

Corn Belt Ports Continue to See New Investment After Being Federally Recognized in 2020 and 2021

June 7, 2022

Corn Belt Ports

Tri-State Region (IL, MO & IA)

MEDIA RELEASE #8



The Tri-State (IL, MO, IA) ports in the Heart of the Corn Belt above Locks and Dam 26 (i.e., the Corn Belt Ports) continue to attract additional investment since becoming federally recognized in 2020 and 2021. The recently released U.S. Army Corps of Engineers FY 2022 Omnibus Bill Work Plan and the State of Illinois 2023 Budget included the following investments that will help ensure the Corn Belt Ports continue to have reliable access to global markets, and stay on course to reach full economic potential:

Tri-State Mid-America Port Commission Area (\$63.177M) - Handled 15.0 M Tons of Freight in 2020

- LaGrange Lock and Dam Design (NESP) (\$23.5M)
- Moore's Towhead Systemic Mitigation (NESP) (\$1.5M)
- Alton Pool Island Protection and Side Channel Restoration (NESP) (\$1.5M)
- Twin Islands Protection and Enhancement (NESP) (\$1.5M)
- Upper Mississippi River Restoration Projects (\$33.17M available, amount per each port TBD)
- Upper Mississippi River Operations & Maintenance (\$21.236M est.) (Locks and Dam 24 & 25)
- Illinois Waterway Operations & Maintenance (\$2.113M) (Downriver of LaGrange Lock and Dam)
- Reservoir Operations & Maintenance (MO) (indirectly supports navigation)
 - Mark Twain Lake (\$11.828M)

Illinois Waterway Ports Area (\$76.506) - Handled 14.9 M Tons of Freight in 2020

- Starved Rock Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Project (NESP) (\$5.5M)
- Fox River Dams Restoration Planning (\$250K)
- Brandon Road Lock and Dam Aquatic Nuisance Barrier (Joliet Regional Port) (\$4.94M)
- Upper Mississippi River Restoration Projects (\$33.17M available, amount per each port TBD)
- Illinois Waterway Operations & Maintenance (\$64.775M)
- Illinois Waterway Locks and Dam Rehabilitation (Included in above line)
- Reservoir Operations & Maintenance (IL) (indirectly supports navigation)
 - Fondulac and Farmdale Reservoirs (\$541K)
- Heart of Illinois Regional Port District Operations (\$500K) (State of Illinois Funded)

Upper Mississippi River Ports (IA & IL) Area (\$125.015M) – Handled *8.4 M Tons of Freight in 2020

- Pool 14 Mooring Cell (NESP) (\$2M)
- Upper Mississippi River Restoration Projects (\$33.17M available, amount per each port TBD)
- Tri-State Upper Mississippi River Operations & Maintenance (\$81.842M) (Locks & Dam 11-22)
- Upper Mississippi River Locks and Dam Rehabilitation (Included in above line)
- Reservoir Operations & Maintenance (IA) (indirectly supports navigation)
 - Lake Red Rock (\$25.828M)
 - Saylorville Lake (\$10.4M)
 - Coralville Lake (\$4.945M)

**Iowa Alone Handled 11.33M Tons of Freight in 2020 (Statistical Area Boundary Changes are Being Considered)*

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This is the very first time since authorized by Congress in 2007 that Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) construction was funded in an annual appropriations bill. Similarly, this is the very first time the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Aquatic Nuisance Barrier Construction was funded in an annual appropriations bill.

The following projects received more in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Work Plan than what was in the 2022 budget (which was nice to see, and somewhat unusual):

- Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) +\$12.179M
- Illinois Waterway Operations & Maintenance +\$2.525M
- Tri-State Upper Mississippi River Operations & Maintenance +\$555K
- Mark Twain Lake +\$552K

The Starved Rock Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Project and the Fox River Dams Restoration were part of the original Illinois River Basin Restoration (Section 519) Program authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 2000. It is nice to see these two projects, over two decades later moving forward.

This is also the first time that the state of Illinois has funded operations for the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District (HIRPD) since it was formed by the state in 2003. HIRPD was federally recognized in 2020.

Additionally, the late **Tom Oakley** made a generous \$1M gift to **Culver-Stockton College** for the **Tri-State Development Summit**, part of which will support task forces related to transportation, waterways, and rivers in the Tri-State Region. This is the first time that the Corn Belt Ports region has participated in a collaborative investment like this. “We are proud to partner with Tom Oakley, who has been involved in tri-state economic development projects, particularly infrastructure and transportation, for over sixty years, to serve as the administrative home for the Tri-State Development Summit,” stated President of Culver-Stockton College Dr. Douglas B. Palmer before Tom’s passing. “Together, we are committed to bringing together the people and the resources within our region to recreate and restore the Tri-State Summit organization to its original model for economic development in [the] 36 County, 3 State area of Northeast Missouri, Western Illinois and Southeastern Iowa.” More information on Tom Oakley’s gift can be found at: <https://culver.edu/news/2022/oakley-gift-establishes-tri-state-development-summit-at-c-sc/>

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Work Plan was released on May 25, 2022, and can be found at:

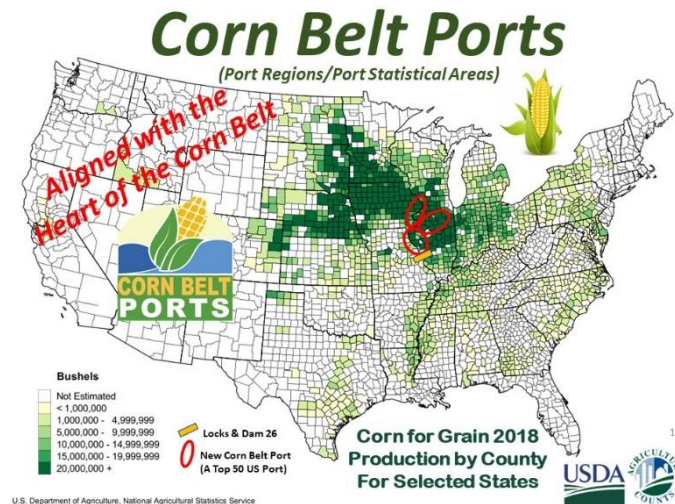
- [Construction FY2022 work plan](#)
- [Investigations FY2022 work plan](#)
- [Operations and Maintenance FY2022 work plan](#)

We continue to enjoy very strong leadership by our elected officials who work in a bipartisan and bicameral way to serve the people of the Tri-State, Corn Belt Ports region. We all know and appreciate that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers only can do what the U.S. Congress authorizes and funds it to do.

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The **Corn Belt Ports** are the federally recognized Tri-State (IL, IA, MO) Ports in the Heart of the Corn Belt above Locks and Dam 26 (see map). The Corn Belt Ports generally follow the Port of Pittsburgh model.



The Mid-America Port Commission (MAPC) is defined by the confluence of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, and is centered on the Quincy-Hannibal, IL-MO area. It includes the I-72 intersection with both the Upper Mississippi River and the Illinois Waterway.

The Illinois Waterway (ILWW) Ports are centered on the river cities of Peoria and Ottawa and includes ten counties within three regional planning agencies, and encompasses 175.5 River Miles. The ILWW Ports include the Havana, Heart of Illinois, Illinois Valley, Ottawa, and Seneca Regional Port Districts. And, they partner with the Joliet Regional Port District to advance common ILWW goals. It includes the I-474, I-74, I-180, I-39, I-55 and I-80 intersections with the Illinois Waterway.

The Upper Mississippi River Ports (IA & IL) is managed by a collaboration of five regional planning agencies, is centered on the Quad Cities, and includes riverfront counties north to the port city of Dubuque. It includes the I-74, I-80 and I-280 intersections with the Upper Mississippi River.

The Corn Belt Ports Objectives:

- All collectively are the equivalent of the Top Inland Port in the Nation based on freight tonnage
- All individually are a Top 50 Principal U.S. Port based on freight tonnage
- All individually are a Top 10 Inland Port
- All are on *Global Trade Magazine's* annual "Top 50 Power Ports List"
- The Mid-America Port Commission is the largest port on the Upper Mississippi River
- The Mid-America Port Commission is the 2nd largest inland port (behind St. Louis) on the entire Mississippi River

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Featured Quotes:

Dr. Anshu Singh, **Director of Sustainability and Conservation for the Corn Belt Ports (IL, MO, IA) and thought leader behind the concept of the Corn Belt Ports** stated, “We are thrilled that both the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program and the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Aquatic Nuisance Barrier Construction are now starting to be funded in annual appropriations bills. Sustainability and natural infrastructure are at the heart of the Corn Belt Ports.”

Chris Smith, **Operations Director for the Corn Belt Ports (IL, MO, IA)** remarked, “The Corn Belt Ports are seeing new investment from the federal government, state governments, and non-profit organizations. This kind of investment is unprecedented in the history of the Corn Belt Ports region.”

Dan Silverthorn, the long-time Chair of the **Heart of Illinois Regional Port District** on the Illinois Waterway said, “These construction projects will ensure that our ports have reliable access to global markets. The nation can’t ignore the importance of the equivalent of the largest inland port in the nation, based on freight tonnage handled. It is good to see the 1930s, steamboat-era locks being replaced by modern and safer ones in the heart of the nation’s agriculture region. This investment will translate to thousands of well-paying jobs in the Corn Belt for several years.”

Mike Norris, Chair of **Mid-America Port Commission (MAPC)**, stated that, “the busiest Locks and Dams on the Upper Mississippi River and on the Illinois Waterway are in the MAPC area. The NESP new start investment is urgently needed and will complete critical improvements to navigation and natural infrastructure projects. MAPC appreciates the efforts of all who made it a reality.”

Denise Bulat, The Executive Director of the **Bi-State Regional Commission between Illinois and Iowa**, and the primary transportation planning lead for establishing the Corn Belt Ports, remarked, “the NESP construction new start will include in the short-term a badly needed mooring cell in the Quad Cities that will enable the towboats and barges to move through our area more efficiently. That is the first major navigation construction new start between Illinois and Iowa since the 1200’ lock was constructed at Keokuk, IA between 1952 and 1957. We are looking forward to helping plan and site the dozens of multi-purpose ecosystem restoration projects that we anticipate being constructed in each of the 3 Corn Belt Port areas in future years.”