

Mississippi River Commission

Low Water Inspection

Briefing by Colonel Peter J. Rowan
August 27, 2004
Houma, Louisiana

SLIDE

SCRIPT

1. Title Slide
MRC Low Water
Inspection, Morgan City
August 25-27, 2004

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

3. Graphic: Topics:
*River Stages
*Funding Program
*MR&T Studies
*MR&T Projects
*Coastal Restoration

4. Graphic: Total Latitude
Flows

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

These are the topics I'm covering this morning ... and I'll begin with river stages in the New Orleans District since the high water inspection in April.

At the latitude of Old River, total flows crested just above 1.2 million cubic feet per second on July 2. Since then, the Mississippi River has been falling steadily and a continued fall is expected.

5. Graphic: Crest Stages
2 July 04 1935-2003
(last signi. Max. Avg.
Crest)

RRL	47.3	51.2	31.7
BR	31.1	37.6	18.8
NO	12.1	17.1	7.3
Sim	29.7	48.0	23.3
MC	5.2	6.3	2.7

6. Graphic: 70/30

7. Graphic: NOD FY 2004
Program

Bullet:

\$298 M Initial Program
\$32 M Coastal Restoration.
\$2 M IIS
\$6 M Other Programs
PAS, CAP, FCCE
<u>\$20 M Local Interests</u>
\$358 M (Total)

8. Graphic: Bar chart of
N.O. District budget trends
FY 05

Pres Bud	House
\$ 11 M GI	\$ +2
\$ 86 M CG	\$ +20
\$137 M O&M	\$ +1
<u>\$ 85 M MRT</u>	<u>\$ +5</u>
\$319 Million.	\$ +28

FY04

Conference	S&S & Rec
GI	\$ 6
CG	\$ 69
O&M	\$137
<u>MRT</u>	<u>\$ 86</u>
Initial Prog	\$ 298 M

Shown here are the corresponding July 2004 crest stages at various locations on the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers.

Today, the total 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 360,000 cubic feet per second.

Currently, we're maintaining the 70/30-flow distribution between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers as mandated by legislation. The cumulative percent since January 1st is 30 (30.000%).

And now for our FY 04 program...

The initial FY 04 program includes \$298 million after Savings and Slippage allocated to the New Orleans District for Investigations, Construction, O & M, and Mississippi River and Tributaries projects.

An additional \$16 million has been reprogrammed into the District as a result of the program shortages associated with ongoing work, mostly maintenance dredging.

We anticipate expending \$32 million for coastal restoration, and \$2 million for the Interagency and Intergovernmental Service Program, and \$6 million for Regulatory, Flood Control and Coastal Emergency programs. About \$20 million of non-Federal funds will be expended on district projects.

In general, the New Orleans District program funding has seen a downward trend since FY 01.

The FY 05 President's Budget of \$319 million is currently in front of Congress for appropriation. One item of note is that debt into 2005 is about \$29 million.

Now let's move on to our Mississippi River & Tributaries study efforts.

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

We're managing four MR&T 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 problems. Now let me give you a closer look at each one.

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

In May 2004, we executed an amendment to the feasibility study agreement for the first phase of Alexandria to the Gulf. The amendment added the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development as a joint sponsor. The department joins Gravity Drainage District No. 1 of Rapides Parish, with which we executed the original agreement in April 2003.

11. Graphic: Lower Atchafalaya Basin Study map
Photo: Aerial of Atch levee system

For the Lower Atchafalaya Basin Re-evaluation study, we're coordinating with Division on the draft report. We anticipate the draft report will be available for public review by the first of the year.

12. Pointe aux Chenes flooding after Hurricane Lili.

The Morganza to the Gulf preconstruction and design of the first element is ongoing, including design of the Houma Navigation Canal Lock, several levee reaches, and other minor structures. The Engineering Design Agreement is being amended to accept the local sponsor's cost-share advance.

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

On Donaldsonville to the Gulf, we completed survey cross-sections for the hydraulic and hurricane levee analysis. Currently, we're preparing the hydraulic models for the hurricane study and interior drainage modeling effort, and we're also processing field data for the economic review. Our sponsors on this project are the LaFourche Basin Levee District and the Louisiana Department of Transportation.

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

14. Photo: Remy to Garyville
Bullet: MR levee mileage
Total: 512
Comp FY04: 501
Ongoing: 0 (Gap closures only)
Remaining: 11

We're 99 percent complete and have only 11 miles of work remaining. With the exception of a short reach in Baton Rouge, only deficiencies in freeboard remain. We currently have one ongoing construction project -- the East Bank Gap Closures.

15. Hohen Solms Levee to Modeste Levee

By the end of the year, we'll award two contracts to enlarge the Alhambra to Hohen Solms levee and the Baton Rouge Front Phase II levee.

16. Photo: Teche Ridge/
Centerville
Bullet: Atch Basin levees
(mi)
Completed: 395
Under Constr: 8
Remaining: 46
Total: 449

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

17. Graphic: FY04, Atch contracts
Awarded 5: W-52 Levee;
E-69/73 Levee; *Wax Lake
West Drainage Structure;
*W85A & B Levee; and
*Wax Lake Outlet West
To be awarded 3:
Krotz Springs Front
Melville Front & Ring and
Wax Lake Outlet East

In the previous fiscal year, we awarded five contracts in the basin and we'll award three more this October, covering about 11 miles. Beyond these, there are no other contracts in the new fiscal year.

During FY 04 we completed three contracts:
- Todd Levee and Pumping Station;
- Wax Lake Outlet West Levee;
- and the Wax Lake West Drainage Structure.

18. Photo: Fluff

Here's an update on the fluff issue in the Atchafalaya River Bar Channel. During the High Water Inspection, I reported that we were using limited FY 04 funds to evaluate several of the Value Engineering alternatives. That effort continues, however, further funding is necessary to complete the evaluations and implement the pilot plans.

19. Photos: Densitune surveying

In addition to the pilot plans, we continue to expand the use of the densitune survey technology. Between March and July, we conducted six densitune surveying events and provided the results to Port and channel users. We continue to refine the process of integrating the densitune technology with the traditional hydrographic surveys.

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

We're also studying the feasibility of providing deeper access channels to facilities on the Lower Atchafalaya River below Morgan City and on Bayous Chene, Boeuf and Black east of Morgan City. The existing waterways provide a 20 by 400-foot channel to major marine fabrication and repair facilities that build offshore oil and gas rigs, and platforms.

21. Photo: Morgan City aerial.

As offshore oil and gas moved into deeper water worldwide, drilling rigs and production platforms have grown in size. Fabricators in the Morgan City area say they need a 35-foot channel to be able to compete with overseas yards.

A feasibility study is under way with the Morgan City Harbor and Terminal District, with a final report set for December 2005. Major issues are high maintenance costs, channel reliability and economic justification.

22. Photo: Holstein modules

As you may be aware, a series of components for offshore production are being fabricated at the McDermott facilities in Amelia, Louisiana. I'm pleased to report the successful sail-out of three Holstein modules in May 2004 and two Mad Dog modules in July 2004 via the Atchafalaya River project.

In addition to performing maintenance dredging in the waterway, the District provided movement support to the tow company and the US Coast Guard. The District Survey Team performs frequent channel condition surveys to ensure timely information is available immediately prior to the movements and provided escort vessels for the sail-outs.

Components of three additional offshore structures are scheduled for sail-out in late 2004 and 2005.

23. Photo: Corps cleanup of Bayou Dularge, Houma

Speaking of structures on the waterways, the District cleared the remains of about 40 abandoned boats from a seven-mile stretch of Bayou Dularge during July and earlier this month. The boats represented both a navigation and safety hazard. The project cost \$250,000 -- \$198,000 of which were Federal funds.

24. Map: Atch Basin water management units

Now on to the status of planning and design of water management units and recreation features in the basin.... We received approval in June 2003 to construct the Buffalo Cove Water Management Unit at 100 percent federal expenditure. A Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) was signed and we're currently developing a project cooperation agreement for construction scheduled to begin in late 2004.

25. 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 have advanced planning, engineering and design in Fiscal Year 04 for 70 acres of recreational improvements along the Lake Palourde shoreline. Our partners are the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, St. Mary Parish, and Morgan City. Our sponsors are seeking authority for a type-A regional visitor's center adjacent to the park.

26. Photo: generic boating activity in Atch.

Bullet: Future boat landings and improvements:

*Simmesport in Avoyelles Parish (under construction)

*Millet Point in St. Mary Parish

*Bayou Pigeon in Iberville Parish

*Bayou Sorrell in Iberville Parish

*Krotz Springs in St. Landry

*Butte LaRose in St. Martin Parish

The contract for the Simmesport boat launch was awarded in December 2003. Construction of the ramp is dependent on river stages. Now that the water level is falling, the contractor resumed work as of August 9, and we're on target for completion this December (2004).

We're also in the planning phase for boat landings and related improvements at the five sites shown. A project cooperation agreement was signed in May and construction is scheduled for late 2004 to build a boat landing at Millet (mee yet) Point.

27. Graphic: Pie chart 50K/338K

This slide reflects the current status of acquisition in the basin. To date, the Corps has purchased more than 47,000 acres and negotiated perpetual rights on about 150,000 acres of the authorized project.

28. 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 percent complete on the Mississippi River. This year we'll place half a mile of underwater stone at Carrollton Bend (Mile 102-L).

29. Photo: generic revetment work on Atch River.

We'll build three-tenths of a mile of revetment on the left descending bank of Courtableau at Mile 48.5.

30. Graphic: Atch Basin
Bank Stabilization (Miles)
Completed: 56.8
Schl'd this Year: .6
Remaining: 4.6
Total: 62

Completion of this work will leave a little more than four-and-a-half miles of the authorized 62 miles of required Atchafalaya revetment to be constructed.

Now we'll move to the topic that tops Louisiana's economic and environmental issues -- and that's coastal land loss.

31. LCA: Impacts

This problem is impacting the state's fisheries, oil and gas infrastructure, hurricane protection and port facilities. If not vigorously addressed, Louisiana's complex coastal ecosystem, composed of diverse habitats and wildlife, will continue to be threatened.

32. Background photo of coast
Bullet: Administration's
FY 05 Budget Guidance
In 2004:
* Identify critical
ecological needs
* Identify scientific
uncertainties
* Propose near-term
program
* Develop long-term
ecosystem restoration
concepts

Since 2002, the Corps and State have been developing strategies to restore coastal Louisiana. During this study effort, the general public, stakeholder interest groups, technical experts from academia and other federal agencies have been engaged in the scoping, formulation and definition of the final array of restoration alternatives.

More recently we have identified the need to refocus this study effort to address the most critical ecological needs of the coastal area over the next ten or so years.

The intent is to:

- Target ecosystem restoration efforts that require the most immediate attention
- Improve our understanding of the needs of the ecosystem and reduce scientific and engineering uncertainty on long-term, large-scale strategies
- Make best possible use of available funds
- and continue pursuing further studies and planning efforts.

33. Background Photo:
Meeting
Bullet: LCA Near Term
Ecosystem Restor. Study
Public Meetings
July 27- Chalmette, LA
July 28- Cameron, LA
July 29-Beaumont, TX
Aug 3- Larose, LA
Aug 4- New Iberia, LA
Aug 5- Mandeville, LA
Aug 9- Alexandria, LA
Aug 10- Bay St. Louis, MS
Aug 12- Memphis, TN

On July 9, 2004, the draft LCA Ecosystem Restoration Study report was released to the public. During July and August, the Corps held nine public meetings across coastal Louisiana and other areas in the Mississippi River Basin. After review of the public comments, our goal is to recommend the best restoration features that can be implemented over the next ten years.

34. LCA Timeline

Incorporate the below in the timeline:

- Jun-Jul, WRDA Bill requires LCA report by December
- Jul 2, Submit draft report /draft PEIS to EPA
- Jul 9-23, 45-day public review and comment period
- Aug 24-Oct 17, respond to comments on draft report, prepare final
- Dec 24, signed Chief of Engineers Report

We're committed to submitting a recommendation to Congress for authorization under WRDA 04. This slide is the schedule for some of the key events that must take place before the Chief of Engineers' report is submitted to Congress. The final study is currently scheduled for a chief's report expected in late December.

35. Dredge building West Bay diversion channel.

During this past high water season, sediment flowed into West Bay just below Venice. In 2003, we dug the diversion channel – which was the first large-scale sediment diversion project. We expect the sediment will build 10,000 acres over the next 20 years. As the first of its kind, West Bay will also provide us with valuable lessons for future projects.

36. Photo: Burrwood Bayou scour hole.

A scour hole that caused a threat to navigation has been addressed and a study last month shows it's now under control. Located at Burrwood Bayou outlet in Southwest Pass, the scour hole was capturing 37 percent of the flow during high stages. The hole was as deep as 130 feet, and caused pilots to restrict ship-traffic to one way.

37. Photo: Burrwood Bayou Scour dike.
Inset: area scouring out

Completed in May, a dike achieved its goal of reducing the flow to 12 percent, and in June two-way traffic was restored.

By July, however, monitoring revealed that the north bank of the outlet has scoured out. A repair has been designed to prevent further damage. About 20,000 tons of rock will be required to complete repairs at a cost of \$500,000.

38. Photo: Group shot of Coastal people

That wraps up the current status of projects in the New Orleans District, with just one aside...

The District's focused efforts in coastal restoration gained national attention last week when, on behalf of President Bush, the Breaux Act Task Force was presented the Coastal America 2004 Partnership Award, recognizing the team of federal, state, and local agencies and individuals.

39. Photos of district employees in Iraq.

Text: Restoring essential infrastructure:

- schools and hospitals
- wastewater and treatment plants
- electric and oil facilities and networks
- ports, bridges and airports

Let me also say how proud I am of District employees who have deployed – and continue to deploy – in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. We’re facing an enormous task in Iraq, but we’re leveraging our expertise and technology there. The situation gets better every day as we continue to restore electricity, water, and oil, and provide environmental restoration.

Over 30 District employees have deployed so far, racking over 4,000 days there. A few are doing second tours, and one employee is currently on his third tour in Iraq. Eight employees are awaiting deployment and 34 others are on a volunteer list. As we continue to serve the Corps and the nation in the Middle East, our prayers are for mission success and a safe return.

40. Photo: West Bay, completed channel.

In closing, I’d like to recognize and thank the levee districts, state and local representatives, district employees and the Mississippi River Commissioners, who -- working together -- ensure the continued safety and economic benefits to the citizens and businesses flourishing alongside the Mighty Mississippi.

41. Photo: West Bay, completed channel, with both sides of the coin.

Thank you very much for your time.

42. NOD mission map

Used for reference by the public in follow-up statements.