



United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Resources, Community, and
Economic Development Division

B-271402

April 2, 1996

The Honorable John R. Kasich
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In response to your interest in obtaining data on the lands the U.S. Army's Corps of Engineers manages for active civil works projects, we are providing information on (1) the acreage of land managed and (2) the purposes for which it is being managed.

In summary, data from the Corps show that, as of March 21, 1996, it managed over 12.4 million acres in association with active civil works projects throughout the United States. Most of the acreage was being managed for the purposes of flood control and navigation.

BACKGROUND

The Army Corps of Engineers has the responsibility for constructing and operating civil works projects that provide, among other things, flood control, navigation, water supply, recreation, and hydropower. The projects are managed by 37 district offices. To accomplish its mission, the Corps assumes management responsibility for the lands that are needed to develop and operate its water projects. The Corps has constructed more than 600 projects, including 463 reservoirs and about 10,500 miles of levees and floodwalls. The Corps also manages over 4,300 recreation areas as part of its civil works projects.

ACREAGE MANAGED BY THE CORPS

According to the Corps' computerized inventory maintained at its headquarters, as of March 21, 1996, the Corps was managing over 12.4 million acres of land. Table 1 shows the total acreage the Corps managed according to the various purposes of its projects.

GAO/RCED-96-101R Lands Managed by the Corps of Engineers

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Table 1: Project Purposes and Acreage Managed by the Corps of Engineers, as of March 21, 1996

Project purpose	Acreage
Fish and wildlife	28,067.9
Flood control, water supply, recreation	549,776.3
Flood control and hydropower	1,306,766.9
Flood control, hydropower, recreation	1,491,635.8
Flood control	7,518,176.3
Hydropower	34,077.9
Mitigation	164,767.7
Navigation	1,154,715.5
Recreation and water supply	20.8
Recreation	256.0
Shore protection	7,569.1
Water supply	13,212.0
Other	135,851.6
Total	12,404,893.8

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

As shown in table 1, project purposes accounting for the greatest number of acres being managed were flood control; the combined purposes of flood control, hydropower, and recreation; the combined purposes of flood control and hydropower; and navigation.

Our discussions with Corps officials on the completeness of the acreage data the Corps provided disclosed that about 200 acres, acquired for the Union Lake project in Missouri, which was deauthorized in 1990, remained under the Corps' management but was not in the Corps' inventory. According to the official at the responsible district office, efforts under way with the General Services Administration to declare this acreage as surplus have been impeded because some questions remain on whether the land contains cultural resources.

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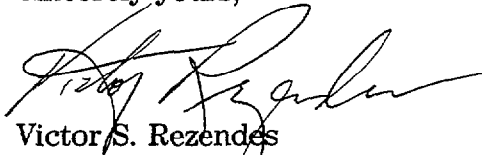
We also noted that about 13,000 acres included in the Corps inventory were associated with projects that are not operating. In one case, 9,110 acres in the Corps' inventory was associated with the La Farge flood control project in Wisconsin, which is partially constructed but is not expected to be completed. No funds have been spent for this project's construction since fiscal year 1985. According to Corps officials, the La Farge project recently became eligible for deauthorization and will be included in the Corps next deauthorization report planned for submission to the Congress this summer. Should the project be deauthorized by law, the Corps intends to identify the project lands as excess. In a second case, about 4,000 acres associated with the Lake Bradley project in Alaska, which was deauthorized in 1982, was continuing to be managed by the Corps.

AGENCY COMMENTS

We provided a copy of a draft of this report to Corps officials for their review and comment. In discussions with these officials, the Deputy Director, Real Estate, stated that the information contained in the report was accurate.

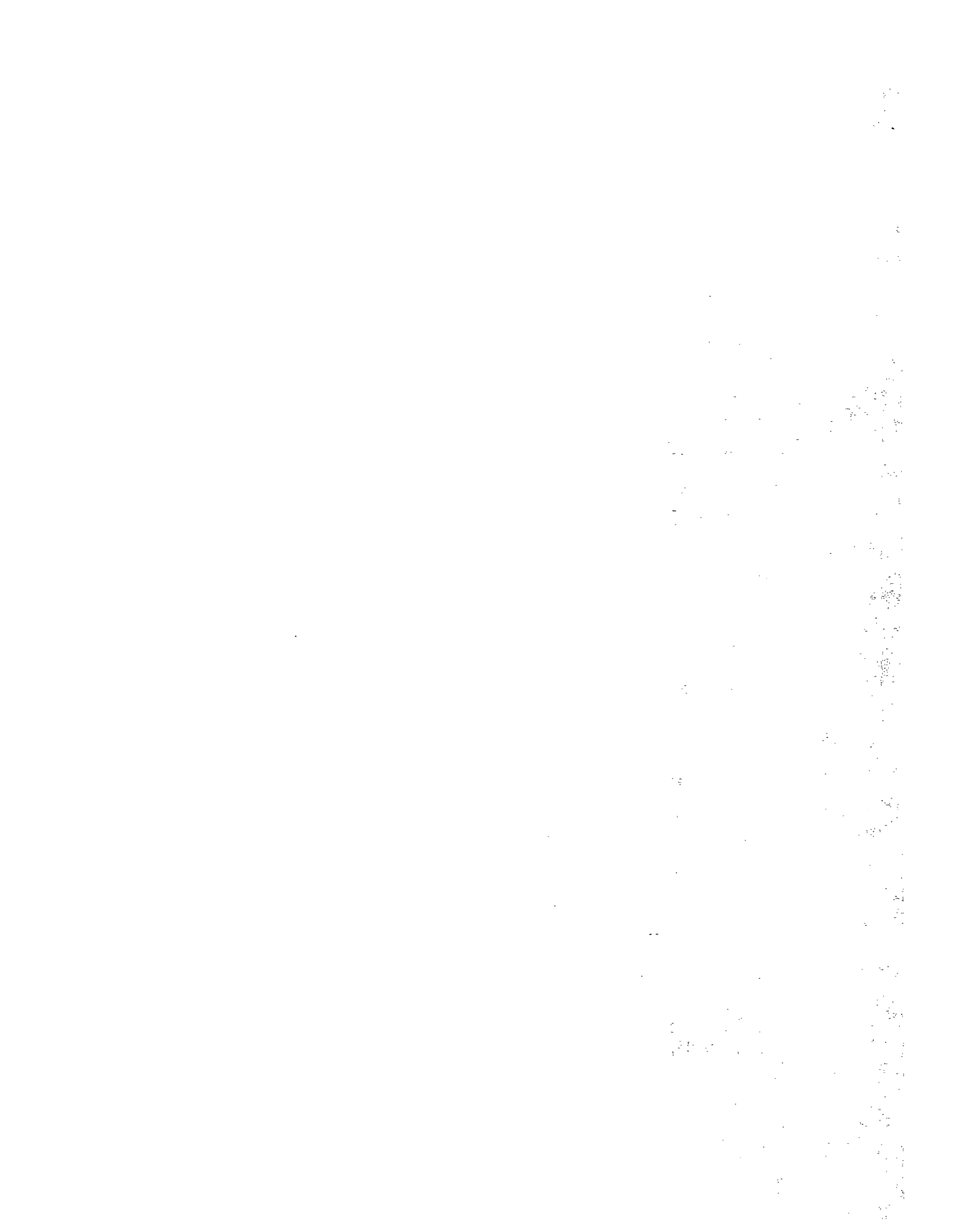
We performed our work from January through March 1996 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We did not independently verify the data provided by the Corps. If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please call me at (202) 512-3841.

Sincerely yours,



Victor S. Rezendes
Director, Energy, Resources,
and Science Issues

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