

Mississippi River Commission

High Water Inspection Trip

Colonel Richard Wagenaar
April 20, 2007
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

SLIDE

SCRIPT

Title Slide

(Thank you, sir.) Good morning, General Crear, members of the Mississippi River Commission and distinguished guests. This is an important day for me. This will be my last MRC briefing; I am retiring three months from today on July 20th.

Before I get into the formal part of the presentation today, I would like to show a brief video that shows the work we've accomplished in the last 18 months since Katrina and the work we continue to do to support the citizens of Louisiana.

1. Title Slide
Bullet: MRC
High Water
Inspection, Baton
Rouge, April 20,
2007

So, in my presentation this morning, I'd like to include some facts to illustrate my tour as the New Orleans District Commander. Actually, I don't call them facts; I call them "fact-oids." My folks who have to do all the research to come up with the factoids call them something else—behind my back. I'm not sure I should repeat it right now, but feel free to ask me about it later.

2. Required
graphic.
Bullets:
-2,800 miles of
navigable channel
-14,500 miles of
coast
-973 MR&T miles
of levees
-325 miles of
hurricane levees

Anyway, factoids aside...it's always my pleasure to present the status of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project and associated programs in the New Orleans District.

I'll begin with river stages in the New Orleans District since the low water inspection in August.

- 18 locks and control structures
- 15 pumping plants
- 13 rec. areas

3. Graphic: Total Latitude Flows

At the latitude of Old River, total flows crested on January 28th at 1,332,000 cfs.

That number means it's time for a factoid. 1,332,000 cfs is equal to 1.2 billion Pat O'Brien's hurricanes each second. Or if you're a beer drinker—321,421 barrels of beer being thrown into the river each second. These numbers are considerably higher than, say, the number of hairs on my head that have NOT turned grey since Katrina. That number is only six.

After this crest, there was a minor rise due to rainfall in mid-March and another in mid-April. Currently, stages and flows are falling and expected to continue falling over the next week.

4. Photo: Old River
Graphic: Crest Stages

Jan. 28, 2007 (crest)	1935-2006 Max.	Avg.
RRL 48.6	55.3	31.1
BR 32.4	39.0	18.9
NO 12.9	18.3	7.1
Sim 32.6	46.3	22.8
MC 5.6	6.8	1.9

Here are the January 28th crest stages at various locations on the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, and the corresponding maximum and average stages for the last 72 years.

Today, the combined discharge of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers at the latitude of Old River is _____ cubic feet per second. The average discharge for this date is nearly 1.1 million cfs. And the stage today at Baton Rouge is _____ ft.

5. Graphic: 70/30

Late last month, Governor Blanco asked for an increase in flow through the Old River Complex to improve the water quality and the crawfish harvest in the Atchafalaya Basin. Shortly after we received the request, the stage at Butte La Rose started to rise due to rain over the Mississippi River Basin. We reviewed the Governor's request and determined the rising stage, along with the

requested increase in flow, could cause river levels at Morgan City to exceed the flood stage. We made the determination to continue the 70/30-flow distribution between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers.

And we're maintaining that flow distribution. The cumulative percent into the Atchafalaya Basin since January 1st is just above 30 percent (30.030). The surplus is about 27,400 cfs and will be reduced by year-end.

Now let's talk about the money—everyone's favorite subject...

6. Title: Graphic:
FY 2007
Program Funds

Our FY2007 funding is almost \$5.7 billion for the district's civil works program. This is due primarily to the funds appropriated in Emergency Supplemental Funds since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Funding for General Investigations, Construction General, O and M and the M R and T Work Plan for FY2007 will total approximately \$242 million. This is down from the normal amount appropriated to these programs. The Emergency Supplemental Funds appropriated are currently scheduled to cover work in the following areas: repair, restore and accelerate completion of hurricane and storm damage reduction projects, and advance completion of some civil works projects at Full Federal expense. These funds were provided to make improvements to the performance of the existing system, raise the system to provide 100-year levels of protection to the Greater New Orleans Area, and evaluate higher levels of protection.

7. FY2008 Pie
chart

The President's FY 2008 budget of \$230 million, enough money to buy 57.5 million cups of Starbucks coffee, and roughly the same amount of coffee I have consumed during my two years in New Orleans, is mostly limited to projects with high rates of return. The budget for the district is just a little less than the President's budget for FY 2007.

Of that \$230 million, General Investigations will include \$14.7 million, with \$13 million to continue LCA and the Science Program, \$1.3 million for Bayou Sorrel Lock replacement and \$395,000 for the Calcasieu River Basin feasibility study.

There's no funding for Construction General because the hurricane protection projects were funded in FY2006 supplemental appropriations. Comite River Diversion, IHNC Lock Replacement and the East Baton Rouge Parish flood damage reduction project are unbudgeted in Construction General. \$126 million is provided for O and M, General, to include funds for Major High Use Waterway Dredging. The Mississippi River & Tributaries budgeted amounts are slightly less than FY2007, but the President's budget includes funds for a new study on Atchafalaya Basin lands in FY2008.

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

Further on the MR&T, 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 that focus on water resource issues.

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

The Alexandria to the Gulf Phase One Feasibility Study was initiated in May 2004. This project not only provides flood protection, but also incorporates water supply to the farmers south of Alexandria. We completed the structure inventory and surveys of the existing tributaries. The Existing Conditions H&H Modeling is currently under ITR and should be completed by the end of this month. Due to the District's heavy workload, we are contracting out the environmental work to help keep the project on schedule.

10. Graphic:
Lower Atch Basin
Study
Photo: Atch levee
system

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

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

At this time, WRDA is still pending in Congress. Key projects for the New Orleans District that await authorization in WRDA are Morganza to the Gulf, LCA near-term plan, Bayou Sorrel lock replacement, and Port of Iberia navigation project. I'll talk about these in the next few minutes.

Project design is ongoing for Morganza to the Gulf hurricane protection. This project will safeguard about 150,000 people and improve or protect 1,700 square miles of wetlands. The project includes: 64 miles of earthen levee, 13 sector gate structures for flood control, 12 environmental water control structures, the Houma Navigation Canal Lock Complex consisting of: 110-foot by 800-foot lock with a 200-foot floodgate adjacent to the structure. We're conducting a detailed design on the complex. Mitigation for direct impacts will require creating about 1400 acres of new marsh to reduce saltwater intrusion and the frequency and duration of wetland flooding.

This calls for another factoid: 1400 acres of new marsh is equal to 11 French Quarters, except with much less fluid interchanging and fewer tourists.

Also, the local sponsor of the Morganza to the Gulf project was authorized to advance construction on levee reach J-1, which was awarded January 2006 and is now 75% complete.

12. Graphic:
Donaldsonville to
the Gulf of
Mexico map

These are the possible hurricane levee alignments being considered for Donaldsonville to the Gulf. A/E firms that are working for the LADOTD and the Lafourche Basin

Levee District (the sponsors) are performing the geotechnical, levee and structural designs to determine the construction cost of each alignment.

13. LaCPR

In response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Congress directed the Secretary of the Army through the Corps of Engineers to develop technical reports on the design and analysis for comprehensive Category 5 protection along coastal Louisiana. A Preliminary Technical Report was submitted in June 2006. A Final Technical Report, due December 30, 2007, will present a full range of flood control, coastal restoration and hurricane protection measures exclusive of normal policy considerations.

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

14. Photo:
Bullet: MR levee
miles
Completed: 496
Under
Construction: .2
Remaining: 16
Total: 512

Based on current information, we're 98% complete and have less than 16 miles of work remaining. Only deficiencies in freeboard remain. Currently, we have one ongoing construction project, West Bank Gap Closure. This project is nearing completion.

15. Hohen Solms
to Modeste Levee

The contract has been awarded for the Hohen Solms to Modeste levee enlargement and concrete slope-paving. Once this contract is complete, work can begin on the St. Charles Parish west-bank bike path. The Edgard Ferry Landing Improvement contract has been awarded. Construction will begin at the start of the next low-water season. We have initiated 6 plans and specifications to advance completion of the MRL project. Three of the P&Ss will be done by AE and the rest of the work will be executed by brokering to other districts.

16. ICW/Levee
Assessment

We continue assessments to determine existing conditions relative to pre-Katrina authorized elevations. This is being done using the recommendations from the

Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force or IPET for short. These assessments will help us determine the requirements to raise hurricane levees to authorized elevations (100-year levels) and improve stability.

17. Graphic or Photo: Davis Pond
Bullets:
Completed FY06:
-Channel Lengthening/Widening
West Guide Levee Lift:
-In Progress
Davis Pond modeling:
- to be issued

Five channels were cut between the lower ponding area of Davis Pond and Lake Cataouatche. These cuts will help divert ponding waters into the lake. Additional cuts are being proposed. A contract for installation of sheet piles on the West Guide Levee is in the works with construction being completed this June. The installation of sheet piles is being used to raise low elevations along the West Guide Levee. A modeling contract will be issued to ERDC to address ponding and drainage issues associated with the diversion.

And for an unrelated factoid just for a change of pace: Some of you may have noticed I'm a gum chewer...during my time as the New Orleans District Commander, I have chewed 6,037 pieces of gum. During the aforementioned gum-chewing, I have managed to bite my tongue only 14 times. My wife says that ought to be a record considering how strenuously I chew. On the bright side, I've developed really strong jaw muscles.

18. Photo: WABPL-40
Bullet: Atch Basin levee miles Completed: 416
Under Construction: 3
Scheduled for remainder of FY07: 6
Remaining: 24
Total: 449

Back to business—these numbers reflect levee progress in the Atchafalaya Basin, where we're about 95 percent complete. Based on IPET findings, the Inspection of Completed Works Manager will assess the previously completed levees using newly defined standards from IPET and lessons learned from Katrina.

19. Graphic:
Atchaf.
Bullet: Atch
contracts
Completed FY06:
W-52 Levee, E-
69/73 Levee,
WLOE, Melville,
Krotz Springs
Completed FY07:
E-33 and Gordy
P.S. discharge lines
Under
Construction:
W-102
To be awarded:
WBS Gordy and
W74

In FY 2006 we completed five contracts, and so far in FY 2007 we have completed two additional contracts and placed one under construction. We intend to award three more contracts this fiscal year. Two others will be delayed until next year so we can fully fund new awards.

20. Photo: Atch
Basin
Title: Authorized
Management
Units
Bullets:
- Buffalo Cove
- Beau Bayou
- Cocodrie
Swamp
- Flat Lake
- Henderson Lake

We executed the Buffalo Cove P C A with the Louisiana D N R in May 2005. Construction of Phase I began last February with 100% federal funding. Phase II construction will begin during low-water period later this year. We also have approval to begin the SEIS for the five authorized management units. The SEIS for Henderson Mgt Unit has begun and is currently in the alternative analysis selection process.

21.
Graphic/Photo
Lake End park
plan

We're also coordinating activities with our local sponsor on the Lake End Park 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're doing an unrestricted advertising for Millet Point because we advertised, restricted to Hub-Zone, and received only one qualified response. A construction contract is ready to be awarded once a qualified contractor is selected. We're also in the planning phase for boat landings and related improvements at these sites.

23. Super:
Channel
Improvement
Bullet:
381 authorized
362 completed
19 remaining

As for the district's channel-improvement program, revetment work on the Mississippi River is about 95% complete. We've constructed just over 362 miles, which is a little longer than the distance from New Orleans to Memphis, Tennessee. Barbeque lovers and Elvis fans may want to tuck that factoid away in case it's time for a road trip.

This year we will continue construction of a series of three dikes at the downstream end of Springfield Bend, Mississippi River mile 241.5. We will also construct a series of hard points at Mississippi River miles 246.5 and 254.5.

24. Photo: generic
revetment work
on Atch
Bullet: Atch
Basin Bank
Stabilization
(miles)
Completed: 58
Remaining: 4
Total: 62

In October of 2006 we completed the last reach of planned revetment construction work on the Atchafalaya River. We will continue to monitor the remaining four miles and take the necessary action if the banks become unstable.

25. Map of New Orleans and Vicinity (MVN, HPO, SELA and pump stations)

Now I'd like to update you on what's going on in the metro New Orleans area. Here you see a graphic of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction System. In FY2006, we awarded 7 contracts and have awarded 11 so far in FY 2007. Based on current funding we plan to award another 10 this fiscal year.

26. MRGO/IHNC

The Corps has stopped dredging on the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. The MRGO was zeroed out by Congress in fiscal years 2006 and 2007 and in the President's FY2008 Budget, which are messages that the administration and Congress do not want the channel maintained. The MRGO is not open to deep-draft navigation because the 2005 hurricanes reduced the depth to 20 feet in the Breton Sound reach. The authorized deep-draft depth is 36 feet. However, a limited number of vessels are using the channel inbound light-loaded with outbound routing through the IHNC Lock on the Industrial Canal. On the MRGO inland, the depths were reduced to 29 and 30 feet in reaches near the junction with the GIWW. All of the bottom widths are also narrower than the authorized 500 feet.

The 3rd Supplemental provided \$75 million to protect endangered wetlands and provide erosion protection so we have begun constructing projects to restore or protect more than 4,000 acres of wetlands on or near the MRGO. In addition, Congress has directed us to prepare a comprehensive plan to deauthorize deep-draft navigation on the channel. An interim report was sent to Congress in December 2006 and concluded that deep- and shallow-draft navigation are not justified Federal investments in the MRGO. A final report to Congress is due in December 2007 as part of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration study.

27. Call to Duty

Finally, I want to tell you how the people of the New Orleans District have answered the Call to Duty—in response to two of the greatest hurricanes to strike the U.S. coast, in restoring hurricane protection, doing their

part in the GWOT and serving in the U.S. military. These folks have done their jobs faithfully through many hardships, including losing their homes and grieving over the deaths of friends and family.

At this time, nine of our employees are deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan—one person is active duty military, two are reservists and six civilians. These civilians include project managers, an area engineer and administrative assistants.

The person you see is Edmay Mayers, who serves as a program manager for the Gulf Region Division, Baghdad Iraq. In addition to her duties with the Corps, Edmay finds time to help Iraqi teachers and children get supplies they need.

28. Photo: Scenic with 2007 coin

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.

One last factoid. In the time I have spent talking to you, 4.2 BILLION gallons of water have passed the motor vessel. Thank you for joining us here today.

29. MVN mission map *(Used for reference by the public in follow-up statements)*