

Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

Upper Mississippi River System



*Bottomland forest of the Upper Mississippi River
National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Pool 10 © USFWS*

Invest Now to Ensure the River System's Long-Term Viability

The Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) is a dual-purpose authority to improve navigation efficiency and reliability and ecological health on the Upper Mississippi River System. Our broad coalition respectfully requests optimal financial investments in NESP to:

- Modernize L&D 25 and La Grange L&D
[Add a 1,200-foot chamber]
- Install small-scale measures to assist navigation efficiency
- Construct fish passage at L&D 22
- Rehabilitate and manage floodplain forests, islands, and aquatic habitats
- Restore and reconnect floodplains
- Protect cultural resources

More Efficient Navigation

NESP includes the construction of seven 1,200-foot locks at the most congested locations (L&Ds 20, 21, 22, 24, and 25 on the Upper Mississippi River and La Grange and Peoria on the Illinois Waterway). Smaller-scale efficiency improvements will provide immediate benefits upon their implementation. Navigation on the river is vital to our nation's economy:

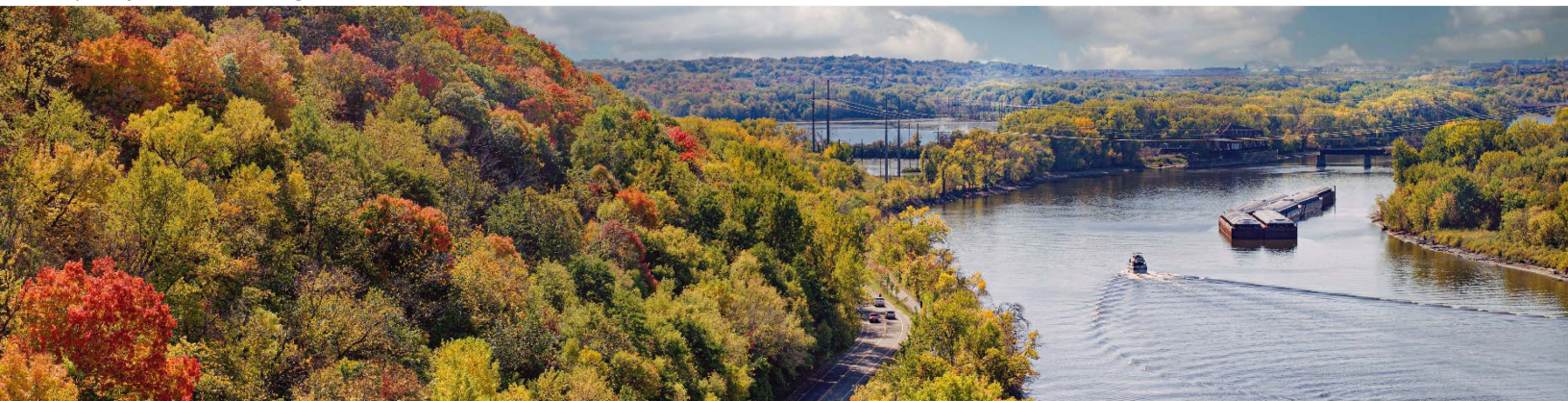
- River transportation on the Upper Mississippi River System prides 59,000 directly related shipping jobs
- Through L&D 25, products are shipped between 132 counties in 17 states and global markets
- An outage at L&D 25 would cost nearly \$1.6 billion and require an additional 500,000 truck traffic trips annually

Healthier River Ecosystem

NESP will improve water quality and habitat conditions for fish and wildlife through modified dam operations for the environment, floodplain restoration and reconnection, construction of fish passages, and backwater, side channel, and island enhancements. The projects and their benefits to water quality, vegetation, fish, and wildlife will be monitored to document river health and the value of restoration actions.

- The river system is home to at least 154 fish species, supporting valuable recreational and commercial fisheries
- The area serves as a globally significant migratory flyway for 60 percent of North America's bird species
- The Upper Mississippi River's \$24.6 billion tourism and recreation industry supports 420,000 jobs at shops, restaurants, outfitters, and marinas in river towns

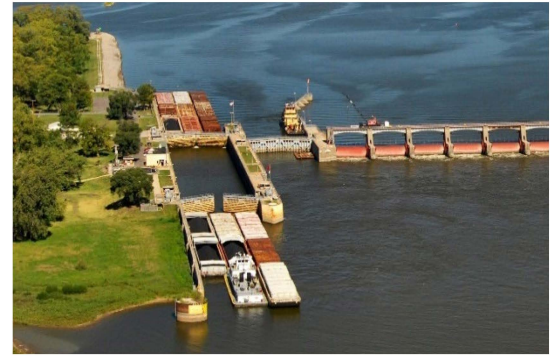
View upriver from Smith Ave Bridge, St. Paul, MN © James T. Ebert



Ongoing Challenges to the River System's Long-Term Integrity

Navigation Challenges

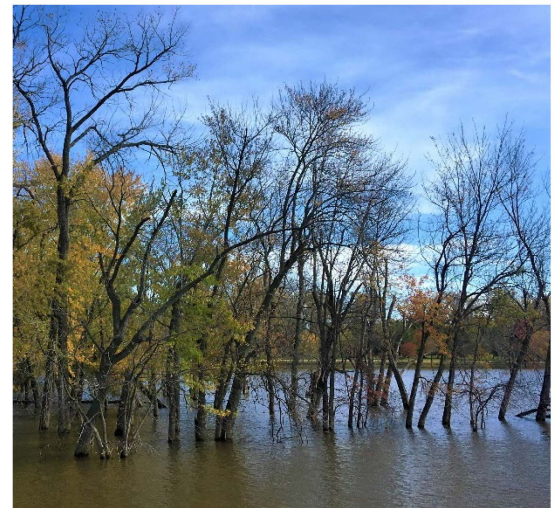
- Most locks were constructed between 1907 and 1936, built for yesterday's needs with a limited intended life span that has long since passed.
- Locks only 600 feet long require tows to pull apart and lock through in two stages. Single chambers constrain traffic to one-way. Both inefficiencies drive up costs and delivery time, hindering the nation's competitiveness and reducing market opportunities.
- Aging locks are susceptible to emergency closures. Single chambers mean a closure at one lock shuts down the entire system.



Tows of 1,200-foot length must be cut and reconfigured to pass through a 600-foot lock. Here a second cut waits to enter L&D 25. © U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Environmental Challenges

- The river has been isolated from its natural floodplain causing dramatic loss in habitats for fish and wildlife, reducing its capacity to store floodwaters and mitigate flood damages, and limiting its ability to improve water quality.
- Floodplain forests are experiencing stress as floods occur more often and over longer durations. Combined with competition from invasive species, additional degradation and loss of the floodplain forest is occurring and is expected to continue.
- Locks and dams restrict native fish species from reaching high-quality spawning, rearing, feeding, and winter habitats. Lack of access to a diversity of habitats along the longitudinal gradient of the Upper Mississippi River System inhibits migratory fishes' ability to fulfill their life cycles.



Prolonged highwater increases tree mortality. © Andrew L. Stephenson

Working for a Healthier Economy and Ecosystem

The Upper Mississippi River System directly generates over \$584 billion in economic activity, supporting more than 1.86 million jobs. **Funding NESP will:**

Create jobs for many skilled construction trades and support and strengthen existing jobs at grain elevators, manufacturing facilities, terminals, and ports.

Lower transportation costs, minimize safety risks, and facilitate new market opportunities through modernized locks and small-scale efficiency improvements.

Reestablish complexes of naturally functioning wetlands, floodplains, braided channels, and forests that filter pollutants, trap carbon, and absorb rains lessening flood impacts.

Improve the quality of life for local communities and ensure the viability of the river's tourism and recreation industry, built upon the serenity and adventure of the river's landscape.

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