

MCCLELLAN-KERR ARKANSAS RIVER NAVIGATION SYSTEM 12-FOOT CHANNEL

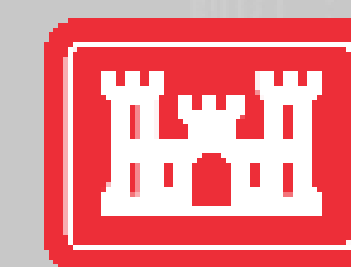
Draft Supplemental
Environmental Assessment

Public Comment Period

February 1, 2024 to
March 1, 2024



"The views, opinions and findings contained in this report are those of the authors(s) and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation."



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**



Environmental Assessment Guidelines and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process

What is NEPA?

- One of the oldest environmental laws, it requires Federal agencies to consider and disclose the environmental and social effects of their proposed actions in a publicly available document.

Why a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

- We have prepared a Draft SEA to update the 2005 Environmental Impact Statement to ensure compliance with all applicable environmental laws.
- An Environmental Assessment fully discloses the Purpose and Need, Alternatives Considered, Baseline Conditions, and the Environmental and Social Effects.

MKARNS 12-Foot Channel

What is it?

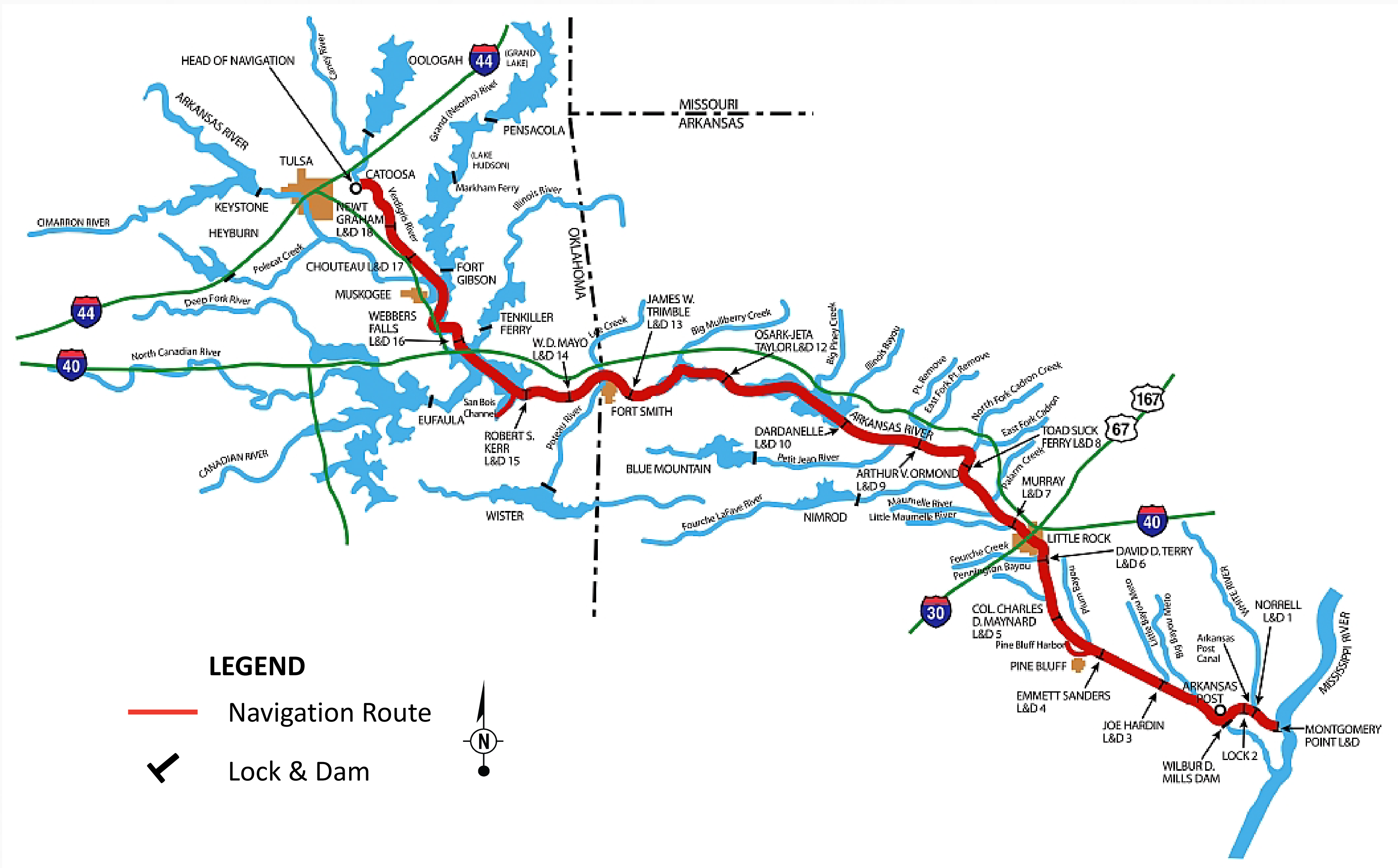
- Authorized under Section 136 of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2004, the MKARNS 12-Foot Channel purpose is to improve commercial navigation operation by deepening the current 9-foot navigation channel to a 12-foot operational depth. Over 85% of the MKARNS is already at this 12-foot operational depth.

Why is it needed?

- Deepening the channel will allow the existing inland commercial fleet to sail at deeper drafts that are consistent with those on the Lower Mississippi River and load more cargo onto their barges thereby lowering transportation costs. This benefits producers and consumers throughout the region and nation. Roughly \$5 billion of goods are moved on the MKARNS annually. In addition, shipping more cargo on the MKARNS versus road or rail may have the added benefit of reducing landside congestion on roads and railways. Lastly, air emissions from barges on a ton per mile basis are far less than trucks or rail carrying a similar weight.

MKARNS Map

McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System



445-mile-long system with 18 locks and dams

MKARNS History

- 1946: Rivers and Harbors Act of 1946 authorized development of the AR River and its tributaries for navigation
- 1952: Construction on the MKARNS began
- 1971: Construction of the MKARNS is completed
- 1999: Arkansas River Navigation Study (ARNS) initiated
- 2004: Energy and Water Development Act of 2004 authorized project depth of 12 feet
- 2005: ARNS Feasibility Study and EIS completed, and Record of Decision signed for 12-foot Channel
- 2020: WRDA 2020 provided funding to initiate updated modeling and designs

MKARNS 12-Foot Channel Construction Features

Features are designed based on updated hydrologic and sediment modeling done since 2021 and include:

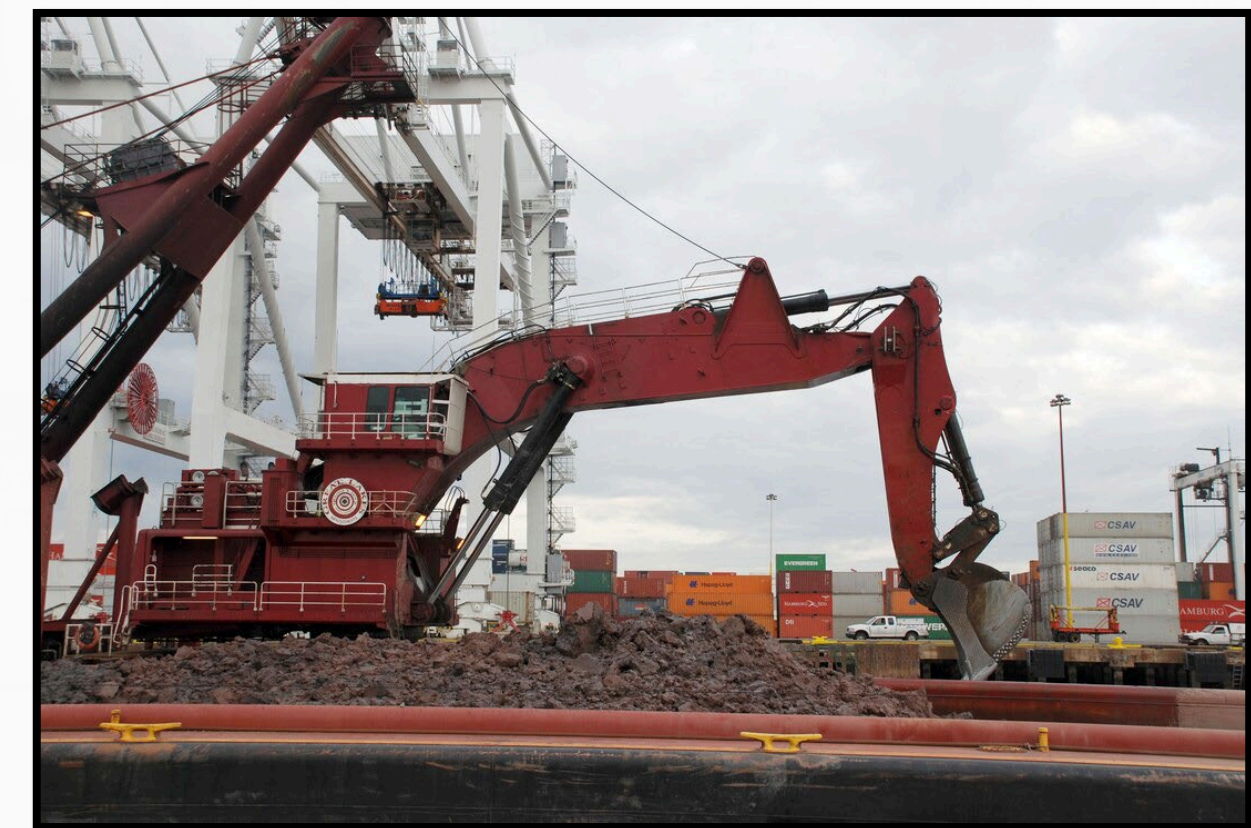
Rock weirs



Re-directive or resistive structures that use the river's energy to deepen and enhance the navigation channel, increase environmental diversity, and maintain system status.

- 193 proposed new or modified in the 2005 plan
- 112 proposed new or modified in the current plan

Dredging



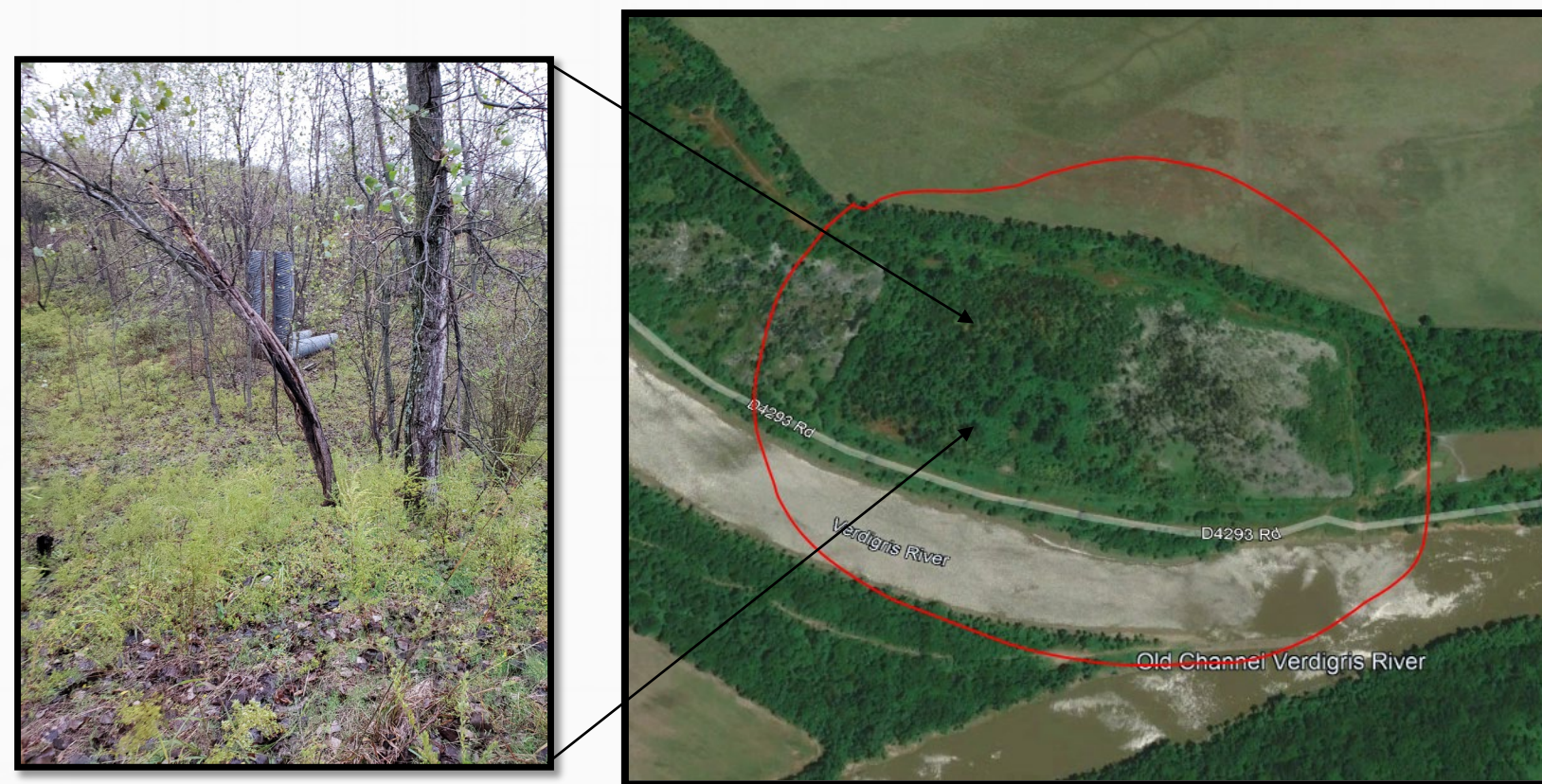
Removal of sediment and debris from the channel to allow ships to pass and maintain river flow.

- 10,985,339 cubic yards of dredging proposed in the 2005 plan
- 5,791,099 cubic yards of dredging proposed in the current plan

MKARNS 12-Foot Channel Construction Features

Features are designed based on updated hydrologic and sediment modeling done since 2021 and include:

Upland disposal sites



Disposal sites include upland sites, where sites are excavated and a berm is built to contain material, or in-water, where sediment is contained by rock structures.

- 55 new upland disposal sites proposed in the 2005 plan
- 39 new upland disposal sites proposed in the current plan (37 in OK, 2 in AR)

Lock modifications



Modifications strengthen locks to accommodate barges with a draft of more than 9ft.

Summary of Environmental Impacts

Resource Category	No Action Alternative	MKARNS 12-Foot Channel
Air Quality	Long-term, negligible adverse	Short-term, minor adverse; long-term, negligible adverse
Climate Change & GHGs	Long-term, negligible adverse	Short- and long-term, negligible adverse
Noise	No Impact	Short-term, minor adverse
Geology and Soils	Long-term, minor adverse	Short- and long-term, minor adverse
Surface Waters	No Impact	Short-term, minor adverse; Long-term, negligible adverse
Land Cover & Land Use	Long-term, negligible adverse	Long-term, minor adverse
Infrastructure	No Impact	Short-term, minor adverse; Long-term, major beneficial
Transportation	Long-term, minor adverse	Short-term, minor adverse; Long-term, major beneficial
Biological Resources		
T&E Species	No Effect	No Effect (12 species); May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect (8 species); May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect (2 species)
Wetlands	No Impact	Long-term, minor adverse (mitigated)
Aquatic Resources	Short-term, minor adverse	Long-term, minor adverse
Terrestrial Resources	Long-term, minor adverse	Long-term, minor adverse (mitigated)
Recreation & Aesthetics	Short-term, minor adverse	Short- and long-term, minor adverse
Cultural Resources	No Effect	No Adverse Effect (with Programmatic Agreement)
Socioeconomics & EJ	No Impact	Long-term, major beneficial

MKARNS 12-Foot Benefits

- Increased cargo capacity by deepening the channel
- Potentially reduces roadway congestion by allowing more cargo to ship on the MKARNS, rather than using truck and rail routes
- Beneficial use options available for dredge material
- Deepening the channel will allow the existing inland commercial fleet to sail at deeper drafts that are consistent with those on the Lower Mississippi River



MKARNS 12-Foot Schedule

July 8, 2023

- Scoping comment period ends

**February 1
to March 1,
2024**

- Draft SEA available for review and comment

**Summer
2024**

- Final SEA available

**End of 2024
to Early
2025**

- Earliest construction would begin

How Can You Participate?

How to Provide Comments (3 options)

- Submit comments online at:

<https://www.swl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Planning/MKARNS-12-foot-Channel/>

- E-mail comments to:

CESWL-NAV-MKARNS12FOOTCHANNEL@usace.army.mil

- Mail comments to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Attn: MKARNS 12-foot Channel Project Biologist (RPEC)

700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 7500

Little Rock, AR 72203

**Comments must
be postmarked by:
March 1, 2023**