

the National Research Council (NRC) is assessing techniques for removing fixed offshore structures. The assessment will determine the occupational hazards and environmental effects of removal processes, determine techniques to mitigate undesirable effects, and appraise current regulations governing the removal of platforms and structures located in the OCS. The study will evaluate both explosive and nonexplosive removal techniques. The MMS is seeking comments concerning methods for removing offshore structures, their hazards and effects, and mitigating strategies. The MMS offers the following information and questions to assist you in your response to this notice.

Requirements for Removal

1. Current regulations require that lessees remove all structures to a depth of 15 feet below the mud line. The MMS is inviting the public, including other users of ocean space (boaters, fishers, conservationists, etc.) to comment on the need for this requirement and to bring to the attention of the NRC committee any information that MMS should consider in assessing and updating this requirement.

Status of Technology

2. What are the alternatives to the removal of offshore structures?
3. What new approaches or improvements to existing techniques for removing offshore structures are in development?
4. What are the requirements and/or limitations of the existing or new techniques relative to different water depths or soil types?

Economic Costs

5. What are the comparative costs of explosive versus nonexplosive techniques for removing offshore structures?
6. Are new technologies in development likely to alter the comparative economics of alternative approaches?

Hazards

7. What are the environmental hazards of explosive and nonexplosive removal techniques?
8. What are the occupational hazards of explosive and nonexplosive removal techniques?

Impacts

9. What are the direct and indirect impacts on living marine resources (fish, marine mammals, sea turtles, etc.) from explosive removal of offshore structures (for example:

direct=mortality, injury, indirect=damage to habitats, damage to overall health and survivability, etc.)?

10. What are the direct and indirect impacts of living marine resources from nonexplosive removal of offshore structures?

11. How do alternative removal techniques affect other users of the marine environment (fishers, recreational boaters, ship operators, others)?

Regulations

12. Do other users of the marine environment have needs that MMS should take into account in regulations for full or partial platform removal and for site clearance?

13. Are existing MMS regulations and operating rules governing the removal of offshore structures adequate?

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National Park Service

FES 95-1

Environmental Statements Availability; Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of Final Comprehensive Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190, as amended), the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, has prepared a Final Comprehensive Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FCMP/FEIS) that describes and analyzes a proposed action and three alternatives for the future management and use of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Minnesota.

The Draft Comprehensive Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released for public review on July 5, 1993 (58 FR 32546), and the public comment period closed October 11, 1993. During this period, four public hearings were held; written comments also were received. The FCMP/FEIS contains responses to the comments received and modifications to the text as needed in response to the comments.

The proposed action and alternatives all have been designed to preserve, protect, and enhance the significant values of the waters and land of the Mississippi River corridor within the Saint Paul-Minneapolis metropolitan area. They differ primarily in approach to overall management emphasis and level of federal involvement.

The proposed action provides a framework to balance and coordinate natural, cultural, and economic resource protection, visitor use, and sustainable development activities. It minimizes adverse effects on the river corridor and conflicts between users while providing for a broad spectrum of land and water uses and managed growth. Corridor management policies would be applied in a practical manner, with individual communities retaining flexibility to respond to unusual situations in special ways, providing that the resources identified in Public Law 100-696, the unit's enabling legislation, are protected. The proposed action emphasizes the importance of biological diversity in the corridor. It also recognizes the importance of economic activities and provides for the commercial use of the corridor consistent with P.L. 100-696. Commercial navigation activities would be continued. A wide range of visitor use activities would be encouraged. The National Park Service would have a lead role in coordinating interpretation for the corridor.

Alternative A (no action) would continue existing resource protection activities, land and water management, and visitor use programs. No overall comprehensive plan would be adopted. Local communities would continue to manage the river with minimal coordination and cooperation. Political boundaries would continue to delineate different management regulations, and the 72-mile segment of the Mississippi River would be managed according to different plans.

Alternative B would place a greater emphasis on resource protection, more restrictive land management, and passive recreation activities. Efforts for resource protection would be coordinated between the National Park Service and existing state, federal, and local programs, with the National Park Service taking the lead on protection of natural and cultural resources.

Alternative C would place greater emphasis on the use and development potential of the corridor; increased tourism and new commercial and industrial development would be encouraged to a greater degree. There would be less land management activity in alternative C, and visitor activities