



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Rock Island District

BRANDON ROAD INTERBASIN PROJECT



QUARTERLY UPDATE

May 2024

The PROJECT

Brandon Road Lock and Dam near Joliet, Illinois, has been identified as the critical pinch point where layered technologies could be used to prevent movement of invasive carp populations into the Great Lakes.

The Brandon Road Interbasin Project is a complex ecosystem protection effort designed to prevent upstream movement of invasive carp and other aquatic nuisance species into the Great Lakes from the Illinois Waterway. Construction is planned in three increments:

Construction Increment I:

(A) Automated Barge Clearing Deterrent, Leading Edge Bubble Deterrent, Leading Edge Acoustic Deterrent Array, Leading Edge Support Facilities, and Upstream Boat Launch (B) Site Prep, Channel Rock Excavation

Construction Increment II:

Electric Deterrent, Wide Acoustic Deterrent Array, Complete Control Building, Right Descending Bank Wall Connect to Lower Guidewall, Flushing Lock, Downstream Boat Launch

Construction Increment III:

Complete Engineered Channel

Non-structural measures, implemented in conjunction with other federal agencies, could include public education and outreach, monitoring, integrated pest management, manual or mechanical removal, and research and development.

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Project Manager Andrew Leichty shows prospective contractors an aerial map of the project site.

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Project Status Update

Over the winter, progress on the Brandon Road Interbasin Project has continued with a focus on effectiveness and efficiency. The project development team has actively sought input from various stakeholders through specialized design charrettes, navigation industry workshops, an industry day with private-sector contractors, and a public open house event. These engagements have proven invaluable, resulting in estimated project savings of \$500 million and a reduction of approximately two years in the construction schedule. Furthermore, these adjustments are projected to prevent several hundred million dollars of impacts to the navigation industry.

The scientists and engineers are dedicated to effectively addressing the risk associated with the transfer of invasive species between the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi River watersheds. The combination of the existing electrical barrier at Romeoville, Illinois, non-structural measures, and the planned layered technologies for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project in Joliet, Illinois, are now more crucial than ever in safeguarding the delicate ecosystem and economy of the Great Lakes region. For example, a two-day non-structural measures event on the Illinois Waterway, resulted in the netting and removal of approximately one million pounds of Silver Carp 45 miles downstream of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam. Recent findings near the Brandon Road Lock and Dam also

highlight the urgency of the project including an adult Silver Carp that was discovered in Lake Calumet just a few years back, and a tagged Silver Carp that was found in the downstream approach channel when the lock chamber was dewatered last summer.

To prevent the upstream movement of these invasive species while minimizing disruptions to navigation, the construction of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project is being planned in multiple increments. A total of \$274 million in federal funding and \$114 million in non-federal funding are ready to be allocated to the project once a Project Partnership Agreement is agreed to and signed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the state of Illinois as the non-federal sponsor. Construction contracts for Increment I-A (leading edge deterrents), Increment I-B (bedrock removal), and the fabrication of acoustic deterrents are anticipated to be awarded later this year.



Lead biologist Mark Cornish talks with a group of contractors and members of the public during a site tour of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project area.



USACE and State of Illinois panelists discuss project features, concerns and construction strategies with attendees at the Industry Day and Public Open House in December 2023.

NEPA and Regulatory Reviews Important to Project

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as well as state and federal regulatory programs, play a critical role in projects, like the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, by requiring federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their proposed actions. It is a legal requirement that helps to ensure that federal actions are conducted in accordance with environmental laws and regulations, reducing the risk of legal challenges and ensuring transparency and accountability in decision-making.

As part of the review process, federal agencies must consider a range of alternatives to the proposed action. For the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, this has involved

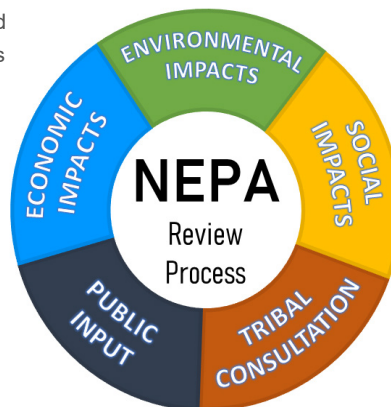
evaluating various structural and non-structural methods for controlling the spread of invasive species. This comprehensive analysis helps identify the most effective and least environmentally damaging approach.

Interagency cooperation and coordination are key to the NEPA and regulatory review processes and helps to ensure the various agencies involved are working together to assess a project's environmental impacts and develop appropriate mitigation measures, if needed.

Public involvement is also essential, and mandated, as part of the decision-making process and ensures that stakeholders, including local communities, environmental

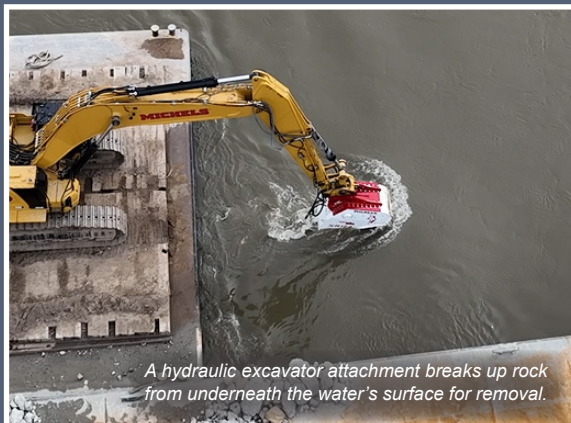
groups, and affected individuals, have the opportunity to provide input and express concerns about the project.

The Brandon Road Interbasin Project website will be updated with NEPA and regulatory review process information as it becomes available.



Technical Team Visits Excavation Demonstration

Earlier this year, members of the USACE and State of Illinois technical teams visited a worksite to see how a hydraulic excavator attachment could possibly be used to increase efficiency of the rock removal process "in the wet" for the Brandon Road Interbasin Project. The device, which can be attached to a standard excavator, is designed for rock excavation and demolition and is known for its efficiency in breaking through hard materials such as rock, concrete, and frozen ground. The attachment operates by applying a combination of vibration and impact force to the material, allowing it to break apart without the need for explosives or time/cost associated with dewatering for "in the dry" methodologies.



A hydraulic excavator attachment breaks up rock from underneath the water's surface for removal.

Completed EVENTS

DECEMBER 2023

Industry Day/Public Open House and Site Visit

MARCH 2024

Facilitated Partnering Workshop #5

Upcoming EVENTS

MAY 2024

Presentation to Midwest Water Analysts Association

Submit Comments
Online Anytime



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its project partners invite public input. Comments regarding the Brandon Road Interbasin Project can be submitted online to the project team at anytime by visiting: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Public-Comment-Form/> or scanning the QR code above with a mobile device.

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