

Mississippi River Commission

Low Water Inspection

Colonel Richard Wagenaar
August 26, 2005
Morgan City, Louisiana

SLIDE

SCRIPT

1. Title Slide

Photo: Aerial, Morgan City
Bullet: MRC Low Water Inspection
Morgan City,
August 26, 2005

2. Required graphic.

Bullets:

- 2,800 miles of navigable channel
- 14,500 miles of coast
- 973 MR&T miles of levees
- 327 miles of hurricane levees
- 18 locks and control structures
- 15 pumping plants
- 13 recreation areas

Good morning, General Crear, members of the Mississippi River Commission and distinguished guests.

As the New Orleans District engineer, it's my pleasure to present the status of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project and associated programs in the New Orleans District.

3. Graphic: Topics:

*River Stages

*Funding Program

*MR&T Studies

*MR&T Projects

*Coastal Restoration

These are the topics I'll cover this morning...

I'll begin my presentation with river stages in the New Orleans District since the high water inspection back in April.

4. Graphic: Total Latitude Flows

At the latitude of Old River, total flows crested just above 459,000 cubic feet per second on July 21st. Since that crest, Mississippi River stages and flows have been falling steadily, however, we are now experiencing a minor rise on the lower Mississippi.

5. Photo: Miss. River
Graphic: Crest Stages
July 21, 2005 1935-
2004

(crest) Max. Avg.

RRL	25.5	47.3	26.9
BR	11.5	34.3	14.5
NO	3.8	15.7	5.4
Sim	11.0	44.7	18.5
MC	3.1	5.8	2.2

6. Graphic found at:
http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/eng/saltwater/wedge_now.htm

7. Graphic: 70/30

8. Title: FY 2005 Prog
Bullets:
\$379M Major
Appropriations Programs
- includes \$57M
Emergency Supplemental
\$58M Coastal Restoration
(Breaux Act) Expenditures
\$6.8M Regulatory, Flood
Control and Coastal
Emergencies
\$3.3M Other Programs
(PAS, CAP, IIS)
\$26.4M Local Interests
(non-fed contributed
funds)
\$473.5M Total

Shown here are the July 21st crest stages at various locations on the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, and the corresponding maximum and average stages since 1935.

Today (August 26, 2005) the combined discharge of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers at the latitude of Old River is _____ cfs. The average discharge for this date is 363,000 cfs, and the stage today at New Orleans is _____ feet.

As is typical during low water periods, a saltwater wedge is progressing upstream from the Gulf of Mexico. It's currently located at Mile 56 above head of passes, and we'll continue to monitor its progress. If it becomes necessary, we will build an underwater sill at Mile 64 to block the saltwater and protect the Belle Chasse water intake. We've taken these protective measures before, in 1988 and '99, with no adverse effects.

At present, we're maintaining the 70/30-flow distribution between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers. The cumulative percent into the Atchafalaya Basin since January 1st is a little under 30 percent (29.997). The deficit is about 5,600 cfs, and it will be made up by year-end.

Now let's move on to our FY 05 program...

The program thru July includes \$379 million available to the New Orleans District for projects in the General Investigations, Construction General, Operations & Maintenance General, and the Mississippi River & Tributaries appropriations -- including \$57 million in Emergency Supplemental funds. We're receiving \$58 million for coastal restoration; \$5.2 million for Regulatory and \$1.6 million for Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies; plus, \$3.3 million for other programs, including the Interagency and Intergovernmental Service Program. About \$26.4 million of non-Federal funds are available to expend on district projects for a total program of \$473.5 million.

9. Graphic: Bar chart of N.O. District budget trends
(Revised FY06 Presidents Budget and FY06 House and Senate numbers)
FY06 - \$291M Pres Budget - \$272M House - \$387M Senate

Overall, District funding through regular appropriations has seen a downward trend from FY 02 through FY 06. We have seen a substantial increase in GI; CG is about half; O&M is down slightly; and MR&T is flat. The FY 06 President's Budget is \$291 million for these appropriations. \$272 million was provided in the House and \$387 million in the Senate.

10. Graphic: Four areas. Alexandria
Lower Atchafalaya Basin
Morganza
Donaldsonville

Moving on to our MR&T study efforts, we're currently managing four studies in the New Orleans District:
- Alexandria to the Gulf
- the Lower Atchafalaya Basin Re-evaluation
- Morganza to the Gulf, and
- Donaldsonville to the Gulf.
All are sub-watershed studies focusing on water resource issues. Now let me give you a closer look at each project.

11. Graphic: Alexandria to the Gulf of Mexico map
(19 miles of channel; 2 control structures)

The Alexandria to the Gulf feasibility study was initiated in May 04. We completed the structure inventory and surveys of the existing tributaries in the Alexandria area. We held our first public meeting in June 05. Questions asked during the meeting and comments that followed reveal farmers below Alexandria believe their water supply will be cut off. The meeting helped allay some concerns but to further address this, we added an agricultural benefits study to the project. The remainder of this fiscal year will be spent designing the hydraulic model and initiating the agricultural benefits study.

12. Graphic: Lower Atchafalaya Basin Study
Photo: Atch levee system

We're coordinating with Division on the preliminary draft report for the Atchafalaya Basin Re-evaluation study.

13. Title: Morganza to the Gulf
Graphic: Project Area, J-1

Project design is ongoing on the overall Morganza to the Gulf hurricane protection project. We're conducting detail design on the Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex. The local sponsor is authorized to advance construction on Levee Reach J-1, which is scheduled for this fall.

14. Graphic:
Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico map
Photo: aerial, Luling

On our last study, these are the possible hurricane levee alignments that are being considered for Donaldsonville to the Gulf. (PAUSE) By December we expect to select one of these alignments for design.

And now for construction progress on the Mississippi River levee system in the New Orleans District.

15. Photo: Welcome to Moonshine
Bullet: MR levee miles Completed: 501
Under Construction: .1
Remaining: 11
Total: 512

We're 99% complete and have less than 11 miles of work remaining. Except for a short reach in Baton Rouge -- which will be raised this year -- only deficiencies in freeboard remain. Currently, we have two ongoing construction projects, East Bank Gap Closures and Baton Rouge Front, Phase II.

16. Hohen Solms to Modeste Levee

We'll award the contract for the West Bank Gaps concrete slope-paving by the end of the year. Once this contract is complete, work can begin on the St. Charles Parish west-bank bike path. We plan to advertise the Hohen Solms to Modeste (mo-desta) levee enlargement contract next month.

17. Graphic or Photo: Davis Pond
Bullets: Davis Pond contracts
Completed FY05:
-East Guide Levee
To be awarded:
-West Guide Levee

We also recently completed the 2nd lift contract for the East Guide Levee and the Gabion Weir modifications at Davis Pond. We're scheduled to award a contract for improvements to the West Guide Levee next month. The contracts will allow us to operate the diversion structure at maximum levels if required by salinities.

18. Photo: WABPL-40
Bullet: Atch Basin levee miles
Completed: 399
Under Construction: 14
Remaining: 36
Total: 449

These numbers reflect our levee progress in the Atchafalaya Basin, where we're about 93 percent physically complete.

19. Graphic: Atchaf.
Bullet: Atch contracts
Completed FY05: W85
Under Construction:
W-52 Levee, E-69/73
Levee, WLOE, Melville,
Krotz Springs
To be advertised:
WBS Gordy, W74, E33

In FY 05 we completed one contract, and have five additional contracts currently under construction. Next month we intend to advertise three more contracts covering 12.5 miles. Two additional contracts that slipped from this year will be considered next year.

20. Photo: Atch Basin

Title: Authorized Management Units

Bullets:

- Buffalo Cove
- Beau Bayou
- Cocodrie Swamp
- Flat Lake
- Henderson Lake

We executed the Buffalo Cove Project Cooperation Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources in May 05. We anticipate beginning construction in October at 100% Federal funding. Approval was also gained to begin the supplemental environmental impact statement process for the five authorized management units.

21. Graphic/photo: Lake End Park plan

We're also coordinating activities with our local sponsor on the Lake End Parkway project in Morgan City. We're conducting planning, engineering and design for 70 acres of recreational improvements along the Lake Palourde shoreline. The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources is seeking authority for a type-A regional visitor's center adjacent to the park.

22. Photo: Boating Recreation

Bullet: Future boat landings and improvements:

- Millet Point in St. Mary Parish - negotiating
- Bayou Pigeon in Iberville Parish*
- Bayou Sorrell in Iberville Parish*
- Krotz Springs in St. Landry*
- Butte LaRose in St. Martin Parish*

We completed construction on the Simmesport boat launch and it should be available for public use in September. We're continuing to conduct right-of-entry negotiations with a non-federal sponsor for the Millet (mee-yet) Point boat launch. A construction contract is ready to be awarded once negotiations are final. We're also in the planning phase for boat landings and related improvements at the four sites shown.

23. Graphic: Pie chart 50K/338K

To date, the Corps has purchased more than 47,000 acres in the basin, and acquired another 108,000 acres for easements.

24. Super: Channel Improvement

Bullet:

- 381 authorized
- 362 completed
- 19 remaining

As for the district's channel improvement program, we've constructed just over 362 miles, making revetment work about 95% complete on the Mississippi River. This year we placed half-a-mile of underwater stone at Carrollton Bend (Mile 102-L).

25. Video: Multi-beam survey/bank failure Algiers Point, Mile 95

Starting next month we'll repair 1.5 miles of riverbanks at various locations on the Mississippi River. What you're viewing is one of the areas created from a multi-beam survey. At left we believe is

the ship Edwin Luckenbach, which sank in 1939, and on the right is the riverbank. We're moving down-stream, and here, located at Algiers Point, Mile 95, is one of the deepest areas on the Mississippi River. The bank erosion here is clear.

26. Photo: generic
revetment work on Atch
Bullet: Atch Basin Bank
Stabilization (miles)
Completed: 56.8
Schl'd this Year: .3
Remaining: 4.9
Total: 62

We'll build one-third of a mile of revetment on the left descending bank of Courtableau at Mile 48. Completion of this work will leave about 5 miles of required Atchafalaya revetment to be constructed.

27. Graphic: Map of
Bayous Chene, Boeuf &
Black

The Corps is addressing the feasibility of providing deeper access channels to facilities on the Lower Atchafalaya River below Morgan City, and on Bayous Chene, Boeuf (buff) and Black east of Morgan City. The existing waterways provide a channel to marine fabrication and repair facilities that build offshore oil and gas rigs and platforms. A revised study schedule and cost estimate was coordinated with the port last month. The scheduled completion of the feasibility study is April 07. The Vicksburg District is managing the study.

28. Graphic or photo:
Dustpan Demonstration

The next step in our efforts to solve the fluff problem includes a Dustpan Dredge Demonstration Project. We anticipate the work will be underway in early September.

29. Photo: Hurricane
recovery – dredging
Chart: Maintenance
dredging (Supplemental
Funds) location-activity
/ cubic yards

Following last year's hurricane season, we began dredging at these locations. (PAUSE) The Atchafalaya River and Bayous Chene, Boeuf and Black Project received \$15 million in supplemental funding. A \$10.3 million contract was completed in May 2005 for the Atchafalaya River Bar Channel. The balance of the Atchafalaya supplemental funding is being used to dredge the horseshoe reach. Work there began earlier this month. We have about \$3 million remaining in supplemental funds that are obligated this fiscal year.

30. Photo: Ground-
breaking at Louis
Armstrong Airport

A contract to rehab the East-West Runway at the New Orleans Airport was awarded by the New Orleans Aviation Board. Included in the airport contract are provisions to construct a floodgate for the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity hurricane protection project. This contract, along with a small floodwall contract that is under construction, will close the last two gaps in the hurricane protection project in St. Charles Parish.

31. Graphic: Comite River Diversion

Phase II construction on the Lilly Bayou Control Structure is the second contract awarded under the Comite (co-meet) River Diversion Project. The flood damage reduction project, estimated at \$163 million, will convey floodwaters from the Comite (co-meet) River to the Mississippi River. Recently, engineering and design preparations for the drop structures and bridges were suspended due to insufficient funding. Now I'll talk a little about our progress in Coastal Louisiana.

32. Photo: Coastal Insert: Strock signing Title: Chief of Engineers Report

On January 31st, General Strock, Chief of Engineers, signed the Chief of Engineers Report for the Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration Program. The Chief's Report will be transmitted to Congress for authorization of \$1.2 billion of the \$1.9 billion LCA Program.

33. Photo: Miss. Basin Title: FY05-06 initiatives
*Barataria Basin
Barrier Shoreline Restoration
*MRGO
-- *Shoreline Protection*
-- *Environmental Restor. Features – Phase 2*
*Beneficial use of dredge material
*Science and Tech Prog.
-- Coastal model east of M.R. / Breton Sound
*Demonstration project

Using existing authority and funding, the Corps is working with the state of Louisiana to advance investigations of two critical near-term features identified in the Chief's Report -- the Barataria Basin Barrier Shoreline Restoration and the MRGO Shoreline Protection feasibility studies. This approach will further restoration efforts while authorization is pending. We're also continuing our efforts to develop project management plans for other near-term projects identified in the Chief's Report. Shown here are a few elements that we'll work on thru FY06.

34. Photo: MRGO

In addition to the MRGO Ecosystem Restoration Study, we're currently nearing completion of a draft reevaluation report on the MRGO. This report is reviewing the navigation economics to determine if there are viable alternatives to the current channel.

35. Photo (aerial): New Orleans and disappearing marshes

That wraps up the current status of projects in the New Orleans District. Let me tell you, though, about a few other things that have impacted our District.

36. Photo: Hurricane Ivan destruction Inset: Corps emergency operations

After four hurricanes hammered Florida and Alabama last year, 149 district employees deployed to assist FEMA with recovery efforts. From lessons they learned there, we knew we needed to improve communications between emergency managers *before* an emergency event in this area. We co-hosted our first Hurricane Preparedness Workshop July 25th and invited federal, state and

parish emergency agencies to attend. With two major hurricanes – DENNIS and EMILY - threatening the coast within weeks of the workshop, the timing for lessons learned couldn't have been better. We plan to continue communicating the top lessons learned which are crucial to planning for evacuation, shelter and emergency supplies.

37. Photo: Work in Iraq
Title: Global War on
Terrorism Deployments
Bullets:

- 17 in Iraq
- 2 in Afghanistan

Average tours = 6
months

Longest tours = 2 years

Once again our employees distinguished themselves for outstanding service in support of the global war on terrorism. Twenty-seven employees have deployed so far this year, and several have taken tours for up to two years. When volunteers were asked why they deployed, the great majority said it was because they *could see* the difference they were making in people's lives. They, and others throughout the Corps, are providing the technical expertise vital to restoring infrastructure and the basic services we normally take for granted. We are very proud of their accomplishments and their dedication.

38. Photo: Coin and
coastal photo

In closing, I'd like to thank the levee districts, state and local representatives, *other partners and stakeholders*, district employees and the Mississippi River commissioners, who, working together, ensure the continued safety and economic benefits to citizens and businesses in south Louisiana.

Thank you for joining us here today.

39. NOD mission map

*(Used for reference by
the public in follow-up
statements)*