

Inland Navigation Planning and Risk-Informed Management: An Introduction to Inland Navigation Q&A Session

This webinar, presented by the Planning Center of Expertise for Inland Navigation and Risk-Informed Economics Division (PCXIN-RED), featured a brief introduction to the center and the U.S. inland waterways system generally, the common types of inland navigation studies and economic evaluation required for them, and a general discussion of how the business line has been incorporating risk-informed decision making. The information presented was geared towards introducing planners and potential project delivery team members to inland navigation analyses and the ways the PCXIN-RED can assist teams in scoping or conducting these studies. For additional information or assistance, planners should contact the PCXIN-RED: PCXIN@usace.army.mil



This summary of the Question / Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Inland Navigation Disposition Studies

How many disposition studies has the PCXIN been engaged in?

Typically, the PCXIN engages in the review of disposition studies. The PCX has participated in approximately three to four disposition studies since 2016 when the consolidated appropriations bill provided funding for several such studies and [USACE released guidance](#), and anticipates it may be involved in additional studies in the future. Disposition studies evaluate a project which is no longer serving its authorized purpose, and are conducted under authorities of Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1970.

Is there any current effort to review and update the 2016 USACE disposition study guidance?

Headquarters Planning & Policy is currently updating the disposition guidance. Until at such time the guidance is completed, study teams should continue to utilize the 2016 guidance.

Has the PCXIN seen a downward trend in barge transport from the phasing out of coal for electricity generation, and if so, is there a potential for decommissioning of parts of the inland navigation system to occur?

Every river used for inland navigation across the country is different and has its own specific commodity mix. The river systems that have historically moved significant amounts of coal have indeed seen a decline. This reduction in coal use for electricity generation has hit the Ohio River System particularly hard, given that a large portion of its commodity mix is coal. However, the reduction in the use of coal barges translates to excess barge supply, which in turn keeps barge rates low, which in turn helps keep demand and use of the waterway system somewhat stable.

Considerations in Inland Navigation Studies

Are there any concerns regarding the need to consider riparian zones for mitigation related to inland navigation projects? If so, what resources have been used to determine mitigation requirements?

Yes, riparian zone mitigation is a consideration that should be made for inland navigation projects. The PCXIN is typically responsible for conducting the National Economic Development (NED) calculations for the economic analysis and design aspects of a study, while the local District generally completes the

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environmental portion of a study, including meeting mitigation requirements. Because inland navigation systems are typically large, diverse systems, the environmental concerns usually differ significantly from project to project.

Can study teams include benefits for reductions in air pollution or in greenhouse gas emissions generated by projects? Which category would such benefits be included in (i.e., NED, Environmental Quality, or Other Social Effects account)?

These types of benefits are sometimes calculated, and sometimes not, depending on the scope and time afforded the analysis. Reductions in air quality impairments, greenhouse emissions, and even accidents have all been measured incrementally between the without project conditions and with project conditions for inland navigation studies. Regardless of whether or not these benefits are monetized, they are typically categorized under the Other Social Effects account. NED is typically reserved for benefits such as transportation resources. Guidance on documenting and incorporating benefits can be found in the [Planning Guidance Notebook](#).