FAQ #20: How are navigable channels defined?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) defines navigable waters as “those waters subject to the ebb and flow of the tide shoreward to the mean high water mark and/or are presently used, or have been used in the past, or may be susceptible for use to transport interstate or foreign commerce.” Thus, navigable channels would normally transport river barges carrying grain to downstream ports, for example, rather than smaller recreational or fishing boats that can navigate almost any stream.