1st Mini-Report From Les 2/4/91 Return to R. Boe

**Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet,
New Lock and Connecting Channels,
Louisiana**

EVALUATION STUDY

The purpose of this report is (1) to provide the rationale and documentation for eliminating a location near Violet, Louisiana, from further consideration as an alternative site in the evaluation study of a replacement lock for the existing Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock in New Orleans, Louisiana, and (2) to present information on how the New Orleans District plans to implement and utilize an open planning process to achieve a consensus on a lock replacement plan at the site of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock.

The existing Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) lock is a connecting link in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway system for shallow-draft traffic and serves as a connecting link for deep-draft traffic between the Mississippi River and the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet. The lock is dimensionally inadequate to handle existing traffic and delays averaging between 10 and 15 hours are common. Two alternative sites have been identified as suitable for a new lock and connecting channels, the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal site in New Orleans, Louisiana, and a site near Violet, Louisiana (See Figure 1).

ELIMINATION OF VIOLET SITE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The authority for replacement of the navigation lock connecting the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MR-GO) with the Mississippi River is the River and Harbor Act of 1956, Public Law (PL) 84-455. The authorizing legislation provided, ". . . that when economically justified by obsolescence of the existing Industrial Canal lock or by increased traffic, replacement of the existing lock or an additional lock with suitable connections is hereby

Not R&H Act

approved to be constructed . . . with type, dimensions, and cost estimates to be approved by the Chief of Engineers. . . . "

Between 1961 and 1964 we conducted studies of a replacement lock at either the IHNC or Violet sites. We concluded that only a barge lock was justified. However, the Chief of Engineers determined that the MR-GO legislation pertained to a ship/barge lock, and that the study should report on a ship/barge lock. After a restudy in 1964, it was determined that historical growth of deep-draft tonnage was being drastically depressed due to the existing lock's inadequate size and the physical congestion in the IHNC, which resulted in ever-increasing delays. Completion of the MR-GO also contributed to this decline in ship usage. Studies were therefore focused on the feasibility of a lock at the IHNC location. Analysis of soil borings in the vicinity of the existing lock showed that using conventional construction methods, the new lock could not be located closer than 750 feet east of the old lock. This necessitated traumatic industrial and social relocations (estimated at that time to be 4,100 people). Therefore, the assuring agency withdrew the State of Louisiana's support for the IHNC site and requested reevaluation of the sites in St. Bernard Parish.

Site selection studies during the late 1960's and early 1970's addressed the IHNC and Violet sites and concluded that the Violet site was the least costly, impacted the community the least, had the smallest population, and was acceptable to navigational interests. The St. Bernard Parish Policy Jury, in May 1969, took a position[1] favoring the location of the "connecting link" in the parish if a bridge across the same was available, but subsequently opposition to a St. Bernard location developed.

Based on the information gathered from public meetings, studies were made of 14 plans at seven separate locations. A detailed plan comparison was made with the IHNC Site. These two plans included proposals for the ultimate disposition of the old IHNC lock and canal, the utilization of a new barge canal as an extension of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), comparative bridge studies, and provision of environmental mitigation. This comparison resulted in the 1974

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[1] "Police Jurors Favor Locating Tidewater River Connecting Link in St. Bernard Parish," Newspaper article, St. Bernard Voice, Arabi, Louisiana, May 9, 1969.

recommendation of the Lower Site Plan, comprising the provision of a ship channel and lock just below Violet, Louisiana, a barge canal to connect the lock tailbay with the GIWW, moth-balling of the old IHNC lock, and provisions for environmental mitigation. Detailed information is available in the "New Lock and Connecting Channels - Site Selection Report" dated March 1975.

In April 1977, subsequent to the submission and approval of the site selection report, President Carter recommended further study of a replacement lock at the existing IHNC Site with emphasis on action to minimize displacement and disruption of residents. In our subsequent studies we have analyzed various groups of plans including lock location(s), lock size(s), number of locks, alternate channels and construction methods.

In 1982 about one-third of the cargo ships in the fleet were too large to use the existing lock and less than one-fifth of the bulk carriers likewise could use the existing lock.

After extensive comparative analyses, a preliminary draft report was prepared with a tentatively selected plan being a new lock adjacent to the existing lock at the IHNC site. After review by LMVD and subsequent preparation of a revised draft report addressing division comments, the New Orleans District was verbally instructed to stop working on the report until further notice as a result of pending litigation on another project.

The Water Resources Development Act of 1986, PL 99-662 modified the 1956 River and Harbor Act "to provide that the replacement and expansion of the existing Industrial Canal Lock and connecting channels or the construction of an additional lock and connecting channels shall be in the area of the existing industrial canal lock or at the Violet site. . . ." It also directed the Secretary to "make a maximum effort to assure the full participation of members of minority groups living in the affected areas, in the construction of the replacement or additional lock and connecting channels authorized by subsection (a) of this section, including actions to encourage the use, whenever possible, of minority owned firms."

In our more recent study efforts, we reformulated the Violet plan with a view toward minimizing environmental impacts by reducing the required rights-of-way. Even with this, we would still require at least 1,000 acres of valuable wetlands for the project. In addition

approximately 9,800 acres of wetlands would be indirectly impacted. Virtually all wetland impacts resulting from construction of a new lock and connecting channel at Violet would occur in St. Bernard Parish. Because of this, mitigation features focused on St. Bernard and adjoining parishes.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The initial public meeting on the MR-GO new lock and connecting channel project was held on February 1, 1960. At that meeting, St. Bernard Parish government officials, along with property owners and civic interests from St. Bernard generally opposed "lower" sites in St. Bernard Parish; however, the attitude was that, if selection of a "lower" site was inevitable, the Violet site would be preferred.

Public meetings were held in Orleans and St. Bernard Parishes in November and December 1972, respectively. In general, the opposition at these meetings was comprised of the political leadership and interested citizens of St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes, a number of environmental organizations, and a small segment of the local shallow-draft barge industry. Proponents included the Governor of Louisiana backed by state agencies (with the exception of the Louisiana State Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, which took no position at that time)[2], the Dock Board, organized labor, the deep- and shallow-draft shipping industry, elected officials, civic groups, and individuals.

The major objections voiced in opposition to the Violet Site included the lack of quantification or resolution of environmental damage, the division of the parish with only one highway link between the two areas, disruption and inconvenience, a fear of increased danger of future flooding, concern about future disposition of the IHNC lock and bridges, and fear that St. Bernard would have to pay for flood protection and relocations. The proponents' position was that the future viability of the Port of New Orleans depends on this lock and the "Centroport" concept, and that this connection affects the national economic interest and defense posture. The State of Louisiana supported the Violet Site, provided that lock

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[2] The Louisiana State Wildlife and Fisheries Commission subsequently went on record favoring an IHNC site on environmental grounds.

construction did not interrupt utilities or highway and rail access; that adequate flood protection was provided at Federal expense; that the environmental impact statement was approved by local, state, and Federal agencies prior to initiation of construction; that the land adjacent to the connecting channels be placed under the jurisdiction of appropriate St. Bernard Parish authorities; and that a high-level highway bridge be provided over the new channel at Federal expense.

In 1978, a Steering Committee for a New Ship Lock (SCANS) was formed by the local sponsor, the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans (Dock Board). The purpose of SCANS was to provide a forum for interested parties to receive information relative to the proposed new lock and provide a means for the Corps and Dock Board to receive feedback. Organizations represented included: the Dock Board; Ninth Ward Citizens Voting League; neighborhood associations; City of New Orleans (Mayor, City Council, various city departments, etc.); American Waterways Operators; New Orleans Steamship Association; local marine interests; representatives of the local congressional delegation; various state representatives from the area; U.S. Coast Guard; planning commissions within the region; citizen groups; and other interest parties.

On May 2, 1978, shortly after the formation of SCANS and after general guidance was received relative to President Carter's instructions, SCANS and the Dock Board held a public meeting for the purpose of soliciting community feedback. The primary concern voiced by the local community representatives was that they wanted the opportunity to make community and neighborhood desires known before any decisions were made.

Over the course of time, the St. Bernard Parish Police Jury has passed numerous resolutions opposing a new lock and connecting channel project. On April 18, 1989 the St. Bernard Parish Police Jury unanimously passed a resolution that reiterated its previous stand opposing a connecting link at Violet or any other location in St. Bernard Parish. In addition, the St. Bernard Planning Commission stated in a letter dated August 21, 1989 that a parish wide planning study, of pre- and post-project conditions would be necessary to identify potential mitigation areas. In addition, the letter also contained numerous other demands, some of which are not within the Corps' authority. Over the years, St. Bernard has used several consultants

to counteract the information and efforts of the Corps toward accomplishing a lock project at Violet. They also pointed out that in accordance with PL 100-678 a change in zoning would be required in order for a new lock project to be constructed.

COMPARISON OF SITES

THE IHNC SITE. The IHNC site would utilize an existing waterway and provide a more efficient navigable connection between the lower Mississippi River and the GIWW and MR-GO. The general location of the site is shown on Figure 1. We have evaluated a plan 400 feet east of the existing lock. At the time we last briefed the Inland Waterways Users Board (IWUB), this was the tentatively selected plan.

Construction of any plan at the IHNC site would involve two basic tasks, construction of the lock complex and construction of bridge relocations, which would be timed to minimize social and vehicular disruptions.

The plan would include construction of two bridge relocations across the IHNC and consist of four-lane semi-high level bridge replacements at St. Claude Avenue, and Claiborne Avenue.

The total construction time for the bridge relocations and lock complex would take about 9 years.

Excavation of the new lock and connecting channels would require disposal of up to 5,200,000 cubic yards of material, most of which would be used to create wetland habitat in areas where marsh has deteriorated or been replaced by open water.

National Economic Development Impacts. The first cost of the IHNC shallow-draft lock plan is estimated at $363.6 million. The total annual cost is estimated at $53.4 million including approximately $51.0 million for interest and amortization of the initial investment and $2.4 million for O&M. A deep-draft lock plan would cost $415.4 million. The total annual cost is estimated at $59.2 million including $56.5 million for interest and amortization of the initial investment and $2.7 million for O&M costs, the costs of operating and maintaining the existing lock is treated as a benefit-savings to existing project. Annual costs for the shallow-draft only

alternative includes $1.1 million representing the loss of deep-draft services. The national economic development (NED) costs do not include the cost of social impact mitigation.

The benefits attributable to plans at this site are estimated to average $74.9 million for shallow-draft and $75.8 million for deep-draft. These benefits result from savings in transportation by providing a more efficient connection between the lower Mississippi River, the GIWW, and the MR-GO; from savings in improved vehicular crossings by constructing two new bridges; and from savings to the existing project as a result of eliminating the need for future rehabilitation and O&M of the existing lock. The average annual net benefits are estimated at $21.5 million for shallow-draft and $16.6 million for deep-draft. The ratio of average annual benefits to average annual costs is 1.4 to 1 for shallow-draft and 1.3 to 1 for deep-draft.

Environmental Impacts. The following paragraphs discuss impacts for various environmental components.

Biological Resources. The impacts upon aquatic values would be limited to the affected waterways and related project-induced changes in water quality and are expected to be slight. Overall negative impacts upon biological resources would be minor. Positive impacts from wetland creation with dredged materials would be significant. Several hundred acres of wetland habitat would be created east of the IHNC in an open water area. The plan would require disposal of 5,200,000 cubic yards of dredged material and have greater releases of lock water than the existing lock.

Cultural Resources. Any plan at this site would impact the Holy Cross and Bywater Historic Districts, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the existing IHNC lock has been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Coordination with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer will be required. Execution of a memorandum of agreement with these agencies will be required to identify what mitigating measures will be incorporated into our plan.

Recreation Resources. Project-related increases in traffic may cause potential congestion patterns between commercial and recreation vessels

in the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet. Heavier wake activity may impact smaller recreational boats and the existing shoreline from which some occasional bank fishing might occur.

Social Impacts. Plans at the IHNC site have the potential for stimulating a healthier regional economy which would result in improved community facilities and greater social bonds. During construction, high noise levels near the lock site during lock and bridge construction and disruption of vehicular traffic would adversely affect the well-being of some residents in the area. In addition, response times for services (fire, police, and emergency medical) would be impacted. In the long term, the adjacent plan would cause the relocation of approximately 620 people in 223 residential units in 93 structures, about 150 job displacements, and take about 9 years to actually construct. Several neighborhood businesses (groceries, beauty salons, restaurants, repair shops, etc.) employing about 160 people would also be impacted.

Regional Development. This plan has potential for stimulating regional development and growth.

THE VIOLET SITE. A lock at Violet could provide a navigable connection between the lower Mississippi River and the GIWW and MR-GO. The general location of the Violet site is shown on Figure 1. The plan's basic features would consist of a new lock, a new connecting channel between the new lock and the MR-GO with paralleling hurricane protection levees, a new eased barge channel at the junction of the MR-GO and the GIWW, and a navigable floodgate at Violet Canal.

Conventional construction would be used within an earthen cofferdam. When the lock construction is complete, the flood protection tie-ins would be connected to the levees outside of the cofferdam and the guidewalls constructed. The lock would then be ready for operation after demolishing the cofferdam and using that material for backfill, as required.

During the project construction period, a four-lane high-rise bridge would be constructed at Judge Perez Drive and a two-lane high-rise bridge would be constructed at river road (St. Bernard Highway) as part of the

project. These bridges would be required to maintain the existing transportation routes which also serve as hurricane evacuation routes.

The total construction period for the lock is estimated to require 9 years and is expected to result in minor residential and business relocations. In addition, the Millaudon Middle School would require relocation.

Excavation for the new channels and levees would be accomplished primarily by bucket dredging. The project would require about 27,350,000 cubic yards of excavation. About 15,000,000 cubic yards of excavated material will be used for backfill in constructing the required hurricane protection levees and for tieing in to the mainline Mississippi River levees.

National Economic Development Impacts. The first cost of the Violet plans is estimated at $384.2 million for a shallow-draft lock. The total annual cost is estimated at $51.4 million including $47.0 million for interest and amortization of the initial investment and $2.4 million for O&M. The first cost of a deep-draft plan is estimated at $420.5 million and the total annual cost estimated at $55.3 million including $50.6 million for interest and amortization of the initial investment and $2.7 million for O&M. Annual costs include $2.0 million for mitigation of environmental losses. Also included in interest and amortization costs for the shallow-draft only alternative is $1.2 million representing the loss of deep-draft service. The NED costs do not include the cost of social impact mitigation.

The average annual benefits attributable to the Violet shallow-draft plan are estimated at $58.5 million and $59.8 million for a deep-draft plan. These benefits result from savings in transportation by providing a more efficient connection between the lower Mississippi River, the GIWW, and the MR-GO; from savings in improved vehicular crossings by eliminating IHNC bridge openings; and from savings to the existing project as a result of eliminating the need for future rehabilitation and O&M of the existing lock. For shallow-draft the average annual net benefits are estimated at $7.1 million and the ratio of average annual benefits to average annual costs is estimated to be 1.1 to 1. For deep-draft the average annual net benefits are $4.5 million and the ratio of average annual benefits to average annual costs is estimated to be 1.1 to 1.

Environmental Impacts The following paragraphs discuss impacts for various environmental components.

Biological Resources. Project impacts on biological resources related to increased lock water releases and increased vessel traffic would be similar to those of the IHNC plan.

Project construction would require the excavation of about 27,350,000 cubic yards of dredged material and 350,000 cubic yards associated with easing the barge channel at the junction of the MR-GO and GIWW to facilitate traffic. Construction of the lock tailbay channel would impact six scenic streams included in Louisiana Scenic Streams system. Permits to impact these streams would require an act of the state legislature. Lock construction would also render the Violet siphon ineffective. This structure was built to enhance wetlands near Violet by diverting nutrient-rich fresh water from the Mississippi River into area marshes. Replacement of the Violet siphon flows would be difficult and expensive to accomplish due to the location of the lock. Estimated cost of replacement is $2,750,000.

Lock construction at Violet would cause direct loss of 550 acres of brackish marsh, 240 acres of bottomland hardwood forest, 220 acres of scrub/shrub wetlands, and 160 acres of MR-GO disposal area. An additional 600 acres of wetland habitat would be impacted during construction (temporary construction easement) of the tailbay levees.

I didn't provide this information. Or this.

Construction of the eased barge channel would cause direct loss of 110 acres of marsh and an indirect loss of an additional 243 acres of bottomland hardwood forest and scrub/shrub wetlands.

Numerous mitigation measures were considered to compensate for impacts to marsh, bottomland hardwood forest, and scrub/shrub wetlands. Efforts were made to develop mitigation plans located entirely within St. Bernard Parish so that they would be more acceptable; however, this was impracticable. The least costly plan for marsh and scrub/shrub wetland mitigation is construction of a stone dike in Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne to protect the eroding shorelines. Grass seeding would be done as sediment builds up behind the dikes. Mitigation for bottomland hardwoods forest would involve purchase and reforestation of pasture lands in nearby Plaquemines Parish. This mitigation plan would not totally

replace habitat values or areas of wetlands eliminated by the Violet site plan. Total estimated cost of the mitigation plan is $10,000,000.

Overall, the net impacts of this plan upon biological resources would be significantly adverse.

Cultural Resources. The plan at Violet would not impact any known cultural resources presently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Recreational Resources. Marsh losses due to project construction would result in a minor loss of potential recreational use. A loss of esthetic value and negative impacts to six state designated natural and scenic streams would also occur.

Social Impacts. The Millaudon Middle School with about 500 students and 45 employees would require relocation. In addition, port-related and maintenance facilities with about 100 employees would have to be relocated. Four residences would have to be relocated and about 50 others would experience reduced access. An automated oil pipeline facility would also have to be relocated.

Regional Development Impacts. The regional development impacts of lock plans at this site has potential for stimulating regional development and growth.

CONCLUSIONS

A new lock is needed between the Mississippi River and the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet/GIWW. The residents of St. Bernard are unalterably opposed to a new lock and connecting channel being located at Violet. The Police Jury, the governing authority of the Parish of St. Bernard, is unequivocally opposed to construction of a new lock and connecting channel project at Violet because it would bisect the parish and cause major adverse environmental impacts. Any plan at Violet would result in the destruction of large areas of wetlands making Violet an unacceptable site for a new lock project.

On the basis of cost, a site at Violet is more expensive and a site adjacent to the existing IHNC lock is more attractive. From the standpoint

of operational efficiency and intraport movement, the advantages of the IHNC site are considerable. In addition, environmental impacts for any new lock and connecting channel project at Violet are significant and adverse. Loss of wetlands, particularly in Louisiana is a very sensitive issue. The sensitivity is evidenced by the passage of the Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Fund by the voters of Louisiana on October 7, 1989, and the state's participation in studies to seek solutions to the coastal problems.

NEPA declared that it was Federal policy to use all practicable means, "to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generation of Americans."

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, directs the Corps to provide leadership and take action to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out its civil works activities. The key requirement of the Executive Order is determining whether a practicable alternative to locating an action in wetlands exists. This requires the identification and evaluation of alternatives that could be located outside of wetlands (alternative sites); other means that would accomplish the same purpose(s) as the proposed action (alternative actions), and no action. If there is no practicable alternative to locating an action in wetlands, the Executive Order requires that the action include all practical measures to minimize harm to the wetlands and preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values. Provision for Corps compliance with this executive order is incorporated in standing Corps planning guidance, as part of the specific and general environmental considerations required.

Representatives of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources have stated orally and in writing that they could not conceive of a possible project design that could be constructed at the Violet site in a manner consistent with the Louisiana Coastal Zone Management program. In addition, we would have to comply with the state laws regarding scenic streams under the Louisiana's scenic streams program. All of these factors would make selection of any plan at the Violet site very difficult to implement. We concluded that, if private interests were applying for a

permit for such a project that impacts wetlands as we would propose at the Violet site, the New Orleans District Engineer would not issue such a permit because there is a practicable alternative that does not impact wetlands.

In March 1990, the IWUB met in New Orleans. The Meetings of the User Board are open to the public. At the Board's request, we presented a status briefing on the current study. During the briefing we stated that "in order to comply with the President's stated policy of no net loss" relative to projects in wetlands, construction of a new lock and connecting channel project at Violet would require extensive mitigation to replace the type and quality of habitat. In recent testimony before a Congressional hearing (Sept. 12, 1990), the ASA's Deputy for Planning Policy and Legislature Affairs stated the Department of the Army's policy. "We apply the same decision criteria to the Army Civil Works projects as we do on whether to grant permits for non-Corps activities." The impact on wetlands is coupled with the traditional opposition we have encountered from local elected officials and local citizen groups.

We feel that any plan at the Violet site is environmentally unacceptable, even though a lock is engineeringly and economically feasible.

RECOMMENDATION

In conforming with Executive Order 11990, in keeping with President Bush's statements regarding "no net loss" of wetlands, and in responding to the spirit of guidance and policy letters issued by the Chief of Engineers concerning the environment, we recommend that the Violet site be dropped from further consideration for a replacement lock.

OPEN PLANNING PROCESS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Based on our planning efforts since the replacement of the lock was authorized, it is apparent that our traditional planning process is not suitable for the formulation of plans for a replacement lock. Another approach is required to achieve consensus.

The direction contained in reports by both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees in conjunction with the FY 1991 Appropriations Act have provided the guidance that has served as a key in developing the open planning process that we, in conjunction with the Port of New Orleans, are proposing to use in developing a consensus solution to the lock replacement problem. The reports suggest that "pursuant to the development of a replacement lock at the Industrial Canal site in New Orleans, La., the Corps in conjunction with the local project sponsor is directed to implement a community participation process . . .The report also directs us to do the following:

- designate an advisory group,
- develop a comprehensive plan to identify and mitigate to the maximum extent possible any social and cultural impacts,
- benefits of cultural and social mitigation and enhancement shall be deemed to be at least equal to the cost of such measures,
- strictly follow guidelines regarding historic properties,
- assure full participation of members of minority groups and report annually, and
- give maximum consideration to alternatives which minimize disruption while meeting goals of improving waterborne commerce.

THE OPEN PLANNING PROCESS

The proposed open planning process was jointly developed by the New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers and the Port of New Orleans and

was agreed to by the senior management teams of both agencies. It represents an "extraordinary" consensus building process that meets the congressional guidance and also has the potential to eventually bring the project to fruition.

The process will be initiated by the Corps and Port, as we jointly identify those individuals and organizations with a vested interest in the project. These will include agencies, neighborhood residents and associations, businesses and industries, navigation interests (both shallow and deep draft), historical interests and key political leaders.

The New Orleans District (Corps) and Port of New Orleans will define the relative roles and involvement of each agency in planning of the project. An advisory committee will be formed consisting of stakeholders, the Corps and Port. The committee members will exchange information and receive community opinions. The Corps and Port will draft a charter for the advisory committee. The Corps will make available all information developed in conjunction with studies of the lock which includes engineering studies of alternative plans at the IHNC site scheduled to be completed in February 1991. These plans include the following:

but the charter excludes the Corps

- •400 feet east of the existing lock,
- •200 feet east of the existing lock (conventional construction)
- •200 feet east of the existing lock (floated in w/steel shell),
- •200 west of the existing lock (conventional and floated-in w/ steel shell),
- •In-situ floated-in lock (concrete),
- •In-situ floated-in (steel shell), and
- •Earth chambered lock with floated-in sector gates.

We will be using A-E design support for the steel shell, floated-in alternatives to back up our own design efforts. The process of obtaining this A-E is underway, scheduled to be on-board in January 1991. This contract will be two-phased. The first phase will be conceptual designs of the steel shell that will be complete in May 1991. Then if the steel shell alternative is recommended we will exercise the 2nd phase in which the A-E will assist us in developing the baseline costs and designs for this plan.

In addition, the Corps will also make available the economic studies and information that has been developed in conjunction with various lock plans, cultural and historical studies of the neighborhoods, and social

impact studies. All of these studies are scheduled to be completed by May 1991. In addition, the Port will make available its local/regional economic study that is scheduled for completion in April 1991.

The advisory committee will be established and functioning in early 1991. They will convene as needed to arrive at their tentative recommendation by October 1991. Upon receipt of the committee's recommendation, which will be the District's recommended plan as long as the recommendation does not violate laws and regulations, the Corps will refine designs and costs and complete any necessary studies required to prepare a draft feasibility report. If the recommended plan is not the NED plan, that plan will also be addressed in the report.

what if RP has BC ratio less than 1?

SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that the New Orleans District will be in a position to submit a draft report and environmental impact statement to the Lower Mississippi Valley Division by December 1992 and a final report and environmental impact statement in October 1993. The attached bar chart shows a breakdown of the milestones and tasks required to accomplish our reporting goal. It should be noted that as we progress through the process, we plan to have in-progress review conferences with higher authority.

The report will be in sufficient detail to provide a baseline cost estimate and will follow the requirements of a traditional feasibility scope effort in support of a construction decision. A general design memorandum (GDM) will be required once the feasibility report is approved.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the fact that our proposed open planning process was jointly developed with the Port of New Orleans and all indications are it will be accepted by the stakeholders, we recommend approval to proceed with the process and approval of our tentative schedule for accomplishing the remaining feasibility process.