IMPLEMENTATION OF NONSTRUCTURAL FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT MEASURES BY THE U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Introduction

The evolution of flood damage prevention measures in the United States portrays a continuing effort to separate flood waters from people and their possessions, all within the framework of an ever-changing set of circumstances. During the early development of this nation, principal concerns were with the most fundamental of human objectives such as dependable food supplies, shelter from the elements, and security from physical danger. The initial development of water resources related directly or indirectly to these needs in the context of an expanding country, and focused mainly on water transportation and water supply. Population centers inevitably clustered along river valleys and in floodplains. Uncontrolled clearing of forested areas for agricultural uses and grading and drainage activities for urban uses changed rainfall-runoff characteristics to compound an already worsening proliferation of unwise uses of floodplain lands.

At this point, flood problems became recognized as a significant concern of the federal government. Early solutions to flood problems were almost always based on the premise that flood waters should be controlled to protect areas of the floodplain for developmental purposes. However, ultimately it became obvious that flood control projects could not protect against all floods, especially if uncontrolled development continued. It was apparent that actions designed to influence land use decisions must become an added dimension to public policy on floodplain management. "Floodplain management," as used herein, is a comprehensive term which covers a full range of actions encompassing both structural and nonstructural measures.

History of the Corps of Engineers in Water Resources Development

The Corps of Engineers has played a major role in the development of water