



Open Channels

The Corps responds to Hurricane Isaac, assists Mississippi and Louisiana

By Bob Anderson
MVD Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division is in full hurricane response mode as the slow-moving storm creates havoc along the Gulf Coast. The drenching rains and powerful winds of Hurricane Isaac made landfall last night along the north-central Gulf Coast near New Orleans. The safety of the public is and always will be the Corps top priority.

MVD is supporting the states of Louisiana and Mississippi and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Regions IV and VI operations centers to organize response efforts. The Corps has received mission assignments from FEMA and we have deployed Emergency Power Teams to Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Commodities, debris and temporary roofing teams are also being deployed to Louisiana.

Other response teams, such as commodities, debris, temporary roofing and temporary housing, have been placed on alert status to support Florida, Alabama and Mississippi. The Corps is also deploying Emergency Command and Control Vehicles to assist with onsite communications. Two

vehicles are deploying to Alabama, and one vehicle is deploying to Mississippi.

The National Hurricane Center forecasts a storm surge of 6 to 12 feet for southeast Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, and a 3 to 6 feet surge for the Florida Panhandle. We are confident in the new Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System around greater New Orleans, a system built for storm surge that has a 1% chance of occurring each year. The New Orleans District will reduce risk of flooding by operating the surge barriers and closure structures per operational protocols.

"Teams from our six districts and other districts within the United States are trained, rehearsed and ready to move into the area with FEMA and state emergency management teams as soon as practical," said David Sills, Chief of MVD's Readiness and Contingency Operations. "We also want to make sure our employees and their families are safe while providing continuity of operations."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducts its emergency response activities under two basic authorities: the Flood Control and Coastal Emergency Act (P.L. 84- 99, as amended) and the Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 93-288, as amended). Under the Stafford Act, the Corps supports the Federal Emergency Management Agency in carrying out the National Response Plan, which calls on 26 Federal departments and agencies to provide coordinated disaster relief and recovery operations.

The Mississippi Valley Division has a primary role in support of the National Response Plan. The plan describes the basic structure by which the federal government will mobilize resources and conduct response and recovery activities to assist states and local governments in coping with the consequences of significant natural or man-made disasters, to include terrorist events.

HURRICANE INFORMATION:



The Mississippi Valley Division is currently engaged with Hurricane Isaac response and recovery efforts. You can access current hurricane information from the following websites:

- Mississippi Valley Division: <http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil>
- Vicksburg District: <http://www.mvk.usace.army.mil>
- New Orleans District: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil>
- National Hurricane Center: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hurricane information page: <http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>
- Mississippi Hurricane Preparedness Guide: <http://www.msma.org/preparation/documents/HurricanePreparedness.pdf>
- The American Red Cross has opened more than a dozens of shelters in Florida, and moving hundreds of trained disaster workers into the state. To find an open shelter, please visit <http://www.redcross.org/find-help/shelter>.

Within this plan, the Department of Defense has designated the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as the primary agency for planning, preparedness and response under the Emergency Support Function #3, Public Works and Engineering. The type of assistance provided by the Corps includes restoration of critical public services and facilities, including supply of adequate amounts of potable water and ice, temporary restoration of water supply systems, provision of temporary emergency electrical power, temporary emergency housing, structural evaluation of buildings and damage assessment, and clearance, removal, and disposal of debris.

The Mississippi Valley Division is responsible for emergency preparedness and developing plans for all hazards response. In addition, each of its six districts has a specific primary mission assignment for execution in support of FEMA under the National Response Plan. These missions are executed by a Planning and Response Team trained specifically for the assigned mission. These teams may respond within the Mississippi Valley area or may be deployed worldwide.

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Mississippi River Commission conducts low-water inspection trip

By MVD Public Affairs

The Mississippi River Commission conducted its annual low-water inspection trip in the Missouri Basin starting in North Dakota traveling the basin to the confluence with the Mississippi then on the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers August 12-24, 2012.

Commission members met with local residents along the river to hear their concerns, ideas and issues during five public meetings held aboard the motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI* in Alton, Ill., at Mel Price Lock & Dam; Caruthersville, Mo., at City Front; Memphis, Tenn., at Mud Island River Park; Greenville, Miss., at Greenville Bridge Boat Ramp; and Houma, La., at Enterprise Marine Services.

All meetings were open to the public. Local interests were invited to present their views and suggestions on

matters affecting the water resources infrastructure needs in the valley, including flood control and the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, environmental issues, recreation and navigation.

The agenda for each public meeting was as follows:

1. Summary report by president of the commission on national and regional issues affecting



The motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI* during the 2012 low-water inspection trip on the Mississippi River.

- the programs and projects on the Mississippi River and its tributaries.
2. District commander's overview for the commission on current project issues in the respective district area.
3. Presentations to the commission by local organizations and members of the public giving views or comments on any issue affecting the programs or projects of the commission and the Corps of Engineers.

The MRC, established in 1879, is composed of seven members, each nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate. Three of the organization's members are officers of the Corps of Engineers; one member is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and three members are civilians, two of whom are civil engineers.

General duties of the commission include recommendation of policy and work programs, the

study of and reporting upon the necessity for modifications or additions to the flood control and navigation project, recommendation upon any matters authorized by law, and making semi-annual inspection trips. The duties of the commission include the entire length of the Mississippi River from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minn., to Head of Passes, La., where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

The purpose of the public meeting is to maintain a dialogue, an exchange of viewpoints and ideas flowing between the public and the Corps. Presentations by the public are made orally, but a copy of the remarks should be presented to the commission for the official record.

The public hearing process is unique to the Mississippi River Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The benefits of hearing the issues and concerns first hand through the public hearing process are invaluable to the commission and the Corps. Also, the interaction with congressional, federal and state interests, local boards and non-government organizations and the public is crucial to the decision-making process of the commission.



MRC Low-Water Inspection Trip



Maj. Gen. John W. Peabody (standing) recently addressed local residents during a public meeting aboard the motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI*. Five public meetings were conducted in selected towns along the Miss. River so commission members had the opportunity to meet with local residents and hear their concerns, ideas and issues during the MRC's annual low-water inspection trip.



A local citizen addresses MRC members during a public meeting, held aboard the motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI* in August 2012. MRC members are (left to right) Rear Adm. Gerd F. Glang, the Honorable William Clifford Smith, the Honorable Sam E. Angel, MG John W. Peabody (MRC President), the Honorable R. D. James, Brig. Gen. Margaret W. Burcham and COL. Anthony Funkhouser.



Devils Lake, N.D., resident wins national Corps of Engineers construction award

By Bianca Jones
St. Paul District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Headquarters recently announced its selection of Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District employee and Devils Lake, N.D., resident Loren Nishek as the recipient of its 2011 Construction Hard Hat of the Year Award.

Nishek received the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division Hard Hat Award in February 2011, making him a contender for the national level award.

The Construction Hard Hat of the Year Award is given out annually by the Corps of Engineers to recognize excellence in construction quality management by its construction field personnel. Nishek was chosen as the recipient



Loren Nishek, recipient of the USACE HQ's 2011 Construction Hard Hat of the Year award.

over contenders from 10 other division offices across the entire Corps of Engineers.

Nishek, who's worked for the Corps of Engineers for 17 years, is a senior project engineer in the district's construction branch. Ni-

shek was recognized for his actions as project engineer in the Western Area Devils Lake Resident Office, where he has provided leadership for construction efforts associated with numerous Corps of Engineers' contracts in the Devils Lake Basin.

"Loren Nishek has provided critical leadership for the last couple of years in the Devils Lake Basin in constructing numerous projects under unique circumstances," said Mike Evenson, the district's western area engineer. "Those who have worked with him fully recognize and respect his capabilities and standards of excellence, whether outside or inside the Corps of Engineers."

Nishek was recognized in August at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Senior Leaders Conference in Little Rock, Ark.

St. Paul District team receives Outstanding Planning Achievement Award

By George Stringham
St. Paul District

The headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, selected the St. Paul District as the 2011 Outstanding Planning Achievement Award recipient July 17 for completing the Fargo, N.D., / Moorhead, Minn., Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study.

While similar studies can take several years to complete, the team completed this study in less than 36 months.

"I take great pride in the team for earning this great award," said Col. Michael Price, St. Paul District commander. "They performed exceptional work on developing and executing the accelerated schedule to complete the final feasibility report and environmental impact statement."

During the study, the team encountered several challenges, to include three major flood events. The 2009 flood event in Fargo, N.D., / Moorhead, Minn., was the highest recorded flood event in history.

The proposed project involves the construction of a 36-mile long diversion channel located in North Dakota that would direct floodwater around the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. The project would temporarily store up to 200,000 acre-feet of flood water immediately upstream of the diversion channel inlet in order to minimize downstream impacts.



USACE partners with Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee, gathers comments from public on Lower Miss. study

By Pamela Harrion
MVD Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' districts in Memphis, Vicksburg and New Orleans recently partnered with the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee to gather comments from the public on the Vicksburg-based organization's study and report, called the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment.



Bret Walters (left), study manager and senior planner/regional technical specialist at the Memphis District, gathers input from the public for the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee during a meeting held at the Vicksburg Convention Center. (Photo by Bruce Reid, LMRCC)

Seven stations and a slide show were set up inside two adjoining meeting rooms at the Vicksburg Convention Center, where several members of the public gathered Aug. 15 to share their knowledge, interests and concerns on the federally funded study and report to Congress on how best to manage habitat needs for wildlife and outdoor recreation on the Lower Miss. River. To provide input during the meeting, people submitted their comments on cards, drew/wrote on the maps provided and talked to the representatives at the stations.

The public can also provide their comments at a later time by accessing the project's web site and Facebook page at <http://lmrcc.org/lmrra.htm>; emailing comments to

bret.l.walters@usace.army.mil; or mailing comments to Bret Walters, 167 North Main, B-202, Memphis, TN 38103.

According to Bret Walters, study manager and senior planner/regional technical specialist at the Memphis District, three assessments will be performed to identify what information is needed to make future river-related management decisions and what steps could be taken to address a wider range of uses without adversely impacting navigation or flood risk management priorities. These include:

1. Assessment of information needed for river-related management.
2. Assessment of natural resource habitat needs.

3. Assessment of the need for river-related recreation and access.

The study includes parts of seven states. A wide range of stakeholders is being engaged to develop a strategy to support broad-based management of the lower river. The three assessments will form the basis for a management plan to support and guide future management decisions. There will be a two-year time limit

for each assessment. Information needs assessment started in January 2012.

Additional partners in the study are The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Delta Wildlife, Wildlife Mississippi, Mississippi River Corridor and Quapaw Canoe Company.



Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Site Grand Opening Ceremony

By Kavanaugh Breazeale
Vicksburg District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District and the Vicksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau held a grand opening ceremony of the Lower Mississippi River Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Site August 24, 2012.

The LMRM is located in downtown Vicksburg at 910 Washington Street and features the retired motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI IV* and a flood model of the Mississippi River. The museum and motor vessel will educate and inform visitors about the lower Mississippi River and its relationship to Vicksburg and the lower Mississippi Delta region. It will provide a glimpse at life along the river with an orientation theater and an assortment of interactive and educational displays for all ages.

A model of the Mississippi River on the west side of the museum building interprets the stretch of the Mississippi River from Greenville to Vicksburg. It illustrates how the Mississippi River, levees and control structures interact while simulating an in bank and flood flow. The model was designed and built by the Engineer Research Development Center at Vicksburg.

The motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI IV* tugboat was in use from the 1960s until 1993. Tours, interactive historical displays and a boat simulator is available for visitors. The facebook address is www.facebook.com/LMRMIC.



Pictured is the Lower Mississippi River Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Site, located in Vicksburg, Miss.



MRC member the Honorable Sam E. Angel of Lake Village, Ark. cuts the ribbon during the Lower Miss. River Museum and Interpretive Site Grand Opening, August 24, 2012.

Curious about what's going on at the **Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway**? Here's a short video showing progress underway at the center crevasse and at the upper crevasse borrow pit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XNU8Delvyc>



Corps' Louisiana Field Office promotes water safety

By *Kavanaugh Breazeale*
Vicksburg District

The Louisiana Field Office of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District continuously works to promote water safety to the public. The most recent contribution of the LFO was the staffing of a booth at the 33rd Annual Folk Festival as a continuation of efforts to educate the public about the Corps' mission, partnering and its ongoing water safety program.

The two-day event, held in

Natchitoches, La., is an annual event promoted by Northwestern State University and the Natchitoches Visitor and Tourist Bureau.

LFO lead park ranger, Diane Cook, and ranger Suzanne Odom, along with volunteer Blake Babin, staffed the booth, which promoted the Corps' mission and water safety program. The Corps' Red River navigation book and charts were made available for inspection by the public and were invaluable in educating the public about navigable waters within the Vicksburg

District that include the Ouachita-Black and Red rivers.

The Vicksburg District's LFO provides day-use activities and camping at two river systems and three lakes. The LFO, which includes the Ouachita-Black River, Red River, Bayou Bodcau, Caddo Lake and Wallace Lake, has an annual attendance at these areas totaling over 1.3 million visitors.

Reinvigorating the USACE Environmental Operating Principles

By *USACE Headquarters*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers unveiled its seven [Environmental Operating Principles](#) March 26, 2002. These principles were designed to provide USACE direction on achieving better stewardship of air, water and land resources while showing the connection between managing those resources and protecting environmental health. The EOPs made evident the direction USACE would take to achieve greater synergy between sustainability and execution of USACE programs.

Offices at all levels of USACE—[Military Missions](#), [Civil Works](#) and [Research and Development](#)—have taken the spirit of the EOPs to heart. Today, integrating environmental considerations in daily project decisions is second nature. The EOPs, or green ethics, when applied by all employees, ensure that all USACE actions consider the environment and are sustainable now and in the future. But we can, and must, do better, for the sake of future

generations. The level of environmental commitment must expand and intensify.

Reinvigorating the EOPs

In 2012, USACE undertook a review of the Environmental Operating Principles to determine if changes were needed. As a result of this review, the Chief of Engineers recommended:

- The principles should be reinvigorated with an increased emphasis on the proactive nature of each principle.
- Strong environmental leadership that encompasses all aspects of the human environment is needed at the senior executive level at Headquarters to implement an environmental vision throughout USACE and place greater emphasis on ecosystem programs and environmental support.
- Educating staff as well as leaders, particularly new commanders and senior leaders, is needed for all business lines on sustainable solu-

tions for multilevel environmental restoration, protection and remediation, the purpose of the EOPs and implementation of the associated national policy.

- Measurable long-term goals and indicators of success should be developed for the EOPs.
- It is essential that each USACE team member understand his or her responsibility to proactively implement the EOPs as key to the USACE mission.
- The EOPs must be considered and incorporated in any revisions to the principles and guidelines and any new or revised engineer regulations, engineer pamphlets, engineer manuals or other guidance.
- Training is key to the initiative—all courses must include information on consideration and implementation of the EOPs.



Welcome Aboard!



Melissa Flanigan Mullen
Acting Levee Safety Officer
MVD Engineering Division

Melissa Flanigan Mullen is currently acting as the Levee Safety Program Manager for the Mississippi Valley Division. Melissa comes from Memphis District where she has been the District Levee Safety Program Manager since 2009. As a district Levee Safety Program Manager, she is responsible for implementing the Corps' Levee Safety Program within the Memphis District. While here at MVD, she will be working to ensure consistent application of the Corps' levee safety guidance and criteria among the six MVD districts.

Before being named the MVM Levee Safety Program Manager, Melissa spent 10 years with the Memphis District as a geotechnical design engineer. As a geotechnical engineer, the majority of her work focused on the identification, evaluation and long-term remediation of seepage on levees and floodwalls. Prior to joining the Corps of Engineers, she spent three years as a consulting geotechnical engineer designing a wide range of structural foundations.

During the 2011 high-water event on the Mississippi River, Melissa acted as geotechnical field advisor for two major flood fight areas. As a result

of her actions during the flood fight, Melissa received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service. She was also named one of the 2012 Memphis Metropolitan Area Federal Employees of the Year due in part to her efforts during the high-water event.

Melissa graduated from The University of Memphis with a master's degree in civil engineering in 1995. She is a licensed professional engineer with 16 years of experience in geotechnical engineering, 13 of those years with the Corps.

Melissa has been married for 16 years and is the proud mother of 11-year-old John Noah Mullen. She also finds herself mothering a very cranky 16-year-old mutt and a slightly psychotic cat. During her spare time, Melissa enjoys knitting, playing video games with her son and riding her bike.

We would also like to recognize and welcome the following new MVD employees:

- **Shawn Cosgrove**, Management Analysis Officer, Regional Business Resource Division
 - **Annette Harris**, Budget Technician, Regional Business Resource Division
 - **Sissy Hudson**, Budget Officer, Regional Business Resource Division
 - **Eileen Winkle**, Supervisory Human Resources Specialist, CPAC
-

SPECIAL RECOGNITION:



Brian Chewing
Acting Deputy Chief/Lead Program Manager
MVD Regional and Middle District Support Team, Vicksburg and Memphis

Congratulations to Mr. Brian Chewing who has been selected as Acting Deputy Chief and Lead Program Manager for the MVD Regional and Middle District Support Team, Vicksburg and Memphis.

Brian began his 120-day assignment with PD-KM August 26, 2012.

If you have a new employee in your office, or if you ARE a new employee to the Mississippi Valley Division, please contact the Public Affairs Office at 601-634-7729, so that we can introduce you to everyone in Open Channels.



Around the Division



Harold Riley, Jr. (far right), MVD Regional Logistics manager, recently presented the Memphis District Supply team with a Certificate of Achievement. The team consisting of Supervisor **Jimmy Longino, Ms. Vearlene Smith, Ms. Melinda Moore and Mr. James Payne** (missing from photo) has continuously proved to be a vital resource to the Ensley Engineer Yard. This team was instrumental in managing to arrange the turn in of more than 4000 items, valued at over \$30,000,000, coordinating transportation to Texarkana Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service; larger items such as a Caterpillar Bulldozer, a 4x4 Crane and a Long Boom Excavator were transferred to other government agencies utilizing GSA Advantage. The team utilized the services contracted to Pearce Liquidators and supervised the removal of scrap metal from Ensley Engineer Yard in excess of 100,000 pounds. Great job, Memphis District!



Ms. Erin Juergens has been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for being instrumental in all aspects of Logistics from right sizing the GSA Fleet with alternative vehicles to designing a Energy Conservation program that can be easily be adapted across other divisions. Erin has departed to Norfolk District but her efforts proved her to be a valuable team member.

Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Division Engineer

Maj. Gen. John W.
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Dates to Remember

Holidays in September

3—Labor Day - Labor Day is a legal U.S. holiday originating from the Central Labor Union to create a day off for the working man. It became a federal holiday in 1894.

11—Patriot Day - Patriot Day is observed in honor of the individuals who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks against the U.S. that occurred on September 11, 2001. On this day, Americans should display their flags at Half-Staff.

17—Constitution Day and Week - In honor and remembrance of the signing of the U.S. Constitution (September 17, 1787) and in recognition of the Americans who strive to uphold duties and responsibilities of citizenship, September 17 will be celebrated as Constitution Day and September 17-23 as Constitution Week.

21—International Day of Peace - International Day of Peace is a day where individuals around the world unite in a worldwide movement to create a Global Ceasefire and a day of peace and nonviolence. Created by a vote of the United Nations General Assembly in 1981, this day is dedicated to establishing and promoting world peace.

28—Native American Day - This day is set aside to honor and celebrate Native Americans, the first Americans to live in the U.S. By the time the first explorers and settlers arrived in Europe, Native Americans had populated the entire North American continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Gulf of Mexico all the way to the northern reaches of Canada.





Operation Boots to Business introduces returning Veterans to entrepreneurship

By Cassius Butts
SBA Regional Administrator

Each year, 250,000 service members make the transition from military service to civilian life. Here in Mississippi, 212,088 veterans call this state home. One of the greatest responsibilities our nation has is to honor and support these men and women. The Obama Administration is committed to providing a seamless transition from active duty to civilian life, and the U.S. Small Business Administration is committed to doing its part.

Veterans already over-index in entrepreneurship. In fact, nine percent of all U.S. firms are owned by veterans. More than 2.4 million veteran-owned businesses employ more than 5.8 million individuals. About one quarter of veterans say they are interested in starting or buying their own business. So, we know that providing greater access and opportunity to these veteran owned small businesses will help them grow and create jobs.

There are numerous SBA programs already in place specifically designed to support our veterans. Financing opportunities exist for veterans who are establishing or expanding their small business, including microloans and Patriot Express loans. Last year, SBA approved more than 4,300 loans to veterans totaling \$1.5 billion. Mississippi SBA contributed to these numbers by approving 52 loans

to veterans totaling \$13,623,000. Thousands of military reservists and veterans have received entrepreneurship training and business counseling through SBA-affiliated partnerships. Within the last two years, SBA worked with contracting officers to deliver the highest-ever percentage of federal contracts to service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses, totaling \$10.4 billion.

But we can do more. That's why the SBA launched Operation Boots to Business: From service to startup to help transitioning service members and veterans become entrepreneurs and create jobs.

Operation Boots to Business will build on SBA's role as a leader in entrepreneurship training. SBA will help connect veterans with its resource partner network – Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, SCORE, and Veterans Business Opportunity Centers – for support throughout the life-cycle of their new businesses.

Through its ongoing collaboration with Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families, SBA also will provide comprehensive training materials specifically geared toward transitioning service members.

The pilot program is currently underway with the Marine Corps at four locations-- Quantico, Va.;

Cherry Point, N.C.; Camp Pendleton, Calif.; and Twenty-Nine Palms, Calif. By next year we plan to expand to all branches of the military. The initiative includes three phases of instruction: a short introductory video on entrepreneurship; an in-person classroom training on entrepreneurship; and an in-depth, online, eight-week entrepreneurship course that leads to the creation of a business plan.

Veterans are natural entrepreneurs, already possessing the experience and leadership skills to start businesses and create jobs. Boots to Business is an opportunity to help our local veterans channel these skills and ultimately help create an economy built to last.

For more information on the Boots to Business training program, and on how to take part as a transitioning service member, please visit <http://www.sba.gov/bootstobusiness> <<http://www.sba.gov/bootstobusiness>>.