

August 8, 1963

No Justification Seen For Wyacondah Work

Because improvement costs would outstrip benefits, the U. S. Corps of Engineers reports that federally-financed flood control on the Wyacondah River is not justified.

Col. Richard L. Hennessy of the Army Corps of Engineers will present a summary of the findings to a public meeting set for Aug. 27 at the courthouse in Memphis, Mo., starting at 7:30.

The report follows the Congressional order in 1961 for a review of previous studies of Wyacondah in regard to flood control and allied purposes.

Following the resolution, a study of flood damage was made in the watershed and various theories of prevention were explored.

Dismissed as too expensive for benefits received were projects for channel straightening, a system of reservoirs and a levee system.

In one narrow, meandering valley, where channel straightening was considered, the Corps concluded that the limited benefits would not justify expense involved in cutting across points of land and making deep cuts through rock.

Sixteen reservoirs were "operated" theoretically to determine their effect on flow frequency, but the cost of the system was figured at \$7.5-million initially, plus \$258,000 in annual charges, against average benefits of \$104,000 annually.

So this proposal was also dismissed.

The reservoirs proposed would have controlled drainage areas above each dam site ranging from 2.2 square miles to 47.3 square miles.

The Wyacondah River includes both the North and South Wyacondahs, which rise in Davis county and flow southeastward to a junction in Clark county, Mo.

North Wyacondah drains 117 square miles and South Wyacondah drains 126 square miles. The river enters the Mississippi at a point 10.3 miles upstream from Quincy, Ill.

The report notes extensive straightening work has been done along main channels. "The original channel . . . was a shallow, meandering ditch," says the report. "Straightening was accomplished by cutting a

pilot ditch in the bottom land...

"The maintenance of the existing straightened channel is a local responsibility. The straightened channel is developing meanders, especially in its lower reaches. If this maintenance work is not done, the river will gradually revert to conditions prior to straightening."

Although ruling out federal money for a massive flood control program, the engineering report suggested "widespread adoption of measures to control soil erosion in the uplands and adoption of measures such as vegetative cover to control bank erosion in the improved channel reaches." Such action "will be of benefit to landowners in the watershed," the report concluded.