation that reflects input from those who will be impacted by their decisions. The Corps should take steps to reach a wider range of individuals, especially those who have historically been excluded from major decisions around infrastructure including BIPOC communities and youth.”*

*“We recommend offering educational resources and public tours while collecting comments, and even after the comment period closes...We recommend the Corps collect basic demographic information about who submits comments and attends public events.”*

### 3.3.2.4 Ownership

*“The structural integrity of LD1 has profound implications for any future owner and suitability of the structure for alternative uses”*

*“The Corps must make clear that if dams are transferred to another owner, jurisdiction over dam safety would be transferred to the Dam Safety Program within the Minnesota*

*Department of Natural Resources, unless the dam owner and hydropower operator are the same entity, in which case dam safety jurisdiction would transfer to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.”*

*“...if conveyance of the property and facilities is considered, a covenant or similar requirement be included obligating the receiving party or parties not only to continue to operate the locks for flood mitigation purposes, or to otherwise provide mitigation acceptable to affected parties, but also to maintain the properties consistent with Corps standards to ensure long term structural stability and function.”*

### 3.3.2.5 Infrastructure

*“The Corps needs to work with the municipalities, Hennepin and Ramsey counties, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the University of Minnesota, and other property owners to understand the potential need to modify these structures and estimate those costs under the dam removal scenario. Impacts to boat access for infrastructure inspection and maintenance should also be considered.”*

### 3.3.2.6 Recreation

*“The Corps should make use of recent studies of visitor demand in their analysis, such as what was used in the Mississippi Gorge Regional Park Master Plan... A private owner would have the discretion to completely close public access through the locks, eliminating some types of recreational boating as well as routes commonly used by commercial tour operators (Padelford Riverboats, Magnolia Blossom, Minneapolis Queen, Paddle Bridge Guide Collective)”*

*“Additionally, if the Corps easements and riverside property were transferred to a private owner, riverfront access points for fishing and boating could also be restricted”*

*“At the moment, recreational opportunities on the impounded Mississippi River are limited. Recreational opportunities are primarily motor boating, paddling, rowing, and bank fishing. Dam removal would change recreational opportunities in the river and allow for more diverse uses, including increased paddling, whitewater kayaking, inter-tubing, wading, fly fishing, and bank fishing”*

*“Removal of the dams would lower water levels in the Gorge. This would expose more acres of shoreline, floodplain, and islands within the Mississippi Gorge Regional Park and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.”*

*“Pool 1 provides ideal practice and competition conditions for the Women's Varsity and Men's Club Rowing teams. From February through November, over 150 athletes use the river Monday through Saturday. For such uses it is critical that flows in Pool 1 are kept within a safe range below 30,000 cfs, and that water surface elevations are maintained to support water access from existing piers.”*

### 3.3.2.7 Navigation

*“As part of the Corps’ analysis of future conditions, the Corps must evaluate how the lack of dredging will impact recreation boating...If deauthorized and disposed of, but not removed, what would become of the channel above each site physically and*

*ecologically? The Corps already says it will start silting in due to reduced dredging. What will it mean for tour boats and recreational craft?”*

#### 3.3.2.8 Hydropower

*“The Corps should include an analysis of the carbon emission reductions generated by the hydro-kinetic facilities operating at these sites. This analysis should be limited to the actual power produced, instead of the power generating capacity”*

*“In addition, the Corps must also calculate the emissions in the context of the modified stream. Studies indicate that reservoirs release a substantial amount of methane due to the decomposition of organic matter and other factors, while free-flowing rivers capture carbon. Peer-reviewed models are available that the Corps should use to provide a clear analysis of hydropower benefits”*

*“This cost should be balanced with the cost of replacing hydropower with other renewable energy. This assessment should be based on the average amount of power currently produced, which is substantially lower than the maximum amount of power production authorized. The replacement cost should also incorporate anticipated changes in the cost of renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, in the coming 5-15 years.”*

*“The unused auxiliary lock at Lock and Dam 1 presents unique opportunities for hydropower research and testing, especially given recent interest expressed by the Department of Energy in supporting research in small modular hydropower technologies.”*

### 3.3.3 Local Government Organizations

The Corps received a total of five letters from Local Government Organizations (LGOs) that included the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, City of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Council, St. Paul Safety and Inspections, and Minnesota Mississippi River Parkway Commission.

The Corps identified a total of 44 comments with the following major themes, in order of frequency: infrastructure, study scope, recreation, ownership, dam removal, social, communication, ecosystem, and Indigenous Nations. Single comments were also observed for access, economics, flooding, hydropower, and status quo.

#### 3.3.3.1 Infrastructure

There are concerns about threats to Minneapolis’ existing infrastructure under the study alternatives. Information was also provided bridges that have piers in the river.

*“It will be very important to understand how different scenarios relate to the current uses and plans for Upper St. Anthony Falls including potential impacts to infrastructure and surrounding land. The infrastructure at the Upper Lock serves many critical functions including maintaining water levels in the Upper Pool where water is drawn to be treated for drinking water. There are numerous important plans and activities in this vicinity including The Falls Initiative.”*

*“Changes to the Mississippi River in terms of flow and scour in the reach below Lock/Dam 1 could significantly impact the wastewater conveyance where it crosses the river. The pipelines at the crossing provide service for nearly 700,000 residents of the Twin Cities. Protection or replacement of the wastewater facilities would have a significant cost impact to the Council and its rate payers.”*

### 3.3.3.2 Study Scope

Comments on this topic were focused on the future vision for this part of the river under the different alternatives being considered as part of the study.

*“This information [hydrology, flood risk, geomorphology, erosion] is required to address the questions below about the opportunities or concerns presented regarding recreation, habitat and wildlife, safety, culture, and infrastructure and will advise whether there’s a federal interest in continuing to own and operate the lock and dams...”*

*“The MPRB encourages the application of tools such as Envision and AutoCASE to more fairly and fully assess impacts related to social, environmental, and economic factors.”*

### 3.3.3.3 Recreation

Comments on this topic were directed to the value of this reach of the river to recreation in the Minneapolis area.

*“The Mississippi is currently an attraction for residents and visitors and important part of our local economy. Enjoyment of the river contributes to a quality of life that draws people to live in the Twin Cities and is critical to tourism. The river is the primary feature of two Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Parks - Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park and the Mississippi Gorge Regional Park and of course, the National Park Service’s Mississippi National River & Recreation Area.”*

*“Numerous regional parks and trails line the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and these lands are owned and managed by Regional Park Implementing Agencies. Together, hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in these treasured regional park and trail units that are at the core of the region’s identity. What are the most likely impacts to these lands and amenities? What will the riparian landscape look like throughout the corridor if these lock and dam structures are removed or altered?”*

### 3.3.3.4 Ownership

Comments on this topic were focused on the ownership of lands and riparian rights; in particular for accrued areas under a dam removal alternative.

*“Should structures be removed resulting in ‘new’ lands along the river, the MPRB would want the accretive lands to become part of its bounding regional parks... the MPRB would encourage the USACE to consider accretive lands to be adjoined to lands of the existing riparian landowner.”*



*“Further, if management of the lock and dams were transferred to a new entity (not the USACE), the Council requires assurance the new entity would have the qualifications and capacity to operate and maintain the two dams into the future. There would need to be requirements placed on the entity to ensure there would not be a possibility of defaulting on their responsibility to keep the structures in good operating order.”*

#### 3.3.3.5 Dam Removal

Comments on this topic were focused on the potential effects of dam removal on the physical environment and associated biota.

*“The City’s comprehensive plan includes a goal to “Explore dam removal to restore natural flow and wildlife habitat on the Mississippi River... “. In each scenario we would like to understand the potential impact on the existing environment as well as the potential to restore native wildlife and habitat and improve water quality.”*

#### 3.3.3.6 Social

Comments on this topic were focused on human safety.

*“The study should consider whether the water would be navigable to rescue boats operated by the Minneapolis Fire Department and the Hennepin County Sheriff. The needs and means to provide safety in the river corridor may change resulting in new capital investments and new training requirements.”*

*“Decades of sediment accumulation have taken place behind Lock and Dam #1, mostly likely along with contaminants and years of pollution accumulation. The study should layout the methods for analyzing and quantifying the amount sediment and the level of contamination.”*

#### 3.3.3.7 Communication

*“...it will be helpful for the USACE to prepare illustrations of varying locations and flow conditions as a means of telling a pictorial story of that process. . . [We] strongly encourage the USACE to, in the process of preparing the disposition study, to develop easily understood graphic depictions of potential future conditions should structures be removed.”*

#### 3.3.3.8 Ecosystem

Comments on this topic were directed towards understanding and exploring different habitat restoration scenarios to this reach of the river.

*“The City’s comprehensive plan includes a goal to “Explore dam removal to restore natural flow and wildlife habitat on the Mississippi River... “. In each scenario we would like to understand the potential impact on the existing environment as well as the potential to restore native wildlife and habitat and improve water quality. The alternatives to be studied by USACE already include, “potential opportunities for the locks and dams to serve a new purpose such as ecosystem restoration.” We will be interested in those findings. How would non-native species like invasive carp be affected in these scenarios, and what might that mean for the ecosystem?”*

### 3.3.3.9 Indigenous Nations

Comments on this topic were directed towards engaging Native American tribes on the study.

*“The river includes sites that are culturally and/or spiritually significant to Dakota people including sacred locations such as Owámniyomni (St. Anthony Falls), Wita Wanagi (Spirit Island) and Bdote where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers meet. ...It will be important to engage the diverse Native community, including sovereign Tribal Nations, urban Indians and those in exile.”*

*“We expect the Corps to consult with tribes early and often throughout the disposition process, provide funds to tribes to cover the direct costs of their participation in this study, publish tribal engagement findings, and allow adequate time and notice for full tribal participation.”*

### 3.3.4 Agencies

The Corps received a total of two letters from relevant state or federal agencies that included the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service.

The Corps identified a total of 30 comments with the following major themes: study scope, dam removal, ownership, ecosystem, and recreation. Single comments were also observed for climate change and status quo. Subthemes were also identified for historic resources and economics.

#### 3.3.4.1 Study Scope

Comments from the agencies on this topic were directed towards a robust scope with weighting on factors other than cost.

*“...ecosystem services, benefits to rare species, and recreation opportunities that improve the overall quality of the environment in the public interest must be considered when selecting the preferred alternative ...”*

*“It is important that this study consider the broader scope of disposition and not just USACE’s structure and real estate at the locks and dams.*

*“...the Mississippi River through the Twin Cities is of exceptional importance to the nation and to State and local communities. Consequently, we have high expectations for a deep and broad analysis to help the American people understand all that disposal, modification, or removal mean.”*

*“...the study’s outcome will likely shape the river in the Twin Cities for generations to come. From their founding in the mid-nineteenth century, Minneapolis and St. Paul began shaping the Mississippi River for navigation and hydropower through the Corps of Engineers and private entities. For the first time since, there is opportunity to consider a new relationship with the river.”*

*“In some of the public engagement meetings we have heard the USACE express economic considerations are the primary study subject, while we believe that Congress’ intent is to prioritize environmental quality”*

#### 3.3.4.2 Dam Removal

Comments from the agencies on this topic identifies concerns with cost of dam removal.

*“...it is also important that the economic benefits as well as costs of dam removal and restoration of the river and its floodplain from St. Anthony Falls to the Ford Dam be part of the dam removal and restoration alternatives.”*

*“The cultural resources of the area consist of evidence of past activities on or near the river. These include burial mounds, campsites, village sites, and ethnographic resources that illustrate the nature of the occupation by Native Americans... The removal of either dam will have a tremendous impact not only the dam structures themselves but the corresponding impoundments. The entire stretch of the river from St. Anthony Falls to below Lock and Dam 1 should be considered the primary Area of Effect for study of the dam structures.”*

*“If the locks and dams are removed it will create opportunities for new recreation possibly including white water rafting, kayaking, and fly fishing. This study should include projected use in these recreation types along with the potential decrease in recreational use from the loss of large commercial pleasure vessels and sport rowing.”*

*“Research on water quality, plants, wildlife which includes birds and insects, the river’s fish and mussel populations, changing climate conditions on river flow, and what the river was like before it was dammed for hydropower and navigation all fit under scientific research that would benefit the river and its resources”*

#### 3.3.4.3 Ownership

Comments from the agencies on this topic were largely focused on concerns about potential new owners of locks and dams having the capabilities to operate and maintain these structures.

*“If LSAF and Lock and Dam 1 are no longer supporting commercial navigation, it is unknown if future funding levels would be sufficient to maintain the locks and dams and prevent the structures from falling into disrepair.”*

*“The DS [Study] should discuss responsibilities that will be passed to a new owner, including invasive carp management, maintenance responsibilities, and flood risk management.”*

*“If a private company walks away from such large costs and responsibilities, the state of Minnesota could ultimately become responsible for these structures at the end of their life cycles.”*

#### 3.3.4.4 Ecosystem

Comments from the agencies on this topic focused on the importance of historic habitat to fish and mussel species.

*“High gradient rapids and riffles, as well as cobble and boulder substrates, are biological hotspots that provide crucial spawning area for numerous rare species, including threatened and endangered species (e.g., blue sucker, paddlefish, and lake sturgeon)... The DS [study] should consider how the removal alternative and restoration of the physical habitat throughout the area would allow fish that served as hosts for many species of state and federally threatened and endangered mussels would bring them up river and into the type of habitat that they need to survive and begin reproducing.”*

*“The most important natural resource in the corridor is the Mississippi River itself. It is a globally significant riverine ecosystem that must be protected and restored because it serves, in part, as a migratory corridor for wildlife, because it is essential to sustaining the biological diversity of the continent and the natural functions of the numerous aquatic and terrestrial communities of which it is composed, and because it supports the quality of life for the citizens who live and work and play on and near it.”*

### **3.3.5 Hydropower**

The Corps received one letter on hydropower interests from Brookfield Renewable.

The Corps identified a total of 11 comments with major themes, in order, to be: hydropower, ownership and historic/cultural.

#### **3.3.5.1 Hydropower**

Comments from the industry were in favor of retaining hydropower at the two locks and dams.

*“Goals set at the federal and state levels to meet renewable energy goals include hydroelectric along with wind and solar as the desired methods of power production, exemplifying identified standards associated with reducing carbon emissions... Removal of the hydropower capacity at Lower St. Anthony Falls and Lock and Dam 1 would be a step away from achieving those stated goals.”*

#### **3.3.5.2 Ownership**

Comments on ownership were generally directed at maintaining the status quo.

*“Brookfield continues to operate and maintain the [LSAF] facility with an experienced operations team in conjunction with the Twin Cities Hydroelectric facility continually investing in the perpetual asset providing clean, renewable energy to the Midwestern wholesale electricity market.”*

#### **3.3.5.3 Historic/Cultural**

Comments on this topic were directed at the historic significance of the Meeker Island lock and dam, and the effects of dam removal.

*“This structure [Meeker Island lock and dam], which is listed on the National Register of Historic places, is a historically significant structure in the history of the Twin Cities. Creating a free-flowing river in Pool 1 would require removal of an 8-foot-high segment of this dam.”*

## 4 Summary

In accordance with the NEPA, the Corps conducted scoping for the LSAF / LD 1 Disposition Study. Scoping events were held with the public as well as LGOs and agencies in October of 2022. A summary and analysis of the scoping comments and meetings is provided in this document with the intention of identifying the major issues by stakeholders. Scoping comments identified significant issues and concerns that focus on the ecosystem, dam removal, scope of the study, navigation, hydropower, recreation, communications, status quo, ownership, infrastructure, and Indigenous Nations. These topics will be addressed at a level commensurate with the level of interest during scoping in the integrated study report/EA.

### 4.1 Information to be Considered in the Disposition Study

There is high public interest in this study, the future of the public use of the river, and Lock and Dam ownership. Based on the early study scoping, the level of analysis for the topics is shown below. If a topic will be addressed with existing data, that does not indicate a topic is not important; all topics will be studied as part of this effort at some level of detail. For topics relying on existing data, it is likely that other groups or agencies already have a sufficient level of detail for the disposition study or that the impacts from a disposition study recommendation would be minimal. Data collection will be commensurate with the level of detail needed to make a disposition recommendation.

**Higher Level of New Data or Analysis-** The team may collect or prepare new information or conduct new analysis.

- Geological and Soil Resources
- Channel Geomorphology and Floodplain Impacts
- Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste
- Site Operational Costs (including repairs) over the next 50 years
- Native American Resources and Federal Trust Responsibilities
- Economic Impacts: The benefit assessment will be both quantitative or qualitative and, if appropriate, monetized.
  - National economic impacts - changes in the economic value of the national output of goods and services.
  - Regional economic impacts - changes in the contribution to a regional economy, such as changes in regional employment or income.
  - Environmental economic impacts - positive and negative impacts to the environment consistent with current ecosystem restoration or environmental compliance guidance
  - Socio-economic impacts - effects to a wide range of factors: urban and community impacts; life, health, and safety factors; displacement; and long-term productivity. Environmental justice will be considered under this category but also related to other topics.

**Moderate Level of New Data or Analysis-** The team may collect or prepare new information or analysis but also rely on a set of existing information from sources both within and outside of the Corps.

- Hydrology & Hydrologic Impacts (including pool elevations)
- Dam Safety and Operations
- Recreation

- Aquatic Habitats
- Study Area Infrastructure
- Cultural or Historic Resources
- Traditional Cultural Resources
- 

**Existing Data Level of Detail-** The team will likely not collect new information to inform our analysis but will instead rely on existing information, sources, or analysis from both within and outside the Corps.

- Fish and Wildlife
- Fishing, Hunting, and Gathering Practices
- Energy Resources
- Endangered Species
- Invasive Species
- Terrestrial Habitat
- Water Quality
- Climate Change / Greenhouse gasses
- Public Health and Safety
- Air Quality

During scoping, members of the public, agencies, LGOs, NGOs, and other entities identified potential new information sources that should be considered as part of the study. These are listed below.

- Macalester College. 2022. Engagement Matters: Public Understandings of River Infrastructure.
- Mississippi Gorge Regional Park Master Plan (2019)  
[https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park-care-improvements/park-projects/current\\_projects/mississippi\\_gorge\\_regional\\_park\\_master\\_plan/](https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park-care-improvements/park-projects/current_projects/mississippi_gorge_regional_park_master_plan/)
- Greenhouse Gas Calculator for reservoirs: <https://www.hydropower.org/g-res>
- D. Perera and T. North. 2021. The socio-economic impacts of aged dam removal: a review. Journal of Geoscience and Environmental Protection.

The Corps will also connect with local, state, and federal agencies to collect data on existing conditions, such as recreational use of the river; migratory bird, fish, and mussel data; water quality and gage data; and existing infrastructure.

## 4.2 Topics or Issues that will not be Considered in the Disposition Study

These topics will not be studied in the LSAF and LD1 disposition study:

- The financial capabilities of potential future owners of the sites
- Detailed environmental analysis of dam removal
- A design for the river with or without LD1 or LSAF

## 4.3 Topics for Future Environmental Evaluation under a Corps Dam Removal Study

The Corps is not conducting a feasibility study for lock and dam removal at this time. If, subsequent to this disposition study, the Corps and a willing non-federal partner enter into an agreement to study the feasibility of ecosystem restoration at one or more of these sites, and

federal funds are appropriated for the study, the impacts to the following topics could be studied in greater detail (not an exhaustive list):

- Hydrology & Hydraulics of the Mississippi River: including detailed sediment transport modeling, sediment testing, and impacts to existing infrastructure and flood risks.
- Geology of the river and its floodplain
- Native American Resources and Federal Trust Responsibilities
- Cultural resources: including the locks and dams themselves and impacts to the viewshed of the river
- Dam Safety
- Water Quality
- Endangered species
- Native, non-native, and invasive species
- Climate change
- Recreation
- Public health and safety
- Hazardous and toxic waste