



Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh
President-Designee



Mr. Sam Angel
Member



Mr. R. D. James
Member



Mr. Clifford Smith
Member-Nominee



Read Adm. Jonathan Bailey
Member-Nominee



Brig. Gen. John W. Peabody
Member-Designee



Brig. Gen. William E. Rapp
Member-Designee



Mississippi River Commission

Executive Summary 378th & 379th Sessions

Listening, Inspecting, Partnering & Engineering since 1879



Mississippi River Commission

The Mississippi River Commission has a proud heritage that dates back to June 28, 1879.

Congress established the seven-member presidential Commission with the mission to transform the Mississippi River into a reliable commercial artery, while protecting adjacent towns and fertile agricultural lands from destructive floods.

The legislation that created the Mississippi River Commission granted the body extensive planning authority and jurisdiction on the Mississippi River stretching from its headwaters to the Head of Passes.

The Mississippi River Commission quickly assumed the role of an active Federal agent capable of transcending

hampered the development of a more effective river improvement system.

The Commission began improving the navigation channel to promote commerce, setting standards for levee construction, and holding public hearings to give local interests a greater voice in shaping federal policy.

The Mississippi River Commission continued its 129-year process of listening to the concerns of partners and stakeholders in the Mississippi valley, inspecting the challenges posed by the river, and partnering to find sustainable engineering solutions to those challenges through the 2008 High-Water Inspection (378th Session of the Mississippi River Commission) and the 2008 Low-Water Inspection (379th Session).



The official record of the Proceedings of the Mississippi River Commission, complete with recorded hearings of public meetings, copies of signed formal statements provided by the public, and other documents of significance, are kept on file in the Office of the President in Vicksburg, Miss.



High-Water Inspection Trip Report

April 6-11, 2008

378th Session of the MRC

The Mississippi River conducted its 378th Session from April 6-11, 2008 onboard the motor vessel *Mississippi* en route from Tiptonville, TN, to New Orleans, LA, as part of the annual High-Water Inspection trip. The Commission held public hearings at Tiptonville, Memphis, TN, Lake Providence, LA, and New Orleans. More than 210 members of the public attended the hearings. The inspection trip coincided with moderate to significant flooding on the Mississippi River and offered the Commission its first opportunity in nearly a decade to inspect the flood control features of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project during a sizeable high-water event.

The Members of the Mississippi River Commission present during the 378th Session included Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh, who assumed command as Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, and President Designee of the Mississippi River Commission on February 20, 2008; Mr. Sam E. Angel, reappointed as a member on November 15, 1999; Mr. R. D. James, civil engineer, reappointed as a member on April 16, 2003; Mr. William Clifford Smith, civil engineer, appointed October 22, 1998; and Rear Adm. Jonathan Bailey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, nominated as a member on March 11, 2008. Col. Steven Miles, Commander, Northwestern Division, represented the Missouri River basin as a non-appointed and non-voting participant. Brig. Gen. Bruce A. Berwick, Commander, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, appointed as member October 6, 2006, was unable to attend. Col. Albert Bleakley served as Secretary of the Commission, which is a non-voting position.





378th Session

Sunday, April 6th

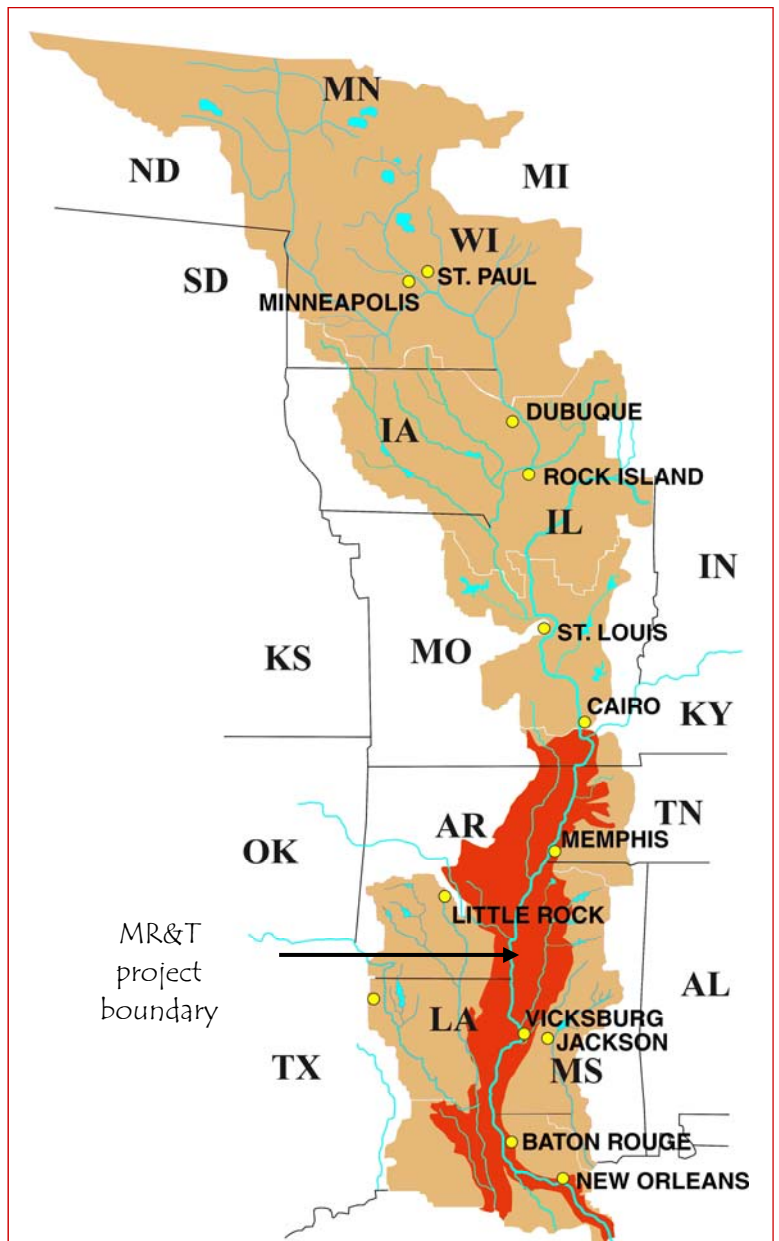
The Mississippi River Commission staff provided the Members with a summary of regional funding trends for the MR&T project and an analysis of authorizations contained in the Water Resources and Development Act of 2007 (WRDA 07), which was signed into law after the previous gathering of the Commission.

The Chief of Watershed Management Division, Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), then provided an analysis of river conditions, complete with stage crest forecasts, future precipitation forecasts, and a comparison of the 1973, 1993, and 2008 hydrographs.

During the briefing, the Members were informed of the increasing likelihood of the necessity to operate the Bonnet Carré Spillway as prescribed in the approved spillway operations manual and the MVD Operations Plan.

The Chief of Operations, MVD, followed this briefing with a discussion of the impacts of the high-water event on the navigation features of the MR&T project.

Col. Thomas Smith, Commander of the Memphis District, provided an update on flood fight operations within the district boundaries and a detailed briefing on the status, schedules, and issues pertaining to MR&T projects within his area of operations, to include the Bayou Meto Basin, AR, the Grand Prairie Region, AR, St. John's Bayou-New Madrid Floodway, MO, Ten and Fifteen Mile Bayous, AR, and maintenance within the St. Francis Basin.





378th Session

Monday, April 7th

The Commission held a public meeting at Tiptonville. The extreme high water on the river forced the Commission to move its meeting location from the Tiptonville ferry landing to the nearby Cargill dock.

Approximately 30 members of the public attended the meeting. Issues discussed by the presenters included confusion and dissatisfaction with the FEMA and Corps levee certification process, concerns regarding the ongoing high water event, the challenges facing small ports and harbors, and general maintenance issues.

Following the meeting, the Members inspected an ongoing emergency operation by the Memphis District to repair active bank caving on the Dyer County Little Levee, a non-federal levee along the north bank of the Obion River that was incorporated into the P.L. 84-99 program.



After the site inspection, the Mississippi River Commission staff provided the Members with an update on the re-evaluation of the recommended plan for the Upper Mississippi River – Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study and a briefing on the status of the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan.

The MVD staff informed the Members that the Commission would conduct a public meeting to consider the Comprehensive Plan prior to or during the Low-Water Inspection trip.



378th Session

Tuesday, April 8th

The Commission held a public meeting at Memphis. More than 80 members of the public attended the meeting and heard a broad range of views by the presenters.

Issues presented again centered on concerns regarding the FEMA and Corps levee certification process, FEMA's inclusion of lands protected by MR&T levees in the Zone X area of floodplain maps, water supply and ground water issues, and discussion of levees and navigation on the White River.

Following the public meeting, the Commission inspected the W.G. Huxtable Pumping Plant located at Marianna, AR, at the lower end of the St. Francis Basin. This component of the MR&T project, with a total pumping capacity of 12,500 cubic feet per second, is the largest stormwater runoff pumping plant in the nation.



The high-water conditions afforded the Members the opportunity to inspect the plant at full pumping capacity.





378th Session

Wednesday, April 9th



Col. Michael Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District, briefed the Commission on flood fight operations within his area of operations and then briefed the Members on a number of MR&T related issues and projects, to include improvements made to the Mississippi River Levee system.

Col. Wehr also informed the Commission that the Environmental Protection Agency had informed USACE and the project sponsor that it was moving toward a veto of the pumping plant feature of the Yazoo Backwater Project under the authority of Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act.

Last, Col. Wehr informed the Members WRDA 07 reinstated the Ouachita River Levees as a component of the MR&T project, thereby affording the levees the same operation and maintenance responsibilities under the MR&T appropriation.



Following the briefing, the Commission held a public meeting at Lake Providence. Nearly 45 members of the public attended the meeting. Presenters again expressed their concerns with the levee certification process and Zone X, as well as the lack of MR&T representation on the Corps of Engineers levee safety board and the EPA threat of a 404c veto of the Yazoo Backwater Project.

Later that same evening, Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, briefed the Commission on the status, schedules, and issues relating to MR&T general investigations and construction projects within his area of operations. He also provided an overview of river conditions and flood fight operations within the boundaries of the New Orleans District.



378th Session

Thursday, April 10th

Staff members from the New Orleans District briefed the Commission on the status of the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) ecosystem restoration project, which was authorized by WRDA 07.

The staff emphasized the relationship of the project to the Commission and the MR&T project by informing the Members that several study considerations included integration of the LCA plan into the MR&T project, alternative operations of the Old River Control Structure, and examination of sediment issues in the Mississippi and Atchafalaya systems.

With freshwater diversion being a high priority of the LCA project, a follow-up discussion centered on the cumulative effects of all diversions within the MR&T system ensued. The New Orleans District staff also provided the Commission with an overview of the Hurricane Protection System in southeast Louisiana and an update on the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration study.





378th Session

Friday, April 11th

The Commission held a public meeting in New Orleans. Approximately 60 members of the public attended.

Presenters discussed a broad array of topics that centered on the possible inclusion of additional freshwater diversions as provided in Section 7002 of WRDA 07, the need for coastal restoration, the Morganza to the Gulf project, water quality, dredging, and navigation issues in the Atchafalaya basin, and the impacts of operating the Bonnet Carré spillway as a result of the extreme high water discharge during the ongoing high-water event.





Operation of Bonnet Carré

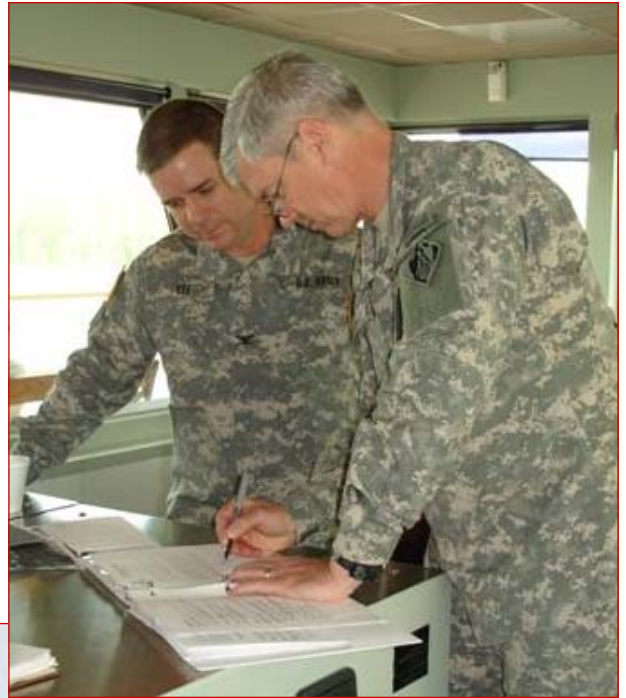
The Commission participated in a conference call with Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, regarding the possible operation of the Bonnet Carré Spillway and to clarify the decision-making process in that regard.

By a letter dated April 9, Col. Lee officially requested the Mississippi River Commission president to open the spillway on April 11 to keep the volume of discharge of the Mississippi River from exceeding 1.25 million cubic feet per second flowing past New Orleans.

Brig. Gen Walsh gathered the Commission to discuss Col. Lee's request to operate the spillway. The Commission concurred with the recommendation based on confirmation of river crest forecasts.

After consultation with the Chief of Engineers and after discussion with Louisiana and Mississippi congressional interests and the governors of both states, Brig. Gen. Walsh authorized the operation of the spillway on April 10.

On April 11, the Commission, which was already in the New Orleans area for a public hearing, traveled the Bonnet Carré structure to inspect the initial operations to open the spillway.



to



Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Upper Mississippi River ▪ August 10-15, 2008

379th Session of the MRC

The Mississippi River Commission gathered onboard the motor vessel *Mississippi* en route from St. Paul, MN, to Alton, IL, as part of the first week of the two-week long annual Low-Water Inspection trip.

The Commission held public hearings at Red Wing, Davenport, IA, Hannibal, MO, and Alton. More than 215 people attended the hearings.

The Members of the Mississippi River Commission present during the inspection trip on the upper Mississippi River included Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh, who assumed command as Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, and President Designee of the Mississippi River Commission on February 20, 2008; Mr. Sam E. Angel, reappointed as a member on November 15, 1999; Mr. R. D. James, civil engineer, reappointed as a member on April 16, 2003; Mr. William Clifford Smith, civil engineer, appointed October 22, 1998; Brig. Gen. William Rapp, member designee and Commander, Northwest Division; and Brig. Gen. John Peabody, member designee and Commander, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division. Rear Adm. Jonathan Bailey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, was unable to attend. Mr. Timothy S. Gambrell, Executive Director of the Mississippi River Commission, served as acting secretary.





379th Session

Sunday, August 10th

The Commission traveled to Lock and Dam No. 2 and received a detailed construction briefing from the Flatiron-Manson project manager overseeing the construction of the I35W bridge replacement across the Mississippi River at Minneapolis. The Members also toured the construction site to garner a closer understanding of the unique construction methods being utilized by the contractor.

Following the site visit, Col. Jon Christensen, Commander of the St. Paul District, provided the Commission with an update of the General Investigation, Construction, and Operations and Maintenance programs within the district's area of operations, to include discussion of the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program (EMP), the Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Channel Project, and the Upper Mississippi River System Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP).





379th Session

Monday, August 11th

The Commission held a public meeting at Red Wing. More than 50 members of the public attended. Presenters exhibited great pride in the broad-based, collaborative relationships established in the upper basin—a sentiment recognized by the Members of the Commission.



Issues and concerns presented included, but were not limited to, the need to secure appropriations for authorized projects in the upper basin, particularly with regard to NESP and the Lock and Dam No. 3 Navigation Safety and Embankments project, the desire to see expansion of the Upper Mississippi

Restoration Program under NESP, and the preservation of recreational facilities and opportunities.

Following the public meeting, the Members received an in-depth briefing on the Lock and Dam No. 3 Navigation Safety and Embankments project and inspected the site of the proposed project.

The project will address the navigation safety problem caused by an outdraft current that tends to steer towboats and barges away from the Lock No. 3 and toward the gated portion of the dam. The project will also remedy a related problem with low and weak embankments on the east bank the dam.

As the last order of business for the day, the Mississippi River Commission historian provided the Members with a thorough discussion of the Commission's existing authorities established in the 1879 Mississippi River Commission Act and the 1928 Flood Control Act.



379th Session

Tuesday, August 12th

The Chairman of the USACE Levee Safety Policy and Procedure Team provided the Commission with an impressive presentation covering the mission, organization, and goals of the program established to assess the integrity and viability of levees and to recommend actions to assure that the levees do not present unacceptable risks. Levee districts from throughout the Mississippi Valley have expressed to the Commission grave concerns with the program.



The presentation afforded the Members a chance to ask lingering questions about the program and receive answers. Col. Robert Sinkler, Commander, Rock Island District, followed with an overview of the projects and programs within his jurisdiction, to include discussion of the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan and NESP.

Following the briefing, the Commission traveled to Lock and Dam No. 11 to inspect the improvements made under the major rehabilitation efforts underway. The Commission

also viewed the Mud Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement project being accomplished under the EMP.

The Commission ended the day with a partnering session aboard the motor vessel. The session focused on a discussion of a 200-year vision for the Mississippi drainage basin.





379th Session

Wednesday, August 13th

The Commission held a public meeting at Davenport with more than 40 members of the public in attendance. The Honorable John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, boarded the motor vessel *Mississippi* and attended the public meeting.

Presentations provided to the Members focused heavily on the recent record-breaking flood that devastated portions of the region. The preponderance of speakers spoke favorably of the Upper Mississippi Comprehensive Plan, with broad support exhibited specifically for Plan M. Several presenters requested the Commission to assist and secure prompt authorization and funding for the Comprehensive Plan.



Other issues and concerns expressed to the Commission included the need to secure appropriations for authorized projects in the upper basin, the need and importance of navigation to the regional economy, preservation of the riverine environment and ecosystem, and desire and need for collaboration among the

various interest groups and stakeholders in the region. Following the public meeting, the Commission traveled to Moline, IL, for a partnering session with members of the John Deere Foundation and received a 2008 Upper Mississippi flood briefing from members of the Rock Island District staff.

Upon return to the *Mississippi*, the Members, with Mr. Woodley in attendance, received a pre-briefing overview from the Comprehensive Plan study team. The briefing afforded the Commission the opportunity to gain clarification, without deliberation, on certain topics that had risen during their individual reviews of the Comprehensive Plan Reconnaissance Study.



379th Session

Thursday, August 14th

The Commission remained on the *Mississippi* en route to Hannibal for the public meeting organized for the Commission to review and consider the reconnaissance-level study for the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan.

While in transit, the Members received briefings from several academic organizations detailing wide-ranging programs coordinated in partnership with the Rock Island District. Upon arrival in Hannibal the Commission



conducted the public meeting on the Comprehensive Plan with approximately 45 members of the public in attendance. The Commission voted to make a favorable recommendation to the Chief of Engineers and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil works of Plan H, with the caveat that no induced increases in surface water levels on the Mississippi River below Thebes, IL. The motion and amendment carried by a 4-2 vote, with Brig. Gen. Rapp and Brig. Gen. Peabody voting in the minority over concerns that the amendment might jeopardize the eventual implementation of Plan H. The following motions accepting the district engineer's recommendations carried unanimously:

- Placement of additional river gages on the Mississippi River and tributaries to better forecast flood events and to inform the public of potential flood risks.
- Watershed analysis on individual tributaries to address the major problems experienced during the 1993 and 2008 floods.
- A feasibility study to address the reconstruction needs of the aging infrastructure to ensure that the systems provide their intended benefits into the future.
- A feasibility study of critical transportation needs to ensure that approaches to bridge crossing the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers remain accessible during major flood events.

A signed copy of the recommendation of the Mississippi River Commission on the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan is attached to this executive summary.

Following the public meeting, Col. Thomas O'Hara, Commander of the St. Louis District, provided the Commission with an overview of projects and issues within his area of operations.



379th Session

Friday, August 15th

The Commission held a public meeting in Alton, with more than 80 members of the public in attendance. The public provided nearly 30 presentations to the Members.

The issues and concerns included the recent flood events in the upper Mississippi basin, support for the Comprehensive Plan and other flood control improvements, the levee certification program, ecosystem preservation and restoration, floodplain restoration, funding for NESP, and Missouri River water resources.

Following the public meeting, the Commission recessed for the weekend.





Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Lower Mississippi River ▪ August 17-22, 2008

379th Session



The Mississippi River Commission reconvened the 379th Session on August 17, 2008, onboard the motor vessel *Mississippi* en route from New Madrid, MO, to Houma, LA.

The Commission held public hearings at New Madrid, Memphis, TN, Greenville, MS, and Houma. Approximately 220 people attended the four public meetings.

The Members of the Mississippi River Commission present during the second week of the two-week long inspection trip included Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh; Mr. Sam E. Angel; Mr. R. D. James, civil engineer; Mr. William Clifford Smith, civil engineer, Rear Adm. Jonathan Bailey, Brig. Gen. William Rapp, Brig. Gen. John Peabody. Lt. Col. George T. Shepard, served as the non-voting Secretary of the Commission.



379th Session

Monday, August 18th

The Commission held a public meeting at New Madrid, with approximately 45 members of the public in attendance.

Issues discussed by the presenters centered mainly on displeasure concerning recent developments with the St. John's Bayou – New Madrid Floodway project, dissatisfaction with MR&T protected areas being included in Zone X on FEMA maps, issues associated with the spring flood event on the lower river, and transportation issues.



Following the meeting, the Members received additional briefings from the Memphis District staff. Owing to the spring 2008 flood on the lower Mississippi River and the subsequent operation of the Bonnet Carré Spillway, the Commission received a briefing detailing the authority, evolution, major features, hydraulics, and decision points concerning the operating plan for the Birds Point – New Madrid Floodway.

This was followed by briefings on the National Levee Database, not from a policy discussion standpoint, but from the GIS perspective on the ground, the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment, and the Mississippi River Marine Seismic Survey.



379th Session

Tuesday, August 19th

The Commission held a public meeting at Memphis, with more than 65 members of the public in attendance. Issues presented again centered on concerns regarding the FEMA and Corps levee certification process, FEMA's inclusion of lands protected by MR&T levees in the Zone X area of floodplain maps, water supply and ground water issues, and discussion of levees and navigation on the White River.





379th Session

Wednesday, August 20th

Col. Michael Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District briefed the Commission on a number of MR&T related issues and projects, to include improvements made to the Mississippi River Levee system.

Col. Wehr also informed the Commission that the Environmental Protection Agency had informed the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works that it had begun the formal review process toward a Section 404(c) veto of the pumping plant feature of the Yazoo Backwater Project. Col. Wehr also informed the Members that the local sponsor had initiated a records search that ultimately could transfer EPA authority to Section 404(r).

Following the briefing, the Commission held a public meeting at Greenville. Fifty-four members of the public attended the meeting. Presenters again expressed their dissatisfaction with the EPA threat to veto the Yazoo Backwater Project and conveyed their concerns with the levee certification process, FEMA inclusion of areas protected by the MR&T project in Zone X in revised floodplain maps, and inadequate funding for projects. The Commission spent the remainder of the day partnering with local stakeholders on the *Mississippi*.





379th Session

Thursday, August 21st

Staff members from the New Orleans District briefed the Commission on the status of the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration project, Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) ecosystem restoration project, and the Morganza to the Gulf of Mexico feasibility study.



The New Orleans District staff also provided the Commission with an overview of the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System and a detailed overview of lessons learned during the 2008 spring floods. Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, also briefed the Commission on a number of MR&T related issues, studies, and projects, to include the Alexandria to the Gulf of Mexico feasibility study, Donaldson to the Gulf of Mexico feasibility study, the Caernarvon and Davis Pond

freshwater diversion projects, the Mississippi River levee system, and a host of issues and projects in the Atchafalaya Basin.





379th Session

Friday, August 22nd

The Commission held a public meeting in New Orleans. More than 60 members of the public attended. Approximately 100 third and fourth grade school children also attended short segments of the public hearing as part of a civics lesson on government.

Presenters at the public hearing discussed a broad array of topics that centered on coastal restoration, support for the Morganza to the Gulf of Mexico project, the need for the Houma Lock and deepening the Houma Navigation Canal, beneficial uses of dredged material, hurricane and flood protection, sediment problems, support for sediment slurry pipeline to restore marshlands, and innovating ways to have flood control while reintroducing sediment from the river onto the land.

Following the public meeting, the Commission toured the coastal Louisiana area south of Houma and generally along the footprint of the Morganza to the Gulf levee. During the site visit the Commission viewed both thriving and deteriorating wetlands and marshes.





MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI

August 14, 2008

MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 80
VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39181-0080

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*Commander, Mississippi
Valley Division*
Vicksburg, Mississippi

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Honorable Sam E. Angel
Civilian
Lake Village, Arkansas

Honorable R. D. James
Civilian/Civil Engineer
New Madrid, Missouri

**Honorable Wm. Clifford Smith
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Houma, Louisiana

**Rear Adm. Jonathan W. Bailey
*National Oceanic and
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Silver Spring, Maryland

*Brig. Gen. John W. Peabody
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RECOMMENDATION OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION ON THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

With the authorization of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program in WRDA 2007, the Upper Mississippi River Basin has two of the three major components - navigation improvements and environmental sustainability - of a holistic system-wide plan to address the multiple needs of the world's third largest watershed. Two major floods in the last 15 years causing billions in economic damage and heart-breaking devastation to the region's people compel the Mississippi River Commission to call for action in the upper Mississippi River watershed. A comprehensive plan for flood damage reduction on the Upper Mississippi must now join the ongoing navigation improvements and environmental restoration efforts needed to maximize long-term and sustainable benefits of "America's River."

In support of building such a complete plan for the basin, the Mississippi River Commission recommends implementing the comprehensive approach to flood damage reduction described in Plan H of the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan (UMRCP), modified such that there will be no induced increases in the water surface levels on the Mississippi River below Thebes, Illinois. The Governors and overwhelming number of stakeholders of Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri strongly support such a comprehensive approach.

Since 1879, the seven-member Presidentially appointed Mississippi River Commission has developed and matured plans for the general improvement of the Mississippi River from the Head of Passes to the Headwaters. The Mississippi River Commission brings critical engineering representation to the drainage basin, which impacts 41% of the United States and includes 1.25 million square miles, over 250 tributaries, 31 states, and 2 Canadian provinces.

Listening, Inspecting, Partnering and Engineering since 1879

While this Commission acknowledges that the reconnaissance level analysis of the UMRCP indicates that there is no Federal interest based on current evaluation criteria, we believe that the full benefits of implementing Plan H cannot be adequately measured with current Corps of Engineer planning guidelines. The people that live along the Mississippi River are sustained by it, and they in turn provide for the nation by working the land, sustaining the environment, and using this magnificent waterway that meanders through the most productive land in the United States to power the economic engine of mid-America.

As the National Water Policy Act of 1934 recognized, water resource engineering does not exist for its own sake. It is of little use to engineer solutions or develop grand plans if we cannot improve the quality of life and sustain the environment upon which that quality depends. For the past 80 years, the Mississippi River Commission and the Corps of Engineers, in conjunction with hundreds of state, local, and private entities, have learned to manage the lower Mississippi for the betterment of millions of Americans living south of Cairo, Illinois. It is time to extend the same commitment to flood damage reduction enjoyed by citizens of the lower Mississippi Valley and to those living in the upper basin as well.

At this time and with current scientific and engineering tools, a significant knowledge deficit prevents us from knowing everything about the upper basin and how best to manage its many facets, but we recommend that the process begin. The 1927 Chief of Engineers' Plan for Flood Control of the Mississippi River in the Alluvial Valley, contained in House Document 90, 70th Congress, did not provide all of the details that ultimately resulted in a comprehensive approach for flood damage reduction on the lower Mississippi River either. It took many years of listening, inspecting, partnering, and engineering by the Mississippi River Commission with partners and elected officials to develop the comprehensive Mississippi River and Tributaries project. That project continues to be improved today through that same iterative process.

We acknowledge that a comprehensive plan for the upper Mississippi River system must do more than build levees - it must be a collaborative effort by states and landowners to decide the best use of land and flood control structures in the higher

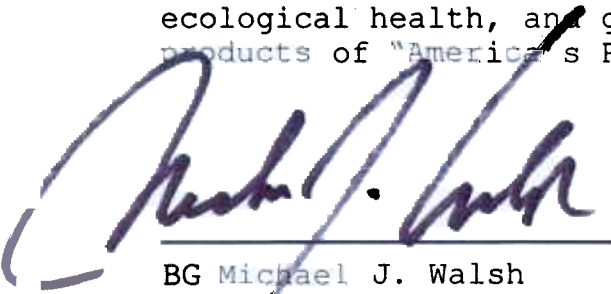
benefit-to-cost ratio area. Given that by some experts' analysis, areas of this region have suffered a 500-year level flood twice in 15 years, this commission believes these events provide a compelling reason to develop a flood damage reduction system that provides a "500-year level of protection" and other cost-effective considerations. This flood damage reduction plan must be nested with the navigation and environmental restoration plans already authorized to create a sustainable, effective, and comprehensive solution on the Upper Mississippi.

In addition to recommending that Plan H of the UMRCP be implemented, the Commission recommends the following actions also be undertaken to help resolve shorter term, but critical challenges in the basin:

- Placement of additional and more durable river gages on the Mississippi River and tributaries to better forecast events and to inform the public of potential flood risks.
- Expand the "main stem" watershed analysis of the UMRCP to include the tributaries of the Mississippi River, in order to create a true basin-wide analysis.
- Begin a feasibility study to address the reconstruction needs of the aging infrastructure to ensure that the systems provide their intended benefits into the future.
- Begin a feasibility study of critical transportation needs to ensure that approaches to bridges that cross the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers remain accessible during major flood events.

This plan must be implemented by a single entity with oversight spanning the entire watershed. The Mississippi River Commission has legislative authority and proven experience to provide leadership to objectively and fairly consider impacts along the entire length of this great river. The entire watershed and impacts on it must be identified and considered as improvements are made. Since 1879, the Mississippi River Commission has had the authority to develop and mature plans from the Head of Passes to the Headwaters, and should provide the Congress and American people oversight on implementing this project.

We cannot solve all or even most problems immediately, but pursuing Plan H as modified to eliminate adverse impacts on the Lower Mississippi would provide a long overdue framework for a significant portion of the Upper Mississippi River Valley. It is time to act to bring about the full Mississippi River basin plan that will, in decades to come, ensure the economic vitality, ecological health, and global competitiveness of the people and products of "America's River."



BG Michael J. Walsh
President Designee
Mississippi River Commission
Vicksburg, Mississippi



Hon. Sam E. Angel
Senior Civilian Member
Lake Village, Arkansas



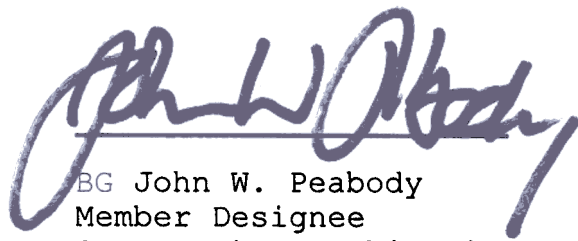
Hon. R. D. James
Civilian Member, Engineer
New Madrid, Missouri



Hon. Wm. Clifford Smith
Civilian Member, Engineer
Houma, Louisiana

[NOT PRESENT]

RADM Jonathan W. Bailey
Member Nominee
National Oceanic &
Atmospheric Administration
Silver Spring, Maryland



BG John W. Peabody
Member Designee
Great Lakes & Ohio River
Division
Cincinnati, Ohio



BG William E. Rapp
Member Designee
Northwestern Division
Portland, Oregon

Mississippi River & Tributaries Project

The Mississippi River and Tributaries project was authorized by the 1928 Flood Control Act. In the wake of the 1927 flood, it was deemed necessary to put into place a comprehensive, unified system of public works within the lower Mississippi Valley that would provide unprecedented protection from floods and an equally efficient navigation channel.

The MR&T project has four major features:

1. Levees/floodwalls
2. Floodways
3. Channel improvement and stabilization
4. Tributary basin improvements

These features work together to provide flood protection and navigation, and foster environmental protection and enhancement.

PROJECT BENEFITS

Flood Protection

- \$12.9 billion invested for planning, construction, operation and maintenance, since 1928
- \$322.1 billion in flood damages prevented, since 1928
- Approximately 4 million people protected
- 25 to 1 return on each dollar invested

Navigation

- 490 million tons of domestic cargo moved down the Mississippi River system in 2006
- \$2.9 billion saved annually in transportation benefits
- The Mississippi River remained opened during 1988 and 1999 droughts. The ability to keep the river open offered unequivocal evidence of the benefit of the MR&T project to the nation. Keeping it open and reliable is a pillar of economic stability and national security.

