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Mississippi River Commission
High Water Inspection
March 7, 2002
Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Final

SLIDE

PRINT

1. Corps seal

2. Super: MRC High Water Inspection, Baton Rouge, LA, March 7, 2002

Good morning, Gen. Arnold, members of the Mississippi River Commission and distinguished guests. As New Orleans district engineer, it is 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 & Projects

These are the topics I'll be covering this morning ...

4. Graphic: Total Latitude Flows

... and I'll begin with a look at river conditions in the New Orleans District since the low water inspection trip back in August. At the latitude of Old River, total flows crested just above 1.3 million cfs on February 2nd. Since that crest, stages and flows have been falling steadily and are expected to continue falling over the next week.

5. Graphic: Feb 2002
(last signi. crest)
Crest Stages
RRL 47.0
BR 31.2
NO 12.5
Sim 31.2
MC 4.9

Shown here are the corresponding February 2002 crest stages at various locations on the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers. Today (March 7th), the total combined discharge of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers at the latitude of Old River is _____ cfs. The average discharge for this date is 976,000 cfs.

6. Photo: Pointe-a-la-Hache water intake pipes

During the low water period the toe of the saltwater wedge advanced up the Mississippi River to mile 47 Above Head of Passes. However, it was not necessary to construct the saltwater barrier. Municipal water intake service downstream from the toe was not disrupted.

7. Graphic: 70/30

As expected, Mississippi River flows are of importance to a variety of interests. The Dept. of Natural Resources' Atchafalaya Basin Program Work Group is developing a plan of action that Louisiana's governor could recommend to the Corps regarding the operation of the Old River Control Complex. The Work Group would like to see improvements to water quality in the back swamps of the Atchafalaya Basin. The Corps looks forward to their recommendations and stands ready to cooperate. In the meantime, we continue to maintain the 70/30 flow distribution between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers as mandated by 1954 federal legislation that authorized the Old River Control Project.

8. Graphic: NOD FY 2002 Program

Bullet:

\$390 M Regular Appropriations
\$15 M Other Programs
CAP, PAS, FCCE
\$25 M Local Interests
\$18 M Coastal Restoration
\$2 M Support for Others

\$450 M (Total)

Our goal in FY 2002 is to expend \$390 million dollars for regular appropriations and \$15 million on other programs, such as small construction projects. We estimate another \$25 million in local interests' non-federal funds, \$18 million in Breaux Act funds and \$2 million on projects we manage in cooperation with other agencies. This brings our anticipated total FY 2002 program to \$450 million. This includes a shortfall of about \$50 million in our construction program that we could execute. We are working closely with the Mississippi Valley Division and Headquarters on obtaining these funds.

9. Graphic: Morganza to the Gulf Study map

And now for our MR&T efforts. We are currently managing four studies. The boundaries of the first one, Morganza to the Gulf, are shown on this slide.

10. Graphic: Morganza to Gulf, Hwy. 57 Alignment

The purpose of the Morganza study is to provide hurricane protection to portions of Terrebonne and Lafourche parishes from Bayou DuLarge to the Larose to Golden Meadow levee. A feasibility report recommending construction of a levee system designed to protect residents and the fragile ecosystem in the two-parish area is currently available for public review. We will seek authorization for this project in the upcoming WRDA 2002.

11. Map: Houma Canal (200'w, 1,200'l, 15'd)

A prominent feature of the Morganza to the Gulf study is the Houma Navigation Canal Lock. We initiated preconstruction engineering design in FY 2000. This project will be available for construction in FY 2004.

12. Graphic: Alexandria to the Gulf of Mexico map
In our second study, we are addressing flooding and other problems in a 1,700-square-mile area extending through nine parishes from Alexandria to the Gulf of Mexico. We are currently waiting on state funds to execute a feasibility cost sharing agreement with DOTD and Gravity Drainage District No. 1 of Rapides Parish. State funds for the study were included in the state's Capitol Outlay Program; however, DOTD cannot execute an agreement until they receive approval from the State Bonding Commission.
13. Graphic: Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico map
Our third study area, Donaldsonville to the Gulf of Mexico, extends between Bayou Lafourche and the Mississippi River. The feasibility cost sharing agreement was executed on February 6th. The main feature is a hurricane protection levee extending from Larose in Lafourche Parish to the vicinity of Luling in St. Charles Parish. Other features include a structure in Bayou Des Allemands, interior drainage improvements and environmental enhancements.
14. Graphic: Lower Atchafalaya Basin Study map
The district has submitted the preliminary draft report on our fourth study, Reevaluation of the Lower Atchafalaya, to division back in December. We are currently addressing comments and concerns expressed by MVD.
15. Graphic: MR levee mileage chart
Total: 512
Comp FY00: 495
Ongoing: 0
Remaining: 17
As for construction work on the Mississippi River levee system in New Orleans District -- it is about 97% complete.

16. Photo: Baton Rouge Front, Phase II
Bullet: FY02 contract to be awarded
- We have one contract at the Baton Rouge Riverfront scheduled for award in August.
17. Alhambra-Hohen Solms levee
- Just south of Baton Rouge, on the Alhambra-Hohen Solms (pro. Al HAHM bra – HOE-en SEWMS) levee, a cultural resources survey performed in the summer of 1999 revealed numerous graves within the levee project. We are planning to relocate the cemetery.
18. Photo: Angola construction
- Above Baton Rouge, FY 02 funds are being used to continue construction on the last levee enlargement contract for the downstream reach from Camp C to the main gate at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Two levee enlargement contracts and one drainage structure contract were completed last fiscal year. FY 03 funds will be used to complete the project.
19. Photo: WABPL-95
Bullet: Atch Basin levees (mi)
Completed: 388
Remaining: 61
Total: 449
- These numbers show our levee progress in the Atchafalaya Basin, where we're about 93% physically complete.
20. Graphic: FY02 Atch contracts
Completed (2): W46/64 & MC/B#1
- Here are the locations of our work in the basin in FY 02. Two contracts were completed earlier this fiscal year and are shown in red.

21. Graphic: FY02,
Atch contracts
Ongoing (3): East Bayou
Sale-Gordy, West Bayou Sale-
Maryland, Wax Lake East
Drainage Structure
To be awarded (1):
Todd

Three contracts have been awarded since
September and another is scheduled for award this
month.

22. Photo: Dredging
in the Atch River

As many of you are aware, we have a problem
with fluff in the Atchafalaya River, mainly in the
bar channel. The Corps dredges the channel to a
bottom elevation of -24 feet. This is done by
accounting for two feet of advance maintenance
and by allowing the dredge two feet of over depth.
Due to the rapid return of fluff into the bar
channel, the New Orleans District requested and
received approval from division to perform, on a
one-time basis, additional advance maintenance in
the bar channel. This action was taken after
business and navigation interests using the
Atchafalaya River expressed their concerns on the
fluff problem to us.

23. Photo: dredging
in Atchafalaya bar
channel

Currently the New Orleans District is preparing
the required environmental compliance and
contract plans and specifications, and acquiring
the real estate clearances necessary to perform the
additional advance maintenance, and to deposit the
dredged material into the new disposal areas
located west of the navigation channel. Last fiscal
year, we increased the number of dredging events
in the bar channel from two to three.

24. Photo: Close up of dredge in Atch.

In addition to these operational modifications regarding the bar channel, the district has contracted with the Corps' Waterways Experiment Station to evaluate the effects of fluff on the channel and means of improving its long-term operability. The 15-month study is designed to determine, among other things, whether deeper dredging will result in keeping the layer of fluff below the authorized channel depth and how rapidly the fluff returns to the channel following maintenance dredging. The district has pledged to keep a dredge in the bar channel, subject to budgetary limitations, until we have resolution of the fluff problem.

25. Graphic, map Hwy 70, Lake Palourde, LA and Photo: completed Phase 1 work.

We also have underway a project that has been anticipated for some time by the citizens in St. Mary and St. Martin parishes. This is the shoreline erosion protection work along LA Hwy 70 at Lake Palourde. Phase 1 of the project was completed in September 2001. During Phase 1, a rock dike was constructed and material was pumped into the diked portion. During Phase 2, which can start as early as this May, an additional amount of material will be pumped into the area. The project will protect the only major hurricane evacuation route from Morgan City proceeding north.

26. Super: Atch Basin
 Bullet:
 *Water Mgmt Units
 *Recreation
- This year, we've really picked up the pace on water management units and recreation features in the Atchafalaya. The purpose of water management units is to enhance the environment by restoring the historical north to south water flow patterns in the basin. Our challenge is to do it in a manner that balances constraints such as sedimentation while maximizing benefits. In 1995, we made three cuts in the east bank of Bayou Eugene to improve water circulation. Follow-up modifications were initiated in October 2001 and completed over a 45-day period.
27. Photo: Buffalo Cove
- We have continued our planning and design phase for additional water management efforts in the Buffalo Cove area. Our goal is to begin construction in early FY 03. We will also initiate planning for Flat Lake Water Management Unit in mid-FY02.
28. Photo: aerial, Simmesport
- On the recreation side, we'll initiate the award of a small business contract for construction of a boat ramp at Simmesport as soon as we receive right-of-way. We anticipate a summer start on the project. Closer to Morgan City, we are finalizing the detailed design report and plans and specifications for the \$2.2 million dollar Myette Point Boat Ramp and associated improvements. We are scheduled to initiate construction in the latter part of this fiscal year.
29. Photo of Lake End Park
 Bullet: Master Plan
- Another effort at Morgan City is Lake End Park. Working with some concepts already developed by Morgan City, we are finalizing the Master Plan and look forward to initiating engineering and design this month.

30. Photo of master plan
Preliminary planning is also underway for an interpretive center across from Lake End Park. Our initial efforts will concentrate on developing visitation, size, and exhibit data. We are collaborating in all of the efforts with DNR, St. Mary Parish, Morgan City and other stakeholders.

31. Photo: generic boating activity in Atch...
We have also initiated planning and design for boat landings and associated improvements at the four sites shown.

Bullet: Future boat landings and improvements
*Bayou Pigeon in Iberville Parish
*Bayou Sorrell in Iberville Parish
*Krotz Springs in St. Landry
*Butte LaRose in St. Martin Parish

32. Graphic: Pie chart 50K/338K
And progress on our acquisition work in the basin is ongoing. Back in 1986, Congress authorized the purchase of 50,000 acres in fee for public access, as well as 338,000 acres in easements. To date, the Corps has purchased 47,342 acres and negotiated perpetual rights on about 144,000 acres.

33. Super: Channel Improvement
As for the district's channel improvement program, we've constructed just over 362 miles, making revetment work about 95% complete.
Bullet:
381 authorized
362 completed
19 remaining

34. Photo: Generic mat unit/levee This year we have no new revetment work scheduled on the Mississippi River.
35. Photo: Revetment plant at work This program does include .3 miles of foreshore work on the right descending bank at Willswood.
36. Photo: Stone foreshore protection We have completed 142 of the presently authorized 160 miles of required foreshore work.
37. Photo: generic revetment work on Atch R.
Miles auth: 160
Miles compl: 142
Total remaining: 18 On the Atch. River, we will construct a total of one mile of revetment on the left descending bank of Jacoby (pro. Jah CO bee), to the left descending bank of an upstream and downstream extension of the Mercier (pro. MUR sir) revetment, and to the right descending bank of Berwick.
38. Graphic: Atch Basin Bank Stabilization (Miles) Completed: 55
Schl'd this Year: 1
Remaining: 2
Total: 58 Completion of this work will leave a little more than two miles of the presently authorized 58 miles of required Atchafalaya revetment to be constructed.
39. Photo: Mat plant Super: Existing Revetment Maintenance
- M.R. approx. 1.3 mi.
- Atch – approx. 0.2 mi. And we are scheduled to maintain existing revetments on the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers.
40. Photo: scenic/generic of coastal land loss, w/ COE logo & State seal My final topic this morning addresses the district's current efforts, together with the state, in combating Louisiana's coastal land loss.

41. Davis Pond

Since 1997, the Corps has been constructing a freshwater diversion project at Davis Pond in Luling. Later this month, the Corps and the state will host a dedication ceremony to celebrate the completion of the project. This vitally important project will reintroduce fresh water into the Barataria Basin from the Mississippi River and result in benefits to more than 700,000 acres of marshes and bays.

42. Photo: Beneficial dredge disposal in Barataria Bay Waterway at Dupre Cut

Bullet:

*La Coastal Area (LCA) Feasibility Study

*Barataria Basin Eco-system Restoration—Marsh Creation Report

*Under district review

The District and Louisiana's Department of Natural Resources are also engaged in a significant ecosystem restoration effort entitled the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) study. There are two on-going feasibility studies. The first, the Marsh Creation Report, is currently under district review.

43. Photo: Timbalier Island Barrier shoreline restoration proj.

Bullet:

*Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) Feasibility Study

*Barataria Basin Eco-system Restoration—Shoreline Restoration Report

*Being prepared

The second, the Barrier Shoreline Report, is being prepared.

44. Map: LCA Comprehensive Study area
Our next major effort will be to initiate a comprehensive study for a coastal restoration plan. We're going to convert the Coast 2050 strategies into implementation plans and develop a road map to success.
45. Photo: (aerial) N.O. CBD
That about wraps up the current status of projects in the New Orleans District.
46. Photo: Baton Rouge Riverfront
As always, I'd like to recognize the levee districts and state and local representatives who work closely with us to ensure the integrity of our levee system here in south Louisiana.
47. Seal Obverse
Thank you.
48. NOD mission map
Used for reference by the public in the follow-up statements.