



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Walla Walla District

## SECTION 208

### Authority for: **SNAGGING AND CLEARING FOR FLOOD CONTROL**

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**WHAT CAN THE CORPS DO?** Section 208 of the 1954 Flood Control Act, as amended provides authority to the Corps of Engineers to plan for and provide removal of accumulated snags and other debris from waterways and to clear stream channels in the interest of flood control. Each project must be complete within itself, not part of a larger project. The limited scope of these projects allows for prompt action to eliminate the threat of flooding. This is recognized in the streamlined study and shortened time frame of the Section 208 program. The maximum federal expenditure per project is \$500,000, which includes both planning and construction costs. Costs of lands, easements, and operation and maintenance must be non-federal.

A project is accepted for construction only after investigation shows its engineering feasibility, environmental acceptability, and economic justification. The planning and design analysis (PDA), conducted at federal expense, will evaluate the alternatives, select one, and develop project design data, including plans and specifications. The impact of the project on the environment will be documented in an environmental assessment (EA). The decision to approve and construct a project under Section 14 is based on information from the PDA. A draft project cooperation agreement (PCA) is drawn up which defines the obligations of the federal government and the sponsor in the construction, maintenance, and cost sharing of the project. No more than 12 months should pass between the start of the PDA and the time the project is ready for construction.

**WHAT ARE THE LOCAL RESPONSIBILITIES?** Costs for Section 208 snagging and clearing projects are shared between the federal government and a non-federal sponsor in accordance with the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended. The first \$40,000 of study funds are 100% federal. Any additional study funds and the costs of construction are shared 65% federal, 35% non-federal. Credit is given for lands, *etc.* dedicated to the project, but at least 5 percent of the cost must be provided in cash. The local sponsor (a state, local, or tribal government) must have the legal and financial capability to fulfill the following local cooperation requirements.

The local sponsor is required to:

- Contribute a minimum of 5 percent of the total project cost in cash;
- Provide all lands, easements, rights-of-way, and relocations;
- Provide any additional cash contributions needed to make the local sponsor's share of the project costs 35 percent; and
- Assume the full responsibility for all project costs above the federal cost limit of \$500,000.

Before construction, the local sponsor must agree to do the following:

- Hold and save the United States free from claims for damages due to the construction and maintenance of the project, except damages due to fault or negligence of the United States or its contractors;
- Provide all access routes and relocations of utilities necessary for project construction and subsequent operation and maintenance;
- Operate, maintain, repair, replace, and rehabilitate the project as long as the project is authorized;
- Comply with provisions of pertinent federal Acts in carrying out the specified nonfederal responsibilities of the project.

**HOW CAN A STUDY BE REQUESTED?** We may begin a PDA study after we receive a written request from the prospective sponsor. A sample letter is offered below.

*District Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, Walla Walla District  
ATTN: Planning  
201 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Walla Walla, WA 99362*

*Dear Sir:*

*This letter is to seek the assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 208 of the 1954 Flood Control Act, as amended, in reducing flood damages along (river or creek) in the vicinity of (city or town, etc.)*

*(Briefly describe the nature and severity of the flooding problem. Briefly describe the known issues that might affect the acceptability of any recommended solutions, from the perspective of local government and/or the public.)*

*We understand that we would be required to pay at least 35 percent of the total cost of a project, with credit granted toward this amount for providing lands, easements and rights-of-way, and that the minimum cash requirement from us would be 5 percent of the total project cost. Please contact (name, address, telephone) for further information.*

*Sincerely,  
(Name and title of public official authorized to request study)*

For more information, contact Plan Formulation, at 509-527-7296 or Email:  
[cenww-pd-ec@usace.army.mil](mailto:cenww-pd-ec@usace.army.mil)