

Vicksburg District responds to historic March rainfall, flooding

By Bob Anderson, MVD Public Affairs

Public safety is the Corps top priority, so when communities, businesses and farms within the Vicksburg District were recently threatened by record rains and major flooding, district flood fighters rapidly and aggressively responded to help prevent loss of life and property.

According to Mississippi Valley Division meteorologist Bill Frederick, normal rainfall for the entire month of March at Monroe is 4.72 inches, and the recorded total was 21.07 inches or 446 percent of normal. Shreveport's normal rainfall for the entire month of March is 4.13 inches, and they recorded 10.41 inches or 252 percent. To put it into perspective, Monroe's two-week rainfall totals during this event topped the previous two-week total since records began in 1930. Also, in the six-day period of the storm, a cooperative station just outside of Monroe recorded half of its ANNUAL precipitation total.

As the deluge continued with no end in sight, and with more than 2,000 homes evacuated as rapidly rising rivers threatened to overtop levees, the Vicksburg District deployed 48 flood fighters who worked hand-in-hand to offer technical assistance and rapidly distribute 157,000 sandbags (and a sandbag filling machine); 70 rolls of poly; 3,000 linear feet of Hesco; and 14 pumps. These critical materials helped communities save lives, while also preventing damages to public infrastructure and private property.

Additionally, the Monroe, Louisiana, Red River, Vidalia and Greenwood project and field offices patrolled and monitored a combined 650 miles of levee during this high water, high drama event, with some levees coming within inches of overtopping.

At the peak of the flood fight, Vicksburg District also had 10 people working within the Emergency Operations Center, and at least 56 others within the district provided support to the mission.

"It was intense and we did not know what the end result would be, but the levee boards and our technical assistance teams fought like hell and saved a bunch of homes and maybe some lives," said Greg Raimondo, public affairs chief for the Vicksburg District.

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March 17 - A National Guard helicopter placed super-sized sandbags in the East Point Levee (along Loggy Bayou, which forms the Bossier-Red River River Parish line), which eroded because of rushing floodwaters.

"It's anguishing to see all these people suffering," says Tensas Basin Levee District's Executive Director John Stringer. "It's devastating when you fly over all of these communities and see how much water is in all these homes. It's a sobering event."

"We're going to do everything in our power to make sure that river is confined within that levee system and hope to not add to their misery down the road," says Stringer.

[\("Vicksburg District responds..." continued on page 4\)](#)



Around the Bend



Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr
Commander,
Mississippi Valley Division

President,
Mississippi River Commission

MVD Team,

Public safety, reducing risk and damages, and providing expert and professional services to the nation are three key ingredients the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD)/Mississippi River Commission (MRC) Team remains focused on in accomplishing the MVD mission. MVD is very thankful for all the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) wide support over the past two weeks, and would offer three topics above the fold in this month's article:

1. The Mississippi River Commission in action.
2. The cost of and strategy for recovery from the 2015 Winter Flood.
3. Engaging with Mr. Lowry Crook, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

First, the MRC is committed to being the voice for our partners in the watershed. The commission is dedicated to listening to the concerns of all stakeholders and partnering to find engineering solutions to the challenges. Six of the seven members of the Mississippi River Commission actively participated in recent Washington events, with the exception being Brig. Gen. Rick Kaiser (Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD)), who graciously covered the Inland Waterways Conference in the MVD footprint. Brig. Gen. Kaiser also played a huge role in the winter flood as LRD did great work in reducing stages at Cairo through management of the Kentucky and Barkley Lakes.

Second, we appreciate the support of HQUSACE and others to provide the testimony regarding winter flood damages. With the necessary repairs to the system being estimated at \$822 million, with \$108 million identified as Class I (Urgent & Compelling) and Class II (Urgent), we are developing strategies to address this part of the most urgent repairs. This includes aligning funding within the FY16 Work Plan to address levee slides, a failed culvert, channel scours and harbor dredging. Joe Redican, deputy chief, Mississippi Valley Division Regional Integration Team (RIT), is helping us synchronize this through the RIT. We appreciate the leadership of Rich Lockwood, chief of Operations at Pittsburgh District, in preparing the repair estimates from the 2015 Winter Flood. Many thanks to Brig. Gen. Rick Kaiser and Col. Bernie Lindstrom for loaning Rich to MVD.

Third, on March 1st, Tom Holden met with Mr. Lowry Crook, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. Tom focused on topics related to public land acquisitions, St. John-New Madrid Floodway and impacts of the 2015 Winter Flood.

In addition, it has been an extraordinary past two weeks, both in D.C. and along the Mississippi River.

THE CURRENT FIGHT – Col. John Cross (Vicksburg District) and Col. Rick Hansen (New Orleans District) continue the multi-watershed support using the early and proactive engagements with congressional delegations, local partners and media to continue the impetus of the invaluable communication and synchronization exhibited during the winter flood event. Those boots on the ground have literally prevented additional loss of homes at Red Chute Bayou in Bossier City, Louisiana, and minimized flooding in several small towns and communities in North Mississippi.

Arkabutla Lake (see the picture included in this article) is a timely example during recent flooding that even when FRM (flood risk management) project features operate as designed, there may be significant downstream impacts.



Around the Bend *(continued from page 2)*

FUTURE OPERATIONS

– On March 10, we conducted a Commander’s Spring Flood Assessments and an Interagency Flood Synchronization Exercise with the regional staff and several of our key partners including Southwestern Division, Northwestern Division, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, Federal Emergency Management Agency Regions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, plus U.S. Army North and Defense Coordinating Officers.

STRATEGIC SHAPING OF THE PROGRAM – Examples of this include the impacts of the Southwest Pass Dredging effort, seeking reprogramming within the FY16 Work Plan, and supporting our interdependence with the Lower Mississippi River Forecast Center (National Weather Service).



Lake Arkabutla overtopped March 31. Project Office personnel continue 24-hour surveillance of the dam and spillway to monitor conditions. The lake will be drawn down slowly and deliberately over the next several months in order to regain storage capacity.

- Continued dredging in the Southwest Pass is expected to take up to six months, along with a one- to two-month effort on the Lower Mississippi crossings to approach the authorized depth of 45 ft. This is captured in the winter flood requirements that is being evaluated by the HQs Steering Committee, which started on March 16th.
- Due to damage from the 2015 Winter Flood, in an effort to buy down risk within the Mississippi River & Tributaries (MR&T) system we are coordinating with our RIT and other HQUSACE offices on options to fund these repairs, to include potential reprogramming actions.
- In partnership with the Lower Mississippi River Forecast Center (NWS), we are working to sign a document during the April MRC High-Water Inspection trip that supports existing national agreements and strengthens the regional relationships. MRC Commissioner Rear Adm. Gerd Glang and I met with Mr. Tom Graziano, acting director of the NOAA’s National Water Center, and Dr. Louis W. Uccellini, director of the NWS, to thank the NWS and NOAA for their solid support of USACE.

The MVD Team will continue to remain focused on providing a reliable navigation channel that is critical to our nation’s economy, working closely with our partners and stakeholders, and leveraging all resources to ensure navigation.

Essayons Along the River...Building Strong...Army Strong!
MG Mike Wehr



Vicksburg District responds...(continued from page 1)



Workers place and reinforce super sacks in Brouillette, Louisiana, along the Red River Mar. 17.

Successful Knowledge Management-related work

By Gerry Hardin, Knowledge Management

Two successful Knowledge Management-related initiatives are highlighted in this month's article.

USACE's Mandatory Center of Expertise (MCX) for the Curation and Management of Archaeological Collections has been assisting the Detroit District's Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, with their archives. Part of this project involves locating an appropriate repository for approximately 2,500 glass-plate negatives of the locks and surrounding areas. Yvette Hinton, the St. Louis District records manager, Natalie Drew of the MCX and Andrea Hoff (a Department of Energy intern assigned to assist the Soo Locks on this project) have been struggling with this issue for at least the last six months, but that has changed recently. After finally speaking with an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the team now has a path forward. NARA has agreed to take these invaluable glass-plate negatives and

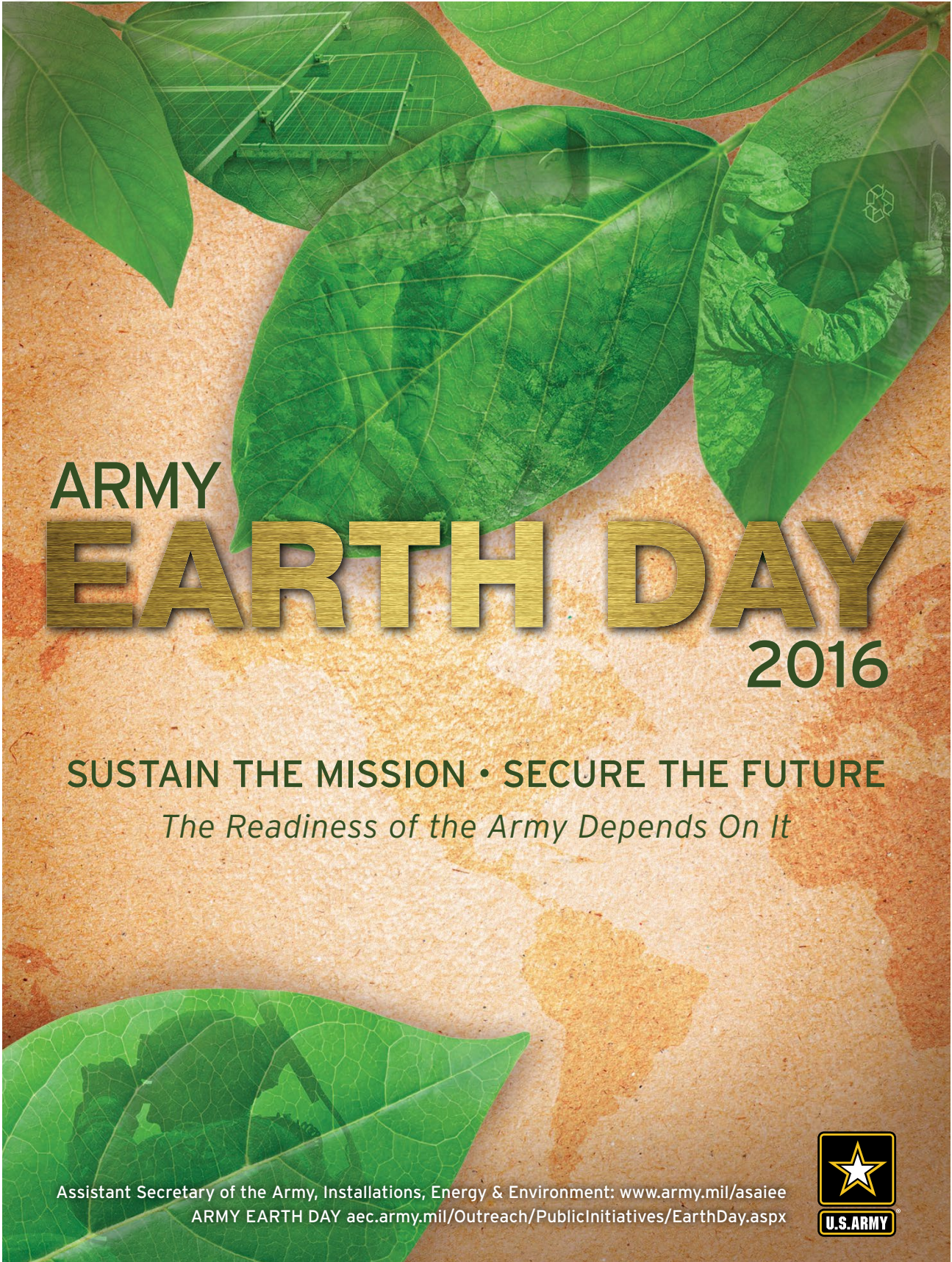
accession them into their collections. The Soo Locks already has digitized the images, so once the transfer is complete both parties will have useful images for everyday use (Soo Locks) and historical research (NARA). This process can serve as a model for how a district appropriately transfers glass-plate negatives out of its care and into the care of our nation's national archives.

The St. Louis District's knowledge repository component of its KM effort is led by Brad Townsend, and Brad has employed a number of strategies to more effectively manage non-project related electronic information. Most specifically, the district's electronic files were, quite frankly, an utter mess. There were at least 37 shares/servers being used by the district with no thought for overall organization and security protocols. Brad developed a plan, using software and hardware already in the district, that established a standardized, organization-based drive mapping for the district that reduced the shares/servers from 37 to seven. Each branch within each division in

the district has control of the organization and security of their folders, and collaboration folders have been added at a number of levels within the structure that allow sharing of files through direct links throughout the district. Additionally, Brad researched and located a software program (TreeSize Professional) that could be used to locate duplicate documents throughout the district (and delete them), run reports on data duplication, and determine the age of files and types of files. TreeSize is also used to determine the exact folder sizes with an eye toward misuse of private user shares, and it's been very useful in determining our archiving policies and enforcing the district's data storage policies. These efforts clearly address the district's KM mission to "Maintain an integrated, logical and finite system of hardware, software and business/knowledge processes that enables each district staff member to effectively and efficiently capture, store, retrieve, analyze, and share information and knowledge."



Army Earth Day is April 22



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Around the Division



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr presented DeAnna Prestwood, MR&T senior program manager, with the Commander's Award for Civilian Service Mar. 8. DeAnna's dedication and exemplary service to the Mississippi River System and the MVD during the 2015/16 Historic Mississippi River Winter Flood provided untiring efforts that were instrumental in developing and fielding a process for streamlined identification of damages, performing assessments, evaluating risks, and communicating with our stakeholders and senior leaders.

APRIL 27, 2016

The Mississippi Valley Division wishes you a Happy Administrative Professionals Day!



Open Channels

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Mississippi Valley Division**



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