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of Engineers**
New Orleans District

News Release

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Stakeholders discuss closure of Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet

Congress directs Corps to begin MR-GO de-authorization study

NEW ORLEANS – The New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosted a stakeholder meeting today to receive input on a comprehensive plan to de-authorize deep draft navigation on the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet.

Stakeholders were introduced to the plan and provided an opportunity for interactive planning. The goal of the meeting was to establish a common understanding of the study authority and provide an avenue for stakeholders to express their opinions and expectations.

Corps representatives also announced that the Galveston District of the Corps' Southwestern Division has been asked to provide technical assistance and independent oversight on the MR-GO Deep Draft De-Authorization Plan due to the New Orleans District's Katrina recovery workload.

This is the first stakeholder meeting on the MR-GO that the Corps has held since hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The meeting provided stakeholders from the environmental, business, academic, and shipping arenas, as well as state and local governments, a forum to begin discussions on the many issues surrounding the waterway and its future based on the Congressional directive to de-authorize the channel.

An initiative from the meeting resulted in several stakeholders groups agreeing to meet independently to review previous documents, plans and proposals related to the MR-GO with the intention of finding areas of agreement within their own plans.

Stakeholder meetings will occur frequently during plan preparation to continue public involvement. A second stakeholder meeting will be held in mid-August. By that time, a web site will be developed containing historical and current information on the MR-GO De-Authorization Plan.

Comments. The public is invited to mail comments, plans or proposals throughout the planning effort to the MR-GO project manager at USACE, Gregory Miller, CEMVN-PM-C, P.O. Box 60267, New Orleans 70160-0267.