



Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh
President-Designee



Hon. Sam E. Angel
Member-Designee



Hon. R. D. James
Member



Hon. Wm. Clifford Smith
Member-Designee



Rear Adm. Jonathan W. Bailey
Member-Designee



Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody
Member-Designee



Brig. Gen. William E. Rapp
Member-Designee

Mississippi River Commission

Executive Summary 380th & 381st 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 1879 legislation that created the Commission granted the body extensive planning authority and jurisdiction on the Mississippi River stretching from its headwaters at Lake Itasca to the Head of Passes, near its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi River Commission quickly assumed the role of an active Federal agent capable of transcending the regional issues that had previously 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.

In its current capacity, the Mississippi River Commissions prosecutes the Mississippi River & Tributaries (MR&T) project authorized by the 1928 Flood Control Act. The MR&T project employs a variety of engineering techniques, including an

extensive levee system to prevent disastrous overflows on developed alluvial lands; floodways to safely divert excess flows past critical reaches so that the levee system will not be unduly stressed; channel improvements and stabilization features to protect the integrity of flood control measures and to ensure proper alignment and depth of the navigation channel; and tributary basin improvements, to include levees, headwater reservoirs, and pumping stations, that maximize the benefits realized on the main stem by expanding flood protection coverage and improving drainage into adjacent areas within the alluvial valley. Since its initiation, the MR&T program has brought an unprecedented degree of flood protection to the approximate 4 million people living in the 35,000 square-mile project area within the lower Mississippi Valley. The nation has contributed nearly \$13 billion toward the planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. To date the nation has received a 27 to 1 return on that investment, including \$346 billion in flood damages prevented.

The Mississippi River Commission continued its 130-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 2009 High-Water Inspection (380th and 381st Sessions of the Mississippi River Commission). 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, executive summaries of the Proceedings, and other documents of significance, are kept on file in the Office of the President in Vicksburg, Miss.





March 29—April 3, 2009

380th Session of the MRC

The Mississippi River conducted its 380th Session from March 29 through April 3, 2009 onboard the motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI* en route from Caruthersville, Mo., to Baton Rouge, La., as part of the annual High-Water Inspection trip. The Commission held public hearings at Caruthersville, Tunica, Miss., Vicksburg, Miss., and Baton Rouge. More than 265 members of the public attended the public meetings. The Members of the Mississippi River Commission present during the 380th Session included:

- **Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh**, Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division and President Designee of the Mississippi River Commission;
- **Hon. Sam E. Angel**, reappointed as a member November 15, 1999;
- **Hon. R. D. James**, civil engineer, reappointed as a member April 16, 2003;
- **Hon. William Clifford Smith**, civil engineer, appointed October 22, 1998;
- **RADM Jonathan W. Bailey**, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), serving as a member designee;
- **Brig. Gen. William E. Rapp**, member designee and Commander, Northwest Division; and
- **Brig. Gen. John W. Peabody**, member designee and Commander, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division.
- **Col. George T. Shepard, Jr.**, serving as Secretary of the Commission, which is a non-voting position.

Also attending the session were the Honorable John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, attended the session through Wednesday, April 1. Maj. Gen. Bo Temple, Deputy Commanding General, Civil and Emergency Operations, attended the April 2 public meeting in Baton Rouge.





Sunday, March 29, 2009

380th Session of the MRC

Stephen Gambrell, Executive Director of the Mississippi River Commission, provided a regional and national interface with Commission schedule and calendar for the year.

John Meador, Acting Director of Programs, provided the Members with a summary of regional funding trends for the MR&T project and a status update of key legislation in Congress.

Charles Shadie, Chief of Watershed Management Division, followed with a detailed analysis of river conditions, completed with an update on reservoir storage capacity in the entire Mississippi drainage basin, precipitation forecasts covering the remainder of the spring season, an overview of flood risk assessments for the Mississippi Valley developed by NOAA, an update on the ongoing flood on the Red River of the North, and a comparison of the 1973, 1997, 2008, and 2009 hydrographs.

Jim Hannon, Director of Regional Business, updated the Commission on key developments on the levee certification program. Of particular significance, Mr. Hannon informed the Commission that USACE adjusted its policy to allow for the Corps of Engineers to perform levee certification determinations for the MR&T levee system with available MR&T resources if a county or local government (non-federal government entity) requests levee certification. Mr. Hannon notified the Members that the Commission staff will work with FEMA and local levee boards to coordinate this new policy.

Col. Thomas Smith, Commander of the Memphis District, followed with 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, Ark., the Grand Prairie Region, Ark., St. John's Bayou-New Madrid Floodway, Mo., Ten and Fifteen Mile



Bayous, Ark., the West Tennessee Tributaries, Tenn., Reelfoot Lake, Ken. and Tenn., and maintenance in the St. Francis Basin, Ark., and Mo.



High-Water Inspection Trip Report

Monday, March 30, 2009

380th Session of the MRC

The Commission held a public meeting at Caruthersville with approximately 85 members of the public in attendance.

The purpose of the meetings is to maintain a dialogue and exchange ideas and viewpoints with the public. This process allows the public a greater voice in shaping federal policy on the river. Issues discussed by the presenters included:

- Continued dissatisfaction with regard to FEMA's involvement in the levee certification program and FEMA flood zone mapping;
- The desire to see the Corps of Engineers certify levees that it built and maintains;
- Disappointment with the decision to deconstruct completed work on the St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway project and the need to resume the project after the completion of additional studies;
- The desire to incorporate into the Missouri River Master Manual the impacts on flow and stages on the Mississippi River;
- Authorization of Plan H of the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan;
- the readiness of certain projects to accept stimulus funding and the disappointment that the stimulus package did not match Corps capabilities in the Mississippi Valley; and
- A host of local maintenance and repair needs.





Tuesday, March 31, 2009

380th Session of the MRC

In the morning, the Members and staff toured the Tunica River Park museum, which houses a number of historical artifacts on loan to the museum from the Commission. After the tour, the Commission held a public meeting at Tunica. Approximately 70 members of the public attended. Presenters discussed a broad array of topics that centered on the levee certification process and the desire for the Corps to certify MR&T levees; needed improvements in the Yazoo-Mississippi levee district; ground water conservation and the economic and social impacts of aquifer depletion in Arkansas and Tennessee; the readiness of projects to receive stimulus funds and the disappointment that the stimulus package did not meet Corps capabilities; navigation improvements on the Arkansas and White river system; maintenance issues at harbors and ports; and increasing recreational opportunities on the river.



Wednesday, April 1, 2009

During the morning, Col. Michael Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District, updated the Commission on the status of the district's funding trends, to include stimulus funding. Col. Wehr briefed the Members on a number of MR&T-related issues and projects to include improvements made to the Mississippi River Levee system, efforts on the tributary phase of the Yazoo Basin Reformulation Study, and progress on data collection on streamflow, rainfall events, floods, and other hydrologic information on the entire alluvial valley. Col. Wehr also informed the Members that WRDA 07 reinstated the Ouachita River Levees as a component of the MR&T project, but the corresponding implementation guidance only confirmed authority of the reach extending Bastrop, La., to Monroe, La.



Wednesday, April 1, 2009

380th Session of the MRC

The Commission held a public meeting at Vicksburg, Miss. Approximately 70 members of the public attended the meeting. An additional 140 local elementary school students attended portions of the hearings as part of a civics lesson on public involvement in government operations. During the hearing, presenters expressed their concerns with:

- The levee certification process and the necessity of the Corps to certify MR&T levees;
- The EPA veto of the Yazoo pumps project;
- Needed repairs and maintenance on levees and flood control structures on the mainline levees in Mississippi and Louisiana;
- Inadequate funding and critical improvements on the Ouachita-Black navigation project;
- The non-inclusion into the MR&T project of certain levee segments along the Ouachita River;
- Maintenance of the Greenville Port;
- The social and economic impact of aquifer depletion in Arkansas and Louisiana; and
- Improved water quality at Lake Providence and other areas.

Following the hearing, the Commission participated in an unveiling ceremony of a mural on the Vicksburg floodwall commemorating the 1927 flood, then reconvened at the Mississippi River Commission headquarters

building for a series of briefings. Dr. Barbara Kleiss, Louisiana Coastal Authority, Office of Science and Technology, provided an overview of the Diversion Summit held in New Orleans March 3-5, 2009, and presented scientific analysis on the issue of diversions to address wetlands loss. The



Commission also heard from Dr. Greg Smith, Director, USGS Wetland Research Center. Dr. Smith indicated that the Mekong delta in southeast Asia is experiencing similar challenges to coastal Louisiana with regard to the loss of marshland and increased storm activity and invited the Commission to engage in dialogue with the Mekong River Commission at a conference in Cambodia in June 2009. Larry Barnett, MVD Division Counsel, and James Merritt, Assistant Division Counsel, provided a detailed briefing on the Commission's jurisdiction and authorities as established through various legislative acts passed by Congress since 1879. Mr. Barnett informed the Members that the briefing will result in a signed legal opinion that will be forwarded to the Commission upon completion.



Thursday, April 2, 2009

380th Session of the MRC

Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, briefed the Commission on the status, schedules, and issues relating to MR&T general investigations, feasibility studies, and construction projects within his area of operations, as well as non-MR&T items that included numerous hurricane storm damage risk reduction, navigation, flood damage prevention, and ecosystem restoration projects.

Following the briefing the Commission toured the Concrete Mattress Casting Field Unit (St. Francisville, La.) where the articulated concrete mattress used in the MR&T bank revetment program is manufactured. Upon returning to the motor vessel, the Commission received a briefing on coastal restoration projects from Troy Constance, New Orleans District, Protection and Restoration Office. The presentation served as an informational briefing on the history, evolution and interconnectedness of CWPRRA, LCA, LACPR, and freshwater diversions. The Commission also toured the historic Plaquemines Lock, which is celebrating its 100-year anniversary.



Friday, April 3, 2009

The Commission held a public meeting in Baton Rouge, La. Approximately 40 members of the public attended. Presenters at the hearing discussed a broad array of topics that mainly centered on the increased costs of dredging while the actual number of dredges working the river have decreased; the desire for the Corps of Engineers to ease restrictions on its own dredges, while ensuring contract dredge operators fulfill their obligations; the pros and cons of diversions to restore coastal marshlands; and the relationship between diversions and increased dredging. Brig. Gen. Walsh adjourned the 380th session of the Commission at 12:18.



August 9-21, 2009

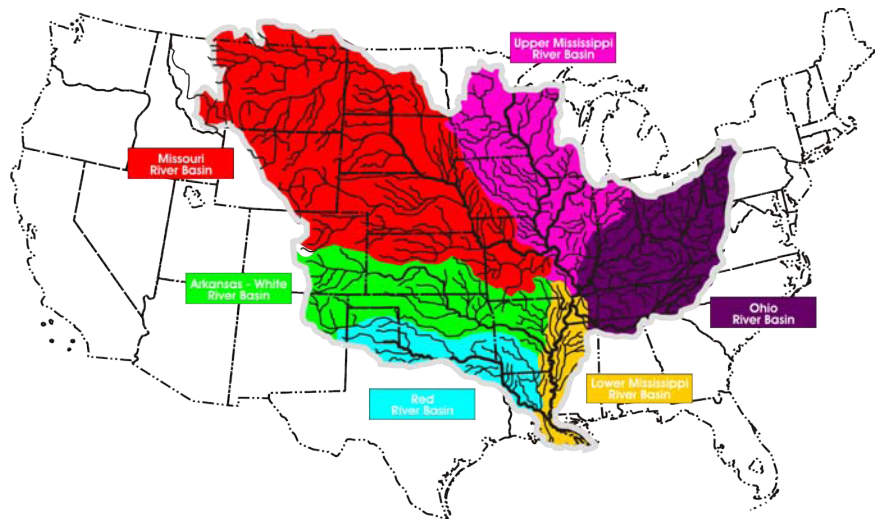
381st Session of the MRC

Since 1879, the Mississippi River Commission has developed and matured plans for the general improvement of the Mississippi River from its headwaters to the Head of Passes near the Gulf of Mexico. With the advent of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) Project in 1928, the Commission's attention focused on the alluvial valley, the historic floodplain of lower Mississippi that extends southward from Thebes, Mo., to the Gulf and encompasses 35,000 square miles spread over seven states. As the MR&T project matured and prospered, the Commission resumed inspections of the upper Mississippi River in 1997.

Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

The Mississippi River drainage basin impacts 41 percent of the United States and includes 1.25 million square miles, more than 250 tributaries, 31 states, and parts of two Canadian provinces. The management of the major individual river basins comprising the watershed directly impacts the operations and decisions of the Mississippi River Commission. Recognizing this, the Commission decided to extend its time-tested process of listing, inspecting, and partnering to the major river basins within the Mississippi River watershed by meeting face-to-face with stakeholders, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offices to better understand the concerns, issues, and impacts on the watershed as a whole. As a result of this decision, the Commission reviewed and inspected the Ohio River Basin in 2005, the Missouri River Basin in 2007, the Illinois River Basin in 2009, and will visit the Arkansas-White Basin in 2010 and the Red River Basin in 2011.

The 2009 visit to the Illinois River was a historic trip. While the Commission supervised levee operations on the lower Illinois River under section 6 of the 1928 Flood Control Act and visited individual locations on the river, it had not completed an inspection of the Illinois River system. The Commission's presence in the region was welcomed by the people of the basin. More than 4,600 members of the public visited and toured the motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI*, the flagship of the Mississippi River Commission, as it traveled upriver in advance of the inspection trip in preparation to receive the Commission and transport it to the Mississippi River. During the trip, the Commission engaged with, listened to, and shared information with more than 100 stakeholders and partners from Chicago to St. Louis.





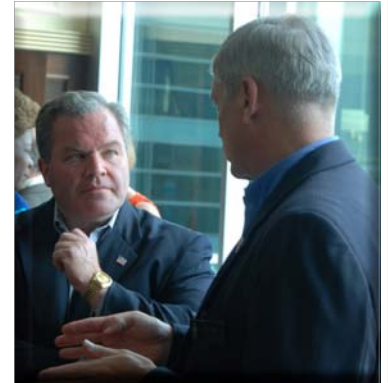
Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Sunday, August 9, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The 381st session of the Commission commenced in Chicago, Ill., at the head of the Illinois River Basin. The members of the Mississippi River Commission present during the inspection trip were:

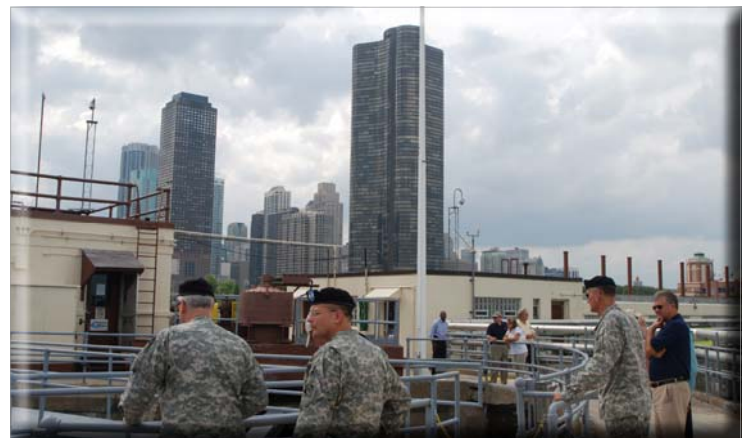
- Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh
- Hon. Sam E. Angel
- Hon. R. D. James
- Hon. William Clifford Smith
- Brig. Gen. William Rapp
- Maj. Gen. John Peabody



The Chicago District Commander, Col. Vincent Quarles, and members of his staff provided detailed briefings on the water resources opportunities and challenges in the district's area of operations. The canals and waterways in the Chicago District represent a vital transition point between the Upper Mississippi River – Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) navigation system and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence waterways.



While in the district footprint, the Commission visited various navigation structures and port/harbor facilities, as well as the invasive fish barrier designed to prevent the harmful affects stemming the migration of non-native species between the Great Lakes and Illinois River.



The trip to the Chicago District also afforded the Commission the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, the Illinois River Carriers Association, and other regional stakeholders.

(NOTE: Mr. Tab Brown, headquarters USACE, Planning/Policy Chief, present this week.)



Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Monday, August 10, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission moved into the Rock Island District area of operations, toured the Lockport Lock and Dam, and then boarded the *MISSISSIPPI* at Ottawa, Ill. Col. Shawn McGinley, the Rock Island District Commander, provided a status update of district's programs and missions to include:

- The 2008 Midwest flood recovery,
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act progress,
- Backlog maintenance issues on the UMR-IWW navigation system, and
- A host of additional construction, flood control, environmental, and operations and maintenance projects.

The Commission also hosted a partnering session with representatives from the Illinois River Coordination Council and regional stakeholders onboard the *MISSISSIPPI*.





Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission continued its listening and partnering session by hearing presentations from the Institute for Principled Leadership in Public Service, the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center, and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. The briefings covered a wide range of topics. The presenters informed the Commission that agriculture is the top priority on the Illinois River and generates \$9 billion in income for the state, but conservation, restoration, and protection of the river and surrounding lands are also of significance to the region. Efforts are underway to form an Illinois River Caucus at the federal level among the 5 states comprising the upper Mississippi basin. The Commission heard pleas for help to secure appropriation and execution of the NESP authorization under WRDA 2007. Presenters also informed the Commission that sedimentation is the major problem that plagues the basin and demonstrated examples of the potential uses of sediment and dredged material in restoration efforts being employed on the river. The water quality issue on the river extends beyond sedimentation and includes high levels of bacteria that could potentially remain a problem even if the sedimentation issue is resolved.

During the afternoon, representatives from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS), and the Illinois Natural History Survey escorted the Commission on a tour of the Chautauqua and Emiquon wildlife refuge areas and provided a demonstration of techniques used in the Long-Term Resource Monitoring Program component of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program formerly known as the Environmental Management Program.

The Commission was impressed by the tour of the 11,000-acre Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge near Havana, Ill. Representatives from the TNC and USF&WS provided an informative description of existing and proposed plans for the project area. Established in 1993, the Emiquon refuge project seeks to restore, protect, and manage quality backwater, wetland, bottomland forest, and seasonal habitat for migratory birds, fish, and resident wildlife in the Illinois River valley through a mitigative management strategy that is entirely dependant on the existing levee, a pumping station, and a gravity drainage culvert.





Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The TNC and USF&WS representatives indicated that it was not desirable from an ecological standpoint to remove the existing levee at the Emiquon project to allow for natural backwater flooding of the floodplain as this process would not benefit the ecology of the area. Instead the mitigative management strategy incorporates the use of the pumping station and drainage culverts to manipulate water levels to mimic the historic flood cycle. The TNC representative, Doug Blogett, also informed the Commission that the management plan provides for drawdowns of the Emiquon backwater area through the gravity drainage and pumps at 5 to 7-year intervals to promote vegetative growth. The drawdown process would drain all but 500 acres of the backwater area and, according to the presenters, the resulting fish loss would be viewed as an acceptable loss that mimics historic drought cycles. The Commission was interested to learn that the proposed management strategy for the wildlife area is dependant on the use of a culvert to allow native fish to transition from the river through the levee and into the backwater area and vice versa. The 2-barrell, 8-foot by 8-foot, culvert would provide sufficient connectivity of the river to the backwater area to allow and promote fish spawns in the backwater area.





Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Wednesday, August 12, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission arrived in Beardstown, Ill. The Rock Island District staff provided a briefing that detailed several significant issues in the region. Dredging and sedimentation problems in the Beardstown harbor and access channel are of primary concern to city officials and local industry, a sentiment that was expounded upon during subsequent briefings from the Mayor of Beardstown and the Director of the American Inland Ports. A representative from the Upper Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers Association (UMIMRA) followed with a discussion of existing issues and problems plaguing the flood control system on the Illinois River. UMIMRA is concerned that the level of protection along the Illinois River is inadequate to protect lives, bridges, highways, industry, and agriculture in the region. In addition, the people who live and work along the river have not seen a major flood event and, unlike the upper Mississippi River, do not have the ability to fight such a flood. UMIMRA fears that these same people do not understand the risks that these inadequacies represent. The Rock Island District followed with a briefing on the history, significance, and accomplishments of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program - Environmental Management Program since its establishment in 1986 and presented a summary of the draft transition plan for the program.



The Commission also received a status update on the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan. In August of 2008, the Commission voted to make a favorable recommendation to the Chief of Engineers and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA (CW)) of Plan H, with the caveat that there be no induced increases in surface water levels on the Mississippi River below Thebes. The ASA (CW) submitted the plan and the Commission's recommendation to the appropriate Congressional committees in January 2009 and concurred with the Commission's recommendation for cost-shared feasibility studies recommended in the report and for additional analyses on the tributaries to address the major problems experienced during the 1993 and 2008 floods. The ASA (CW) also acknowledged the Commission's recommendations for Plan H and for the placement of additional river gages, but stopped short of issuing concurrence. This presentation was followed by a briefing on the status and implementation scenarios of Title VIII of WRDA 2007 (NESP).



Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Wednesday, August 12, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

By mid-afternoon, the *MISSISSIPPI* entered the St. Louis District's jurisdictional boundary. Col. Thomas O'Hara, the St. Louis District Commander, gave a detailed briefing on the status of the General Investigations, Construction General, and Operations and Maintenance programs within his area of operations and provided background information on several issues. These issues included, but were not limited to:

- FEMA flood zone maps,
- Levee certification,
- The Metro East levee system, and
- The river regulating system along the middle Mississippi River.

The Commission ended the day by hosting a partnering session on the *MISSISSIPPI* with representatives from several Illinois levee districts, the Illinois River Coordinating Council, various state and federal agencies, and environmental organizations.





Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Thursday, August 13, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission arrived in Alton, Ill., and visited the National Great River Research and Education Center (NGRREC) construction site with U.S. Congressmen: John Shimkus, Jerry Costello, and Jim Duncan. The facility, being developed on leased Corps land by a partnership comprised of the University of Illinois, Lewis and Clark Community College, and the Illinois Natural History Survey, incorporates state-of-the-art “green” technology in every aspect of its construction.

The Commission then participated in a Policy Forum as part of the Visions of a Sustainable Mississippi River Conference at Lewis and Clark Community College. The goal of the four-day conference was to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, researchers, and natural resource managers to formulate new recommendations on issues critical to the sustainable management of the river. Select conference attendees presented the recommendations at the forum to a

panel that consisted of the members of the Commission, Congressmen Shimkus, Costello, and Duncan, Col. McGinley, Col. O'Hara, Steve Stockton, Director of Civil Works, and representatives from the EPA, IDNR, USF&WS, and UMRBA.





Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Friday, August 15, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission held a public meeting in St. Louis, Mo., with more than 50 members of the public in attendance.

The public provided 16 presentations to the members. The main issue and concern included the proposed Section 108 study of the Missouri River. Much of the testimony presented to the Commission centered on this topic with unanimous opposition to the study. The presenters feared that the purpose of the study is to eliminate navigation on the Missouri River in favor of holding more water in the upper basin for recreational interests. Presenters were unanimous in their support for including the impacts of Missouri River flows on the Mississippi River if the study were to go forward.

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





Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Low-Water Inspection

381st Session of the MRC

The Mississippi River Commission reconvened the 381st Session onboard the motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI* in route from Tiptonville, Mo., to Morgan City, La. The Commission held public hearings at Tiptonville, Memphis, Tenn., Greenville, Miss., and Morgan City. Approximately 285 people attended the four public meetings. The purpose of the public meetings is to maintain a dialogue, an exchange of viewpoints and ideas flowing between the public, the Corps and the Commission. This process allows the public a greater voice in shaping federal management and policy on the river.

The Members of the Mississippi River Commission present during the second week of the two-week long inspection trip included:

- Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh
- Hon. Sam E. Angel
- Hon. R. D. James
- Hon. William Clifford Smith
- Rear Adm. Jonathan Bailey
- Brig. Gen. William Rapp





Sun, August 16, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

Stephen Gambrell, Executive Director of the Mississippi River Commission, reviewed with the Members the key objectives of the inspection trip and provided a regional and national interface overview. He briefed the major topics, schedule and 18-month calendar.

Mark Mazzanti, Director of Programs, provided the Members with a summary of regional funding trends for the MR&T project and a status update of key legislation in Congress, including a proposal for WRDA 2010 legislation, the passage of the defense supplemental bill, and the schedule for work under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Mr. Mazzanti also discussed the potential ramifications to existing and planned navigation projects if the under capitalization of the Inland Waterway Trust Fund continues.

Charles Shadie, of the MRC Watershed Management Team, followed with a briefing that detailed the actual versus normal precipitation amounts in the watershed and a review of floods this past year on the Mississippi River, the Illinois River, and the Red River of the North. Mr. Shadie also provided the Commission with a precipitation, drought, and temperature outlook for the next three months.

Jim Hannon, the Technical Director of the Mississippi River Commission, reminded the Commission that USACE adjusted its policy to allow for the Corps of Engineers to perform levee certification determinations for the MR&T levee system with available MR&T resources if a county or local government (non-federal government entity) requests levee certification. Mr. Hannon then updated the Members on the process, organizational structure, and prioritization of the national levee certification program.

Col. Thomas Smith, the Memphis District Commander, provided 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, Grand Prairie Region, New Madrid Riverfront Improvements, Reelfoot Lake, St. Francis Basin maintenance, St. John's Bayou-New Madrid Floodway, Ten and Fifteen Mile bayous, and West Tennessee Tributaries. Col. Smith's briefing also covered several non-MR&T projects to include the Little River Diversion, the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment, Northwest Tennessee Harbor, and the White River Navigation project. Col Smith also briefed the Commission on the status of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects and the USACE levee certification and FEMA accreditation processes. Following the briefings, the Commission attended a partnering engagement with local interest. U.S. Congressman John Tanner, state representative Judy Baker, the mayors of Tiptonville, Dyersburg, Obion County, and Lake County, and other local elected officials attended the event.

(NOTE: Mr. Zoltan Montvai, headquarters USACE, Deputy, Planning/Policy, present this week.)



Monday, August 17, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission held a public meeting at Tiptonville, with approximately 80 members of the public in attendance. Issues discussed by the presenters concentrated on a host of localized issues and problems with regard to flood control, dredging of ports, and access to the river. Several presenters also voiced their objection to the draft Executive Order – Flood Plain Management, which has been floated as a replacement for Executive Order 11988. The presenters indicated that many of the recommendations contained in the 1994 Galloway Report are incorporated into the draft executive order.

Another key issue pertained to the St. Johns Bayou – New Madrid Floodway project, a feature of the MR&T project that was halted by an injunction from the U.S. District Court in September 2007 on the grounds that the Corps of Engineers had not adequately studied whether or not fish would migrate through the 6-barrell, 10-foot by 10-foot, culverts on St. John's Bayou and the 4-barrell, 10-foot by 10-foot, culverts in the New Madrid Floodway. The injunction also ordered the dismantling of completed work. A member from the St. Johns Levee and Drainage District testified that the Missouri Department of Natural Resources was comfortable with the project if the proper mitigation measures are included. On the other hand, the USF&WS remains opposed to the project and informed the sponsor that no level of mitigation would be acceptable that would alleviate the opposition. The Commission notified the sponsor that the USF&WS is a partner with TNC in the Emiquon Wildlife Refuge project in the Illinois River Basin and that the Emiquon project is dependant on fewer and smaller culverts through an existing levee to allow fish connectivity with backwater areas. The Commission suggested that the St. Johns Levee and Drainage District reach out and partner with TNC and the USF&WS in that region and request that they share their science and data on fish passage through culverts.

Following the public meeting, the Commission traveled to Memphis and toured the Memphis port. During public meetings in recent years, issues regarding access, dredging, and other needed port improvements had been brought before the Commission. The tour allowed the Commission to view these problems first hand and partner with local sponsors to develop solutions.

Low-Water Inspection Trip Report





Tuesday, August 18, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission held a public meeting at Memphis, with more than 85 members of the public in attendance. The presenters voiced concern on a number of wide ranging topics that included:

- Both support for and opposition to the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment,
- Needed improvements to the Arkansas and White River basins,
- Water supply,
- Aquifer depletion, ground water issues, and
- The need for the Grand Prairie and Bayou Meto projects.

A number of the presenters also articulated their dissatisfaction with the National Levee Safety Program and one of its recent reports. Common complaints against the program included:

- The lack of representation or consultation with anyone from the lower Mississippi Valley and MR&T project on the board comprising the program,
- The failure of the program to delineate the differences between the design, construction, maintenance and operation of MR&T levees from levees in other regions across the country;
- The program's push for the mandatory purchase of flood insurance against the 100-year flood for areas within the MR&T project despite those areas being protected by a flood control system designed to handle a project flood in excess of a 500-year event;
- Fear that the program will harm economic development in the lower valley; and
- The programs call for protection of large population centers, but not for rural areas.





Wednesday, August 19, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

Col. Michael Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District, briefed the Commission on a number of MR&T-related issues and projects. Col Wehr informed the Members that funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act were having a direct impact in the areas of relief well construction, channel improvements, and revetment.

Following the briefing, the Commission held a public meeting at Greenville with more than 75 members of the public in attendance. Presenters:

- Questioned the legality of the EPA veto of the Yazoo Backwater Project and called for restriction on EPA's authorities,
- Conveyed their concerns over the new draft executive order on floodplain management - the National Levee Safety Program recommendation that all people protected by levees be required to purchase flood insurance,
- The need for improvements in the Ouachita-Black and Arkansas-White river basins, and
- Water supply/aquifer depletion in south Arkansas and north Louisiana.

Following the meeting, Dr. Barb Kleiss, Director of the Louisiana Coastal Authority, provided an overview of Mississippi River diversion science and technology. Dr. Kleiss discussed the various types of information needed, proposed modeling approaches, tentative schedules, and potential



Low-Water Inspection Trip Report



Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Thursday, August 20, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

Col. Alvin Lee, Commander of the New Orleans District, provided a briefing that detailed several MR&T construction and maintenance projects to include Mississippi River Levees, the Atchafalaya Basin and floodway system, Old River Control, Bayou Sorrel Lock, and the Davis Pond and Carnarvon Freshwater Diversion. In addition to the project brief, the Commission received status updates on the following feasibility studies: Alexandria to the Gulf, Donaldsonville to the Gulf, Morganza to the Gulf, and the Houma Navigation Canal Deepening. Col. Lee also updated the Members on several non-MR&T projects to include the Inner Harbor Canal Navigation Lock, the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet closure, and ecosystem protection and restoration efforts along the Louisiana coastal area.



At the request of the Commission, Maj. Gen. Peabody provided an Ohio River watershed update, followed by a Missouri River watershed update from Brig. Gen. Rapp. Maj. Gen. Peabody's presentation focused on two main areas—the status of infrastructure on the Ohio River, complete with a discussion of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, and the relation of Ohio River basin flood control efforts and their relation to the Mississippi River. Approximately one-half of the navigation locks in the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division are more than 50-years old. The age of the structures leads to frequent closures for repair, decreased performance, and costly delays. Closures have increased by 500 percent since 1992. Navigation improvement projects are cost-shared on a 50-50 basis with the Inland Waterways Trust Fund,

which is greatly under capitalized. Including the matching federal funds, only \$180 million is available annually, despite the capability to handle at least \$500 million annually. The under capitalization of the fund is delaying construction of existing projects and pushing back new starts on badly needed projects from 10 to 25 years.

Aging infrastructure also impacts the flood control mission in the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division. Thirty-three percent of flood control dams are more than 50 years old, and two dams on the Cumberland River that are critical to flood levels on the Mississippi River—Wolf Creek and /center Hill—are considered to be in active failure. This status prevents the Corps from impounding potential floodwaters, which impacts the operation of Barkley Dam.



Low-Water Inspection Trip Report

Thursday, August 20, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The latter structure, although not an MR&T feature, is operated to reduce flood stages on the lower Ohio River and the Mississippi River near Cairo, Ill., and to reduce the probability of operating the Birds Point-New Madrid floodway.

Brig. Gen. Rapp's briefing focused on the Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study (MRAPS) authorized and funded in the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Acct, Title I, Section 108. As noted in the summary of presentations for the Commission's public hearing in St. Louis, this study will prove to be of great interest to stakeholders not only in the Missouri basin, but also in the Mississippi basin.



Brig. Rapp provided the Commission with a history of water resource management efforts in the Missouri basin from the authorization of the Pick-Sloan plan in the 1944 Flood Control Act, continuing through the 1988 Supreme Court ruling that recognized the predominance of flood control and navigation as the

authorized federal purpose on the river, and ending with the 15-year Master Manual study and the authorization of the Section 108 study. Brig. Gen. Rapp explained the authorizing legislation and proposed implementation guidance to the Members and then provided an overview of the specific considerations that will and will not be considered, the various study phases, the quality management and review processes, and the public engagement strategy. Brig. Gen. Rapp also provided an overview of the Northwest Division's missions, with particular emphasis on the flood control, navigation, environmental/ecosystem restoration, and hydropower generation. The Commission was particularly interested to learn that the Federal government spends \$185 million annually on improving salmon on the Columbia and Snake Rivers.



Friday, August 21, 2009

381st Session of the MRC

The Commission held a public meeting in Morgan City, La. Approximately 45 members of the public attended. Presenters at the hearing focused on a broad array of topics that included:

- Flood and hurricane protection for Morgan City and Terrebonne Parish,
- The need for the Morganza to the gulf project,
- Dredging and sediment loads in the Atchafalaya River and its ports and harbors, and
- The desire to reexamine the 70/30 water distribution at the head of the Atchafalaya Basin.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Brig. Gen. Walsh adjourned the 381stth session of the Commission.





MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI

August 20, 2009

STATEMENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESOURCE ASSESSMENT DRAFT RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

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

PRESIDENT and MEMBER

*Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh
*Commander, Mississippi
Valley Division*
Vicksburg, Mississippi

MEMBERS

*Honorable Sam E. Angel
Civilian
Lake Village, Arkansas

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

*Honorable Wm. Clifford Smith
Civilian/Civil Engineer
Houma, Louisiana

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

*Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody
*Commander, Great Lakes &
Ohio River Division*
Cincinnati, Ohio

*Brig. Gen. William E. Rapp
*Commander, Northwestern
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* designee
** nominated

Since its establishment in 1879, the Mississippi River Commission has been charged with developing plans for the general improvement of the Mississippi River to facilitate navigation, promote commerce, and prevent destructive floods. The Mississippi River Commission recognizes the vital importance of the vast natural resources of the Mississippi River to the nation. Maintaining the great natural resources of the river is of vital significance to the comprehensive approach to fulfilling the objectives and requirements of the nation's responsibilities.

The focus of the Commission continues to be on listening, inspecting, partnering, and engineering to help find solutions to water resource challenges facing the watershed. During the 2009 Low-Water Inspection Trip, the Commission received testimony appreciative of, and in opposition to, the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment, Draft Reconnaissance Report, dated July 2009. While generally supportive of the assessment, the Commission finds that the report addresses only a part of the larger picture that comprises the many valuable resources of the lower Mississippi River valley. The study appears to be insufficient by failing to adequately address key issues such as the impacts on private property rights, navigation, and flood damage reduction. Also, the footprint of the study does not include a valuable area of coastal Louisiana between the mouths of the Mississippi and the Atchafalaya Rivers.

The Mississippi River Commission remains dedicated to helping achieve a sustainable long-term vision that includes the balanced and appropriate use of the incredible resource that makes up the entire Mississippi watershed. We will continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, other Federal agencies, and other non-governmental groups to realize that vision.

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

Mississippi River Commission
Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment
Draft Reconnaissance Study
August 20, 2009

BG Michael J. Walsh
President-Designee
Mississippi Valley Division
Vicksburg, MS



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



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Civilian Member, Engineer
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Portland, OR



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MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI

August 20, 2009

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For more than 130 years, the Mississippi River Commission has been closely involved with important issues facing the Mississippi River basin. Our focus continues to be on listening, inspecting, partnering, and engineering to help find solutions to water resource challenges facing the basin.

The Mississippi River basin is an integrated system of rivers that drains portions of 38 states and more than 1.2 million square miles. Significant actions that affect water quality or water quantity in any portion of the upper basin eventually have an impact downstream on flood damage reduction, navigation, environmental sustainability, water supply, and river-related infrastructure. As such, this Commission is compelled to express our concern with potential changes in major tributaries to the Mississippi that could adversely affect the lower basin. The Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study, authorized and appropriated in Section 108 of the FY 09 Omnibus Appropriations Act, has the potential of leading Congress to make such changes. After hearing numerous challenges to the study from stakeholders during our 2009 Low-Water Inspection Trip, the Commission wants to express our interest in the process and outcomes of that study.

At certain times of the year, the Missouri River contributes up to 60 percent of the Mississippi River flow between St. Charles and Cairo and historically the majority of the sediment load of the system. The Pick-Sloan plan, authorized by the 1944 Flood Control Act, and the Missouri River Master Manual operations have direct and indirect impacts on the Mississippi River. After 65 years, some changes in the authorized purposes may well be appropriate, but must be made only after careful study and deliberation. In order to ensure that any impacts on the Mississippi River generated by changes contemplated in the authorized purposes of the Missouri River are fully understood and assessed, the Commission requests the following:

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.

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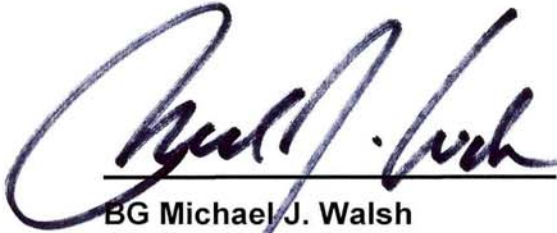
- That the Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study fully assesses the impacts of potential changes in flow regimes in the Missouri River on the Mississippi River with particular attention to flood damage reduction, navigation, and sediment loads.

- That the Northwestern Division of the Corps of Engineers consults closely with the St. Louis District of the Mississippi Valley Division on the assessment of these impacts to the Mississippi River.

- That the Northwestern Division briefs the Mississippi River Commission on the results of the interim external peer reviews and independent science reviews before the study is finalized.

The Mississippi River Commission is dedicated to helping achieve the long-term vision of the incredible resource that is the entire Mississippi River Basin. We will continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, other Federal agencies, the basin's states, and other non-governmental groups to realize that vision.

Mississippi River Commission
Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study
August 21, 2009



BG Michael J. Walsh
President-Designee
Mississippi Valley Division
Vicksburg, MS



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



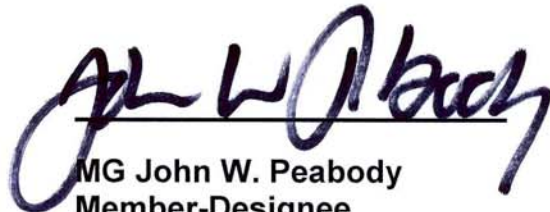
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Portland, OR



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Listening, Inspecting, Partnering and Engineering since 1879

America's Watershed: A 200-year vision

An Intergenerational Commitment

Our people ...

- Enjoy a quality of life unmatched in the world.
- Lead secure lives along any river or tributary in the basin.
- Enjoy fresh air and the surrounding fauna, flora and forests while hunting, fishing and recreating along any river or tributary in the basin.
- Travel easily, safely, and affordably to various destinations in the watershed.
- Drink from and use the abundant waters of any river, stream or aquifer in the basin.
- Choose from an abundance of affordable basic goods and essential supplies that are grown, manufactured, and transported along the river to local and world markets.

National Security &
Comprehensive
Flood Damage Reduction

Infrastructure & Energy

Environmental
Sustainability
and Recreation

Water Supply & Water
Quality

Movement of Goods;
Agriculture & Manufacturing

Leveraging engineering, science, technology and public policy

Mississippi River Commission
America's Watershed – 200 Year Vision
August 20, 2009



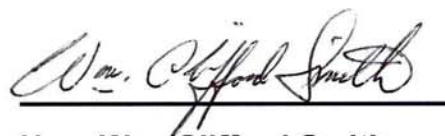
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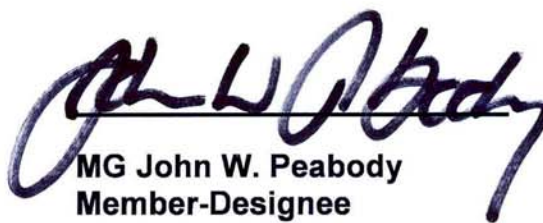
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High-Water Inspection Trip Report

Mississippi River Commission

Priorities....

- 200-year Vision – America’s Watershed “seed planting” development and diverse buy in
 - » Ensure vision has system-wide focus
 - » Ensure vision compliments national vision
- Infrastructure
 - » Use MRC process of listening, inspecting, and partnering to increase awareness of the deteriorating infrastructure in the Mississippi Valley and the Mississippi drainage basin
 - » Through already-established relationships, develop plans to address infrastructures in the valley and the basin; lead federal efforts
 - » Use MRC process to increase and improve infrastructure investment in the valley and the basin
- Environmental Sustainability
 - » Integrate science based, sustainable and resilient work into all projects (life-cycle costs)
 - » LCA: Explore innovative approaches/solutions such as water / sediment diversions
- Comprehensive Flood Control
 - » MR&T (Mississippi River Levees, Morganza to Gulf)
 - » Upper Miss Comprehensive Plan
 - » Communicate MRC/MR&T process as successful model to follow in the six major sub-basins comprising the world’s 3rd largest drainage basin – the Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Red, Arkansas, Illinois River basin and tributaries.
- Navigation – available and improving delivery
 - » Address container on barge for 2013
 - » Dredging of small ports and harbors
 - » Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP)
- Water Supply
 - » Prolonged drought concerns/storage of runoff
 - » Aquifer depletion



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.

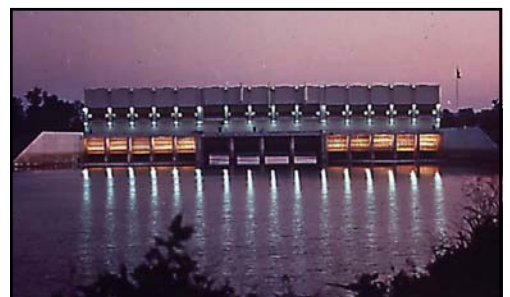
PROJECT BENEFITS

Flood Control

- \$12.9 billion invested for planning, construction, operation and maintenance since 1928
- \$346 billion in flood damages prevented, since 1928
- Approximately 4 million people protected
- 27 to 1 return on each dollar invested

Navigation

- More than 500 million tons of cargo move on the Mississippi River system each year.
- \$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.





World's 3rd Largest Watershed

Drainage basin for 41% of the United States

