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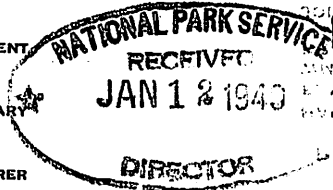
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ST. LOUIS, MO.
January 10th, 1940.

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Mr. Arno B. Cammerer, Director,
National Park Service,
Interior Building,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:--

I am enclosing herewith a supplement to this letter which tells the story up to last week, at which time a committee from Missouri met with the Illinois State Planning Commission, with the result that they are recommending to Governor Horner of Illinois that the Illinois State Planning Commission be designated to study the desirability and the feasibility of the entire project.

It looks now as though the Illinois State Planning Commission and a special Committee appointed by Governor Lloyd C. Stark of Missouri will act as a bi-state Commission.

It also seems apparent that in the near future the River Engineers of the War Department will correct the navigation hazard in this ten mile reach of the Mississippi River known as Sawyers Bend, just south of the Chain of Rocks.

Should these things transpire, our next step then would be to see that the bed of the old channel of the Mississippi River would be partly filled, and other land areas to be used for airport and park purposes would be raised above flood stage.

Now the information that I am seeking from your Department is, just how much assistance your Department would be willing and able to render towards the development of this park and recreational area? In order to obtain that assistance would it be necessary to have an Act passed by Congress, or is your Department so situated that it can assist projects which in the opinion of the National Park Service are needed and desirable. Just how far in a financial way can the National Park Service assist in the development of a large regional park, consisting of about 3,150 acres.

I shall appreciate any information that you may give me, that I might be in a position to present same to a bi-state committee when it is organized.

Thanking you in advance, I remain,
Sincerely yours,

Dr. Julius W. Bechtold

Mr. Cammerer
Mr. DeGraffenreid
Mr. Wirth

What Helps
Business
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To the People of Illinois and Missouri:

Re: Changing the Channel of the Mississippi River at Sawyers Bend for the purpose of eliminating the most hazardous stretch in the entire Mississippi River, and in conjunction therewith to create a very large and much needed park, recreational area and airport in the St. Louis Region.

The reach of which we speak is located south of Chain of Rocks Bridge, north of Merchants Bridge and is about ten miles long. The river makes quite a bend towards the Missouri side, contains two fairly large islands, and is bordered on the east by towns in Illinois, namely Nameoki, Granite City and Madison.

Public recreational facilities along the waterfront within the St. Louis Region are almost entirely lacking. No great center of population is in greater need of such facilities. There now exists an excellent opportunity to provide these much-needed facilities if there can be coordinated local, interstate, and Federal effort.

In 1929 the City Plan Commission of St. Louis prepared a report recommending the development of a large park along the Mississippi River at Sawyers Bend. The sharp bend and rapid current in the river at this point have long offered a difficulty to navigation.

Since 1927 the North St. Louis Business Men's Association have recommended the general change and after the City Plan Commission published their report in 1929 the North St. Louis Business Men's Association most heartily endorsed the entire report and have been the prime movers towards the objective.

A committee from the North St. Louis Business Men's Association held several conferences with Congressmen Cochran, Newton and Niederinghaus and the River Engineer, all seemed favorably impressed but where was the legislation to cover a situation of this kind. Missouri people asking to develop land which belonged to the State of Illinois. There was none.

On June 23, 1936 there was approved a Congressional Act, Public 770 1/2 "To authorize a study of the park, parkway, and recreational-area programs in the United States, and for other purposes." This act authorized and directed the Secretary of Interior to cause the National Park Service to make comprehensive study of the public park, parkway and recreational-area program of the United States. This act went further and in Section 3 states:—"The consent of Congress is hereby given to any two or more states to negotiate and enter into compacts or agreements with one another with reference to planning, establishing, developing, improving and maintaining any park, parkway or recreational area. No such compact or agreement shall be effective until approved by the legislatures of the several States which are parties thereto and by the Congress of the United States."

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Some of the work that this piece of legislation covers has been accomplished, and the National Park Service have already made their investigation and a portion of the report is herein quoted:

"A report on the investigation was submitted to this office in September 1936. It indicates that while the proposal apparently is desirable from the viewpoint of providing a large municipal recreational area and airport near the center of the City of St. Louis, it is complicated by the fact that the area is in the State of Illinois. An Interstate Commission or regional authority,--- would probably be necessary to properly sponsor such a project. Its execution would, of course, depend upon the U. S. Engineers approval of changing the Mississippi River Channel." Signed, (SGD) Arno B. Cammerer, Director, National Park Service.

Adopted October 31, 1938 is a resolution presented by the Committee on Rivers and Harbors, House of Representatives, U.S.

"Resolved by the Committee on Rivers and Harbors of the House of Representatives, United States, That the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors created under section 3 of the River and Harbor Act, approved June 13, 1902, be, and is hereby, requested to review the reports on Mississippi River between the Ohio River and the mouth of the Missouri River, submitted in House Document Numbered 50, Sixty-first Congress, first session, and subsequent reports, with a view to determining whether any modification in the existing project for improvement of the Mississippi River between the mouth of the Missouri River and East St. Louis, Illinois is advisable at the present time; and to formulate for the stretch of the river in question a comprehensive plan with estimates of cost, for all advantageous improvements to whomsoever the benefits therefrom may accrue.

This particular stretch of the Mississippi River did present some very serious problems and need for navigation improvement and the matter was referred to the Vicksburg laboratories where it was thoroughly studied. This stretch of the river is no new problem to the Engineers of the War Department, many times has it been mentioned in subsequent reports but today after the Government has spent millions of dollars on the twenty six locks and dams, north of this point, to maintain a nine foot channel, their purpose is defeated over this ten mile stretch, and demands attention. During the record low-water year of 1937, depths as low as 5 1/2 feet were measured even though for only 1 day, but less than 9-foot depths were available for a total of more than 2 months (not consecutive). In 1939 barge line carriers were constantly hung-up due to inadequate depths and dredges were employed for weeks at a time.

Quoting from Document 231 House of Representatives, 76th Congress, 1st Session. "The low-water plane in St. Louis Harbor has lowered approximately 10 feet during the past century in the soft alluvial material of which the river bed is composed. Approximately 8 feet of this lowering, however, has occurred in the last half century. Ordinarily this lowering of the low-water plane

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would continue upstream until a condition of equilibrium was reached, but just above Bissell Point the bedrock outcrop is encountered and the erosion halted. Thus this stream which has an average fall of 0.6 foot per mile between the Ohio and Missouri Rivers, has, in the Chain of Rocks section, a measured fall which exceeds 2 feet per mile; while in the highly contracted section, in St. Louis Harbor, it has an average fall of only 0.3 foot per mile. Any future additional lowering of the low-water plane will, of course, increase the differential between the rock sills and the easily eroded section.

Conclusions - Navigation conditions at Chain of Rocks are such as to require correction at the earliest practicable date in order that full use may be made of the almost completed canalization improvement of the upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The swift currents over the steep slopes in this section at high and low flows and the shallow depth over the rocky ridges at the low flows make this the controlling point of the entire upper Mississippi River system."

Along with the above, in Document 231 recommendations as to how the channel might be changed to overcome the aforementioned difficulties were made, and consist mainly of building a canal, almost in a straight line, about a mile below the mouth of the Missouri River, close to Granite City and Madison, Illinois and reentering the old channel about a mile above the Merchants Bridge.

This project was contained in the Rivers and Harbors Bill in the last session of Congress and passed the House of Representatives but got tied up in the last hours of the session and did not pass the Senate. It will possibly come up at this coming session of Congress which convenes January 1940.

From many resolutions and letters of indorsement by business, civic, improvement organizations and individuals this is a muchly desired project by peoples in both Illinois and Missouri.

On October 19th, 1939 both Governor Horner of Illinois and Governor Stark of Missouri were requested to appoint committees for each State, these committees to investigate the feasibility and the desirability of the project and to act as a bi-state committee to represent the two States while working in conjunction with the Federal Government.

On December 13th, 1939 Governor Lloyd C. Stark of Missouri appointed a seven man committee. This committee had its first meeting and organized on December 26th, 1939 and is now ready to meet with an Illinois Committee if and when it is appointed.

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There are many other phases of this project which will attract the attention of the bi-state committee but in this brief report it seemed best to show the need for the correction of navigation hazards, the need and desire for the park and recreational area, the need and the desire for inter-state cooperation and thereby bring about the greatest number of advantages to the greatest number of people in the region.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. J. W. Bechtold, Chairman,
Governor Stark's Committee.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

~~Mr. Cotten~~ 11/2/40
~~with~~

Could you
sometimes show
me on a map
just where this
proposed
improvement
is?
②

*Clint
Johnston
Galson 1/18
Drew
Dumery*

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

ADDRESS ONLY
THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

January 16, 1940

~~Dr. Julius W. Reichtold,
Secretary, North St. Louis
Business Mens Association,
4026 St. Louis Avenue,
St. Louis, Missouri.~~

*0-32
Sawyers Bend*

Dear Dr. Reichtold:

I have received your letter of January 10, requesting information concerning the assistance the National Park Service could render in the development of a park at Sawyers Bend on the Mississippi River, adjoining the City of St. Louis.

The Service has authority to cooperate with the States and local governments in the planning and development of recreational areas; however, the only available means it has of assisting in the development of parks is through the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Civilian Conservation Corps provides the labor, equipment, and supervision — the sponsoring agency must provide funds for materials over and above those furnished by the Corps, and guarantee the maintenance and operation of facilities completed by the Corps.

Since it will be necessary for this Service to effect a drastic reduction in its present quota of camps during the next fiscal year, beginning on July 1, 1940, it will not be possible to undertake the development of new areas for at least one or two years. You may be assured, however, that when your project is ready for development, this Service will give it every consideration which is consistent with the availability of companies for assignment to new areas. In the meantime, it is suggested that you contact the State Administrator of the Work Projects Administration to ascertain whether it would be possible to obtain WPA assistance.

Sincerely yours,
(SGD) Arno B. Cammerer

Arno B. Cammerer
Director.

cc: Region II
Mr. Olcott

GWO:bh
KH

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

Mr. Cammerer:

Attached is a report on the proposed area at Sawyers Bend. Maps and pictures showing the location of the area are included in the report.


George W. Olcott
Park Planner.