



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

ST. LOUIS DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
1222 SPRUCE STREET
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63103-2833

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

March 11 , 1993

Planning Division
Environmental and Recreation Resources Branch

Dear Reviewer:

A copy of a signed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is enclosed for your files. This document concerns maintaining the navigation pool level at the Kaskaskia Lock and Dam at maximum 368.8 feet NGVD, 0.8 feet above the originally authorized normal full pool level of 368.0. The Environmental Assessment has been finalized after public review and placed on file in our District office.

As a result of the Finding of No Significant Impact, the St. Louis District will continue to maintain the pool at 368.8 feet NGVD. However, please note that this action is still considered a temporary deviation from the authorized 368.0. Any future intentions to make this a permanent change to the water control plan would require additional hydraulic, engineering, and environmental studies.

Thank you for any review comments you may have provided. Should you require additional information, please contact Dr. Leo Nico, of our Environmental and Recreational Resources Branch, at telephone number (314) 331-8148.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Owen D. Dutt".

OWEN D. DUTT
Chief, Planning Division

Enclosure

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

MAINTENANCE OF NAVIGATION POOL AT ELEVATION 368.8 FEET (NGVD) KASKASKIA RIVER LOCK AND DAM, ILLINOIS

1. I have reviewed and evaluated the documents concerned with maintaining the navigation pool level at the Kaskaskia Lock and Dam at maximum 368.8 feet NGVD, 0.8 feet above the originally authorized normal full pool level of 368.0. The main purpose of maintaining the higher water is to permit lockage during drought conditions; however, the action has also been shown to have environmental and recreational benefits.
2. I have also evaluated pertinent data and information which addresses the various practicable alternatives relative to my decision on this action. In addition to the recommended plan that maintains the pool at 368.8 feet NGVD, I have evaluated and considered various alternatives including:
 - a. A return to the normal full pool level of 368.0 feet NGVD;
 - b. Other pool elevations;
 - c. Periodic restrictions on both lockages and water withdrawal;
 - d. An increase in water releases from upstream reservoirs;
 - e. Pumping water from the Mississippi River into the navigation pool.
3. The possible consequences of these alternatives have been studied for physical, environmental, cultural, social and economic effects, and engineering feasibility. Major findings of this investigation include the following:
 - a. All alternatives involving pool elevations below 368.8 feet NGVD were evaluated and considered unacceptable primarily because they would not provide a dependable supply of water for lockages over a wide range of flows.
 - b. Other alternatives were evaluated and subsequently rejected primarily based on the potential for negative impacts to navigation, aquatic life, recreation, and water users.
 - c. The recommended plan was selected because it provided an engineering solution to the problem consistent with preservation of the environment.
 - d. The proposed action will have only slight impact on hydraulics and ground water levels.

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e. The recommended plan is in compliance with Federal and state regulations concerning water quality. Approval under Clean Water Act sections 404 and 401 is not required because the action does not necessitate placement of fill material into waters of the United States.

f. The recommended plan is not expected to impact riparian habitat and bottomland forests. It is expected that certain low-lying wetland areas will benefit.

g. The recommended plan will help to maintain a deeper water connection between the main channel and backwater areas thereby providing the local fish community with important spawning, nursery, and wintering areas. However, it is noted that a higher pool level is only a temporary solution to the problem of backwater sedimentation.

h. The recommended plan would not adversely impact Federally endangered or threatened species.

i. The recommended plan would benefit recreation.

j. The recommended plan would have no effect upon significant historical properties.

k. Prime farmland would not be lost as a result of the action.

4. It should be noted that the maintaining a full pool of 368.8 feet NGVD is still considered a temporary deviation from the authorized maximum of 368.0 feet. Any future intentions to make this a permanent change to the water control plan would require additional hydraulic, engineering, and environmental studies.

5. Based on my analysis and evaluation of the alternative courses of action presented in this Environmental Assessment, I have determined that maintaining the Kaskaskia River Navigation pool level at elevation 368.8 feet NGVD will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared prior to proceeding with this action.

2 Feb 93

Date

Richard Brantoli

Richard F. Brantoli
Major, U.S. Army
Acting District Engineer