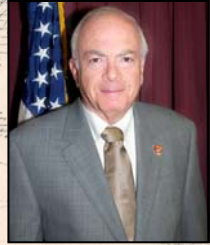
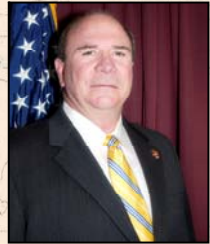




Brig. Gen. Robert Crear
President



Mr. Sam Angel
Member



Mr. R. D. James
Member



Mr. Clifford Smith
Member



Brig. Gen. Bruce A. Berwick
Member



Brig. Gen. Gregg F. Martin
Member



Rear Adm. Samuel De Bow, Jr.
Member



Mississippi River Commission

2007 Low-water Inspection Executive Overview





Mississippi River Commission

By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the great need for navigation improvements and flood control on the Mississippi River was obvious. Following several decades of constitutional squabbles, engineering disputes, and regional bickering dating back to the early 1800s, Congress fully recognized the need to harmonize river improvements on the Mississippi River through a central organization. On June 28, 1879, a congressional coalition of navigation and flood-control interests, established the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) as an executive body reporting directly to the Secretary of War.

The originating legislation granted the MRC extensive jurisdiction on the Mississippi River from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minnesota, to the Head of Passes near the Gulf of Mexico. The act also empowered the MRC to make surveys and investigations necessary to prepare plans to improve the river channel, protect the banks, improve navigation, prevent destructive floods, and promote commerce.

In addition to its responsibilities for overseeing the improvement of the Mississippi River, the newly established MRC gave Mississippi Valley interests a greater voice in shaping federal policy—a tradition that continues to this day. Thus, the practice of addressing issues and concerns through the formal public hearing process, so critical in the federal government's civil works mission today, began in the Mississippi Valley with the creation of the MRC

The legally mandated membership of the MRC called for three officers from the U.S. Corps of Engineers, one member from the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (now the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and three civilians—all nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. This splendid mix of membership reflected a desire to heal a burgeoning schism between the military and civilian engineering communities.

The establishment of the MRC in 1879 represented the next logical step in the process of improving the

Mississippi River, and the next five decades marked an era of experimentation. In 1880, the MRC, relying heavily on input from local partners, developed a general plan of improvement based on contracting the low-water channel with permeable dikes and protecting the riverbanks from erosion with various forms of revetment. In implementing this plan, the MRC learned many valuable lessons that advanced the evolution of river improvements.

Continuing constitutional concerns with regard to the federalization of flood control, though, stagnated the development of a meaningful flood-control program by leading to legislation restricting the implementation of MRC plans. From 1881 through 1892, federal law prohibited the MRC from expending funds to build or repair levees for the sole purpose of protecting private property from overflow. Instead levees were to be constructed as aids to navigation. When the restrictions were finally lifted, the MRC settled into the position that an adequate levee system, void of costly adjuncts, could protect the Mississippi Valley from inundation. The first federal flood control act, passed in 1917, facilitated the final implementation of a levees-only program. Ten years later, the great Mississippi River flood of 1927 forced a wholesale reappraisal of the federal government's levee policy and galvanized legislative, engineering, and popular support for a comprehensive river improvement plan buttressed by large appropriations.

Today the MRC oversees the implementation of the comprehensive Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project under the supervision of the Chief of Engineers. The MR&T project is arguably the most successful civil works project ever initiated by Congress. From 1928 through 2004, the nation contributed nearly \$12 billion toward the MR&T project and received an estimated \$425.5 billion return on that investment, including savings on transportation costs and flood damages. No project levee has ever failed despite several major floods since the inception of the project. Subsequently, the frequency of flooding in protected areas has declined, resulting in a sharp drop in flood damages.



Montana

Sunday, August 12th

- Fly over of Great Falls and Three Forks (confluence of Jefferson, Gallatin, and Madison rivers) en route to Havre, Montana.
- Tribal Pow-Wow at Hays, Montana, with Tribal Elders (Assiniboine and Gros Ventre Tribes).
- Commission members participated in the annual Pow-Wow and led the march in the grand entrance as standard bearers.
- Commission members had lunch and met and discussed issues with Tribal Elders of the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre people on the Fort Belknap Reservation at the Pow-Wow grounds.



Key Tribal concerns:

- Protection of sovereignty
- Water and treaty rights
- Cultural resources protection (access to sacred sites)
- Water intakes/water quality
- Recovery of the river
- Return of lands
- Limit checker boarding of reservation
- Tribes lost hundreds of thousands of acres of the best rich bottom lands
- Tribes saw significant rise in unemployment due to taking of lands (from ~4-7% to claims of more than 60%)
- Economic development opportunities
- Tribes waiting for government to fulfill promises (hospitals, schools, free or reduced cost electricity, etc.)





North Dakota

Monday, August 13th

- Commission members visited the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and Fort Mandan.
- Lunch with stakeholders at Corps' Riverdale office – 4 stakeholders including: Dave Johnson with the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, and Terry Fleck, President of the Friends of Lake Sakakawea, North Dakota.
- Lake Audubon and Ft. Stevenson State Park with Governor John Hoeven.
- Discussed issues with Gov. Hoeven, State Park representatives and Lake Sakakawa representatives.

Issues:

- Drought conservation measures
- New marina (bids received last Friday - \$20 million project)
- Water intake structures





South Dakota

Tuesday, August 14th

Commission members visited with Governor Michael Rounds at the State Capitol. Issues discussed with state officials and Gov. Rounds included the 1944 Flood Control Act and how the authorization's validity in today's environment needs to be based on a current prioritized needs analysis of the Missouri Basin.

Areas of concern:

- Flood Control
- Hydropower
- Recreation
- Drinking water
- Navigation
- Irrigation
- System storage
- Indian cultural resources and burial sites

MRC members also conducted a site visit to the Oahe Dam and Power Plant. Issues discussed included impacts of water levels, drought conditions and other challenges. Afterwards, en route to Yankton, South Dakota, Commission members managed a fly over of the Bad River confluence, the White River confluence, and the backwaters of Lewis and Clark Lake.

Issues:

- Sedimentation in lake and lack of sediment directly below the lake.
- Pallid sturgeon and endangered species.
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service fish hatchery – funding of extensive pallid facility by Corps.





Missouri

Wednesday, August 15th

Kansas City

Issues:

- Missouri River bed degradation.
- Impact to water supply in Kansas City, Missouri, and Johnson County, Kansas.
- Impacts to water supply for 1.2 million people.
- Viewed completion of levee project in Riverside.
- Great partnership between local municipality, levee district and Corps.

Commission members also conducted an on-site meeting with Representative Moore and had lunch with Kansas City Mayor and 8 stakeholders in Riverside, Missouri (agriculture interests, levee board members, councilmen).



Overview from Missouri River intake plant.



Missouri

Thursday, August 16th

Barge trip departing from Taylor's Landing (Marion Bottoms for fish demonstration, Tadpole Bend, Eagle Bluff, Jefferson Intake and Terminal).

Issues:

- TNC – perspective is that rock dike notches are creating excellent habitat. Pallid sturgeon – monitoring the tagged fish.
- Need a reliable navigation channel for commercial traffic. Missouri is losing the towing industry.
- 50% of the drinking water comes from the Missouri River.
- Sand and gravel operations – permits!
- Degradation of the river.
- Power generation – low water results in threatened water supply to power plants and decreased operation.





Missouri

Friday, August 17th

St. Louis

- Breakfast meeting with River Industry Executive Task Force representatives, Mr. Monahan and Ms. Muench.
- Public meeting at 9 a.m. on board the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI*.





Missouri

Monday, August 20th

Cape Girardeau

- Public meeting at 9 a.m. on board the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI*.
- Downstream trip with Memphis District stakeholders.

Issues:

- FEMA shaded Zone X.
- Dredging of ports and harbors.





Tennessee

Tuesday, August 21st

Memphis

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration / Mississippi River Commission benchmark placement ceremony at Mud Island Park.
- Schedule ceremonies at Dubuque, Iowa; Itasca, Minnesota; Tunica, Mississippi; New Madrid, Missouri; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Vicksburg, Mississippi.
- Public meeting at 9 a.m. on board the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI*.
- Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil work joined MRC in Memphis during the public meeting.
- Downstream trip with stakeholders.
- Dinner with stakeholders in Greenville, Miss.





Mississippi / Arkansas

Wednesday, August 22nd

Greenville

- Public Meeting at 9 a.m. on board the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI*.
- Downstream trip with stakeholders.
- MRC and ASA(CW) meeting to discuss Administration issues.
- Downstream trip with International Commission for the Protection of the Danube and Sava Rivers and series of meetings/briefings to discuss similarities, lessons learned and international relationships. Members from: Germany, Serbia, Croatia, Romania
- Briefing on transboundary cooperation in the Sava River Basin by Dejan Komathina, Ph.D, civil engineer and Secretary of the International Sava River Basin Commission.
- Briefing on the National Planning Center for Ecosystem Restoration by Dr. David Vigh, Mississippi Valley Division
- Briefing on the MR&T Project and Channel Stabilization by Mr. Eddie Brooks, Mississippi Valley Division.
- Briefing on Mississippi River Commission History and project development since 1700's by Mr. Charles Camillo, Mississippi Valley Division Historian.





Louisiana

Thursday, August 23rd

- Downstream trip with stakeholders via the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI* down the Atchafalaya River - through Old River lock.
- Updates and meetings for MRC members:
 - Hurricane storm damage reduction system briefing by Mr. John Meador
 - Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration project briefing by Mr. Ed Russo
 - Louisiana Coastal Authority briefing by Mr. Troy Constance
 - Hydropower and Wind Energy possibilities briefing by Brookfield Power
 - Information on 1) ferro-concrete surge breakers; 2) induced vertical oyster reefs; and, 3) the fault-driven subsidence problem by Dr. Sherwood "Woody" Gagliano
- MRC site visits by survey boat – Motor Vessel *TECHE* - Morgan City Port South: viewing channel shoaling issues, FLUFF/Fluid Mud issue, crossing dredging problem areas, delta building and erosion areas, beneficial use of dredged material, Fabrication facilities, etc.
- Dinner with stakeholders (Morgan City, City of Berwick, levee boards, industry)





Louisiana

Friday, August 24th

Morgan, City

- Public meeting at 9 a.m. on board the Motor Vessel *MISSISSIPPI*.

Issues:

- Back-water flooding in Morgan City.
- Reliable 20-foot navigation channel at Morgan City.
- Morganza to the Gulf – has been realigned, is ready to do the job that needs to be done to protect people and structures and enhance the environment now. “People are vulnerable and exposed and we need the protection now.”
- Lunch briefing, with stakeholders, on Morganza to the Gulf project and issues.





Louisiana

Saturday, August 25th

- Site visits between Krotz Springs and Old River Lock.
- Briefing and site visit of Old River Lock and Louisiana hydropower plant.
- Upstream guest briefings.

