

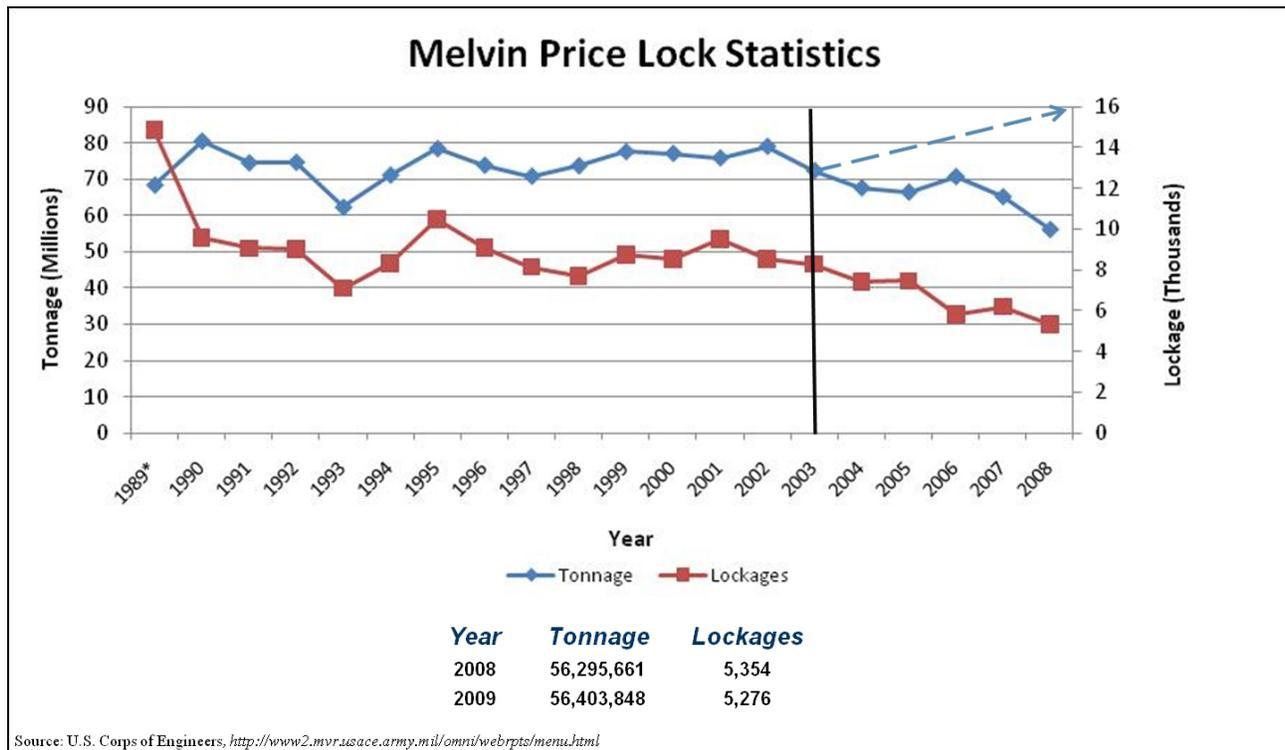
FACT SHEET: Upper Mississippi River Barge Traffic is not Increasing

Since 1990 barge traffic on the Upper Mississippi River has been flat or declining, contradicting predictions by the Corps and negating any need for longer locks.

The UMR-IWW system is loosely shaped like a "Y," with the UMR and Illinois River converging just west of Melvin Price Locks and Dam. Barge traffic flowing downstream from both rivers converges at the locks at Melvin Price Dam, also designated as Locks and Dam 26. The existing 600-foot locks at Locks and Dams 20-25, Peoria, and La Grange are designed for a nominal 50 million tons in annual barge traffic, and the three existing 1,200-foot locks at Dam 19, Melvin Price Dam, and the Chain of Rocks Channel (Lock 27) near St. Louis are designed for approximately a nominal capacity of 100 million tons annually.

Using barge traffic data through 2003, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2004 "Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the UMR-IWW System Navigation Feasibility Study" projected that barge traffic would increase. However, barge traffic has never increased to the Corps' projected level, even with record corn production in 2007¹ and 2009.²

In fact, 2008 traffic levels on the UMR-IWW, taken from the Corps' Internet barge traffic reporting system, continued a two decades long flat-to-declining trend with recent dramatic declines. Historic barge traffic for the Melvin Price Locks in the figure below shows a steady decline from a peak of 80.5 million tons in 1990 down to 56.3 million tons in 2008 and 56.4 million tons in 2009.



A 2009 report by Donald Sweeney³ (former lead economist on the Corps' UMR-IWW proposed 1,200-foot locks feasibility study) evaluates the Corps' 2008 Economic Reevaluation Report. Dr. Sweeney compares the lock service status in four usage categories for the seven 600-foot locks at which new 1,200-foot locks are proposed. (See Figure 5) The graph vividly shows the steady

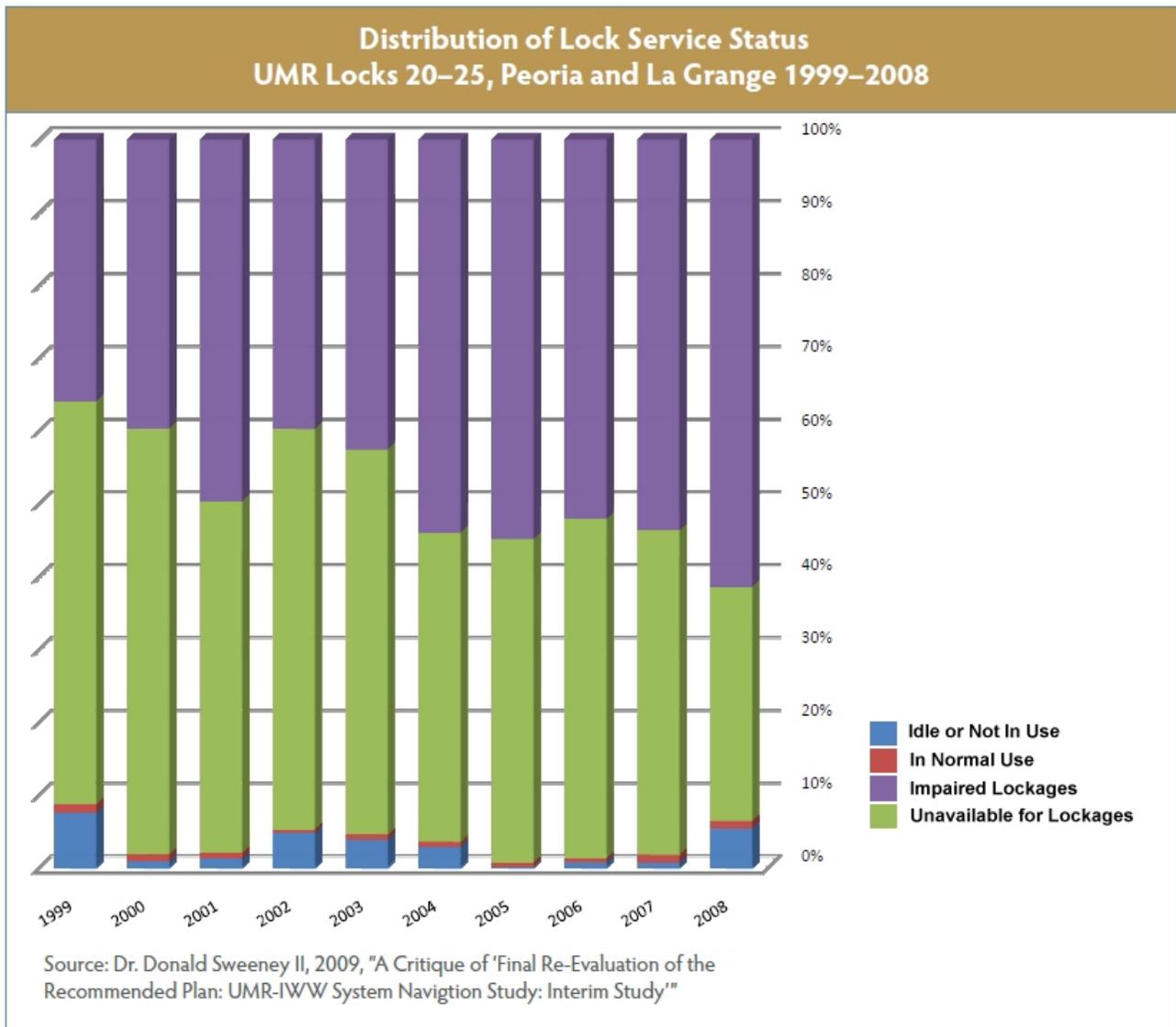
¹ Scott Kilman, 2008, "U.S. Corn Production Seen Dropping, Though More to Be Used for Ethanol," *Wall Street Journal*

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2010, "2009 Crop Year is One for the Record Books, USDA Reports"

³ Dr. Donald Sweeney II, 2009, "A Critique of 'Final Re-Evaluation of the Recommended Plan: UMR-IWW System Navigation Study: Interim Study'"

FACT SHEET: Upper Mississippi River Barge Traffic is not Increasing

decrease in lock traffic and associated growth in available lock capacity. In 1999, these seven locks were processing river traffic approximately 60 percent of the time and sat idle without traffic more than 35 percent of the time. By 2008, the same seven locks were processing traffic less than 35 percent of the time and sat idle without traffic more than 60 percent of the time.



The existing seven 600-foot locks have had excess capacity of well more than 50 percent of their annual carrying capacity over the last five years and could accommodate significant increases in barge traffic. With lockage “supply” already outstripping “demand,” there is no justification for spending more than \$2 billion to construct new 1,200-foot locks.

To review the entire “Big Price – Little Benefit” report and find out why the proposed locks on the Upper Mississippi River are not economically viable, go to: www.iwla.org/bigprice

The Nicollet Island Coalition is a group of conservation and environmental organizations formed in 1994 to address restoration issues on the Upper Mississippi River and provide coordinated advocacy work on Upper Mississippi River issues.