

Complete Guide to the Olmsted Locks and Dam on the Ohio River - Controversial In-the-Wet Construction Method, Inland Waterways Navigation Dams, Equipment, Designs, Financing

U.S. Government, Department of Defense, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE)

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Beset by significant cost increases and mounting schedule delays, the Olmsted Locks and Dam project on the Ohio River has been in the news because of allegations that Senator Mitch McConnell (R, Kentucky), was involved in the inclusion of authorization for funding the project in the October 2013 bill ending the government shutdown. (Senator McConnell has denied the claim; the provision was added by Senators Lamar Alexander and Diane Feinstein.) This unique ebook provides an authoritative collection of official documents about the project and other inland waterways navigation dams.

The continuing growth in demand for water-borne commerce on the Ohio River requires periodic improvements in the waterways transportation infrastructure. Locks and Dams No. 52 and 53 located on the Ohio River between Paducah, Ky., and Cairo, Ill., were completed in 1929. Temporary 1,200-foot long lock chambers were added later. The antiquated design and age of these structures make it impossible to meet current traffic demands without significant delays.

Over the last five years tonnages have averaged 90 million tons at Locks and Dam 52 and 79 million tons at Locks and Dam 53. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the navigation industry, in a continuing effort to provide for the nation's future navigation needs, will replace these aged facilities with one of the largest civil works projects undertaken by the Corps.

This new locks and dam project is under construction near the community of Olmsted, Ill. at River Mile 964.4. Construction of the Olmsted Locks and Dam Project was authorized by the U. S. Congress on Nov. 17, 1988, by passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-676).

The cost of this project is being equally shared by congressional appropriation and the navigation industry.

Industry pays a tax on diesel fuel which goes to the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. The trust fund then pays 50 percent of the cost.

This strategic reach of the Ohio River provides a connection between the Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi rivers. The area has been described as the "hub" of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers waterway system. Barge traffic moving between the Mississippi River system and the Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland rivers must pass through this stretch of river. More tonnage passes this point than any other place in America's inland navigation system. This is a critical reach of water from a commercial navigation perspective.

The Olmsted project will consist of two 110-foot by 1,200-foot lock chambers located along the Illinois shoreline. The dam will consist of tainter gates, a navigable pass section and a fixed weir.

In a raised position the wickets will maintain the required navigable depths from the Olmsted project

upstream to Smithland Locks and Dam. When river flows are sufficient, the wickets can be lowered to lay flat on the river bottom and allow traffic to navigate over the dam without passing through the locks. This reduces delays experienced by locking through the system.



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Rhonda Munoz:

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Sandra Lowe:

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