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U.S. ARMY, CORPS OF ENGINEERS, TULSA DISTRICT
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CESWT-OD

31 MAY 2013

DISTRICT COMMANDER'S POLICY MEMORANDUM #126

SUBJECT: McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System
Recreational Lockage Policy

1. Purpose. This policy is to establish guidance for the implementation and execution of recreational vessel lockages on the State of Oklahoma portion of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS).

2. Background. The USACE navigation mission is to provide safe, reliable, efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable waterborne transportation systems for movement of commerce, national security needs, and recreation. Faced with the realization of budget constraints and increasing maintenance requirements, USACE must take steps to extend the service life of its locks by optimizing usage and by increasing maintenance. This policy provides guidance to implement these steps related to recreational traffic on the system.

3. Applicability. This policy applies to locks in Oklahoma on the MKARNS. The USACE District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is establishing a policy, excepting for geographic and District-specific references, for the portion of the MKARNS in Oklahoma. These policies are intended to act in tandem and will only be revised or rescinded in tandem with coordination between the two Districts.

4. References.

a. 33 CFR 207 - Navigation and Navigable Waters, McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System: use, administration, and navigation, revised 2 July 2011.

b. 36 CFR 327 - Rules and Regulations, dated May 2000.

c. OPORD 2012-63, USACE Implementation of Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Process Improvement, Standard Level of Service.

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d. SWD Operations Order (OPORD) 2012-05, Southwestern Division (SWD) USACE Implementation of Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Process Improvement, Standard Levels of Service, dated 20 August 2012.

5. Objective. The intent of this policy is to effect measures related to recreational traffic on the MKARNS to (1) reduce the number of gate cycles, thus prolonging the life of the system and (2) increase the number of maintenance hours to address routine and critical maintenance needs (when required) to improve reliability and reduce unscheduled outages at these locations.

6. Policy. Based on the foregoing, the following will be implemented, related to recreational lockages on the MKARNS:

a. Locks 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 in Oklahoma will not be available for recreational lockages Monday through Thursday, 1000-1400 hrs.

b. During the closure period emergency response personnel in watercraft will be locked through to facilitate search and rescue operations.

c. Prior to a special event such as Bass Tournaments, Regattas, large pleasure vessels such as cabin cruisers, yachts, etc., needing to transit the entire MKARNS system, consideration through prior coordination will be given to suspending or shortening at one or more locks due to a special event.

d. An annual reassessment of this policy will be conducted to determine if adjustments are required. If adjustments are required, then the District Commander will approve changes to schedules. This annual reassessment will coincide with the annual reassessment of IMTS Levels of Service applicability to the MKARNS locks.

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7. Procedures.

a. The District will, to the greatest extent possible, advertise Scheduled Maintenance Outages by Navigation Notice, using established distribution method. Relaying of these notices by internet or social media is strongly encouraged.

b. The locking of recreational vessels will be accomplished by the swinging of a single gate, rather than both gates. Generally, the right side of the lock chamber in the direction of the lockage will be used. This will ensure the amount of gate swings are evenly dispersed with consistent use by the boat operators.

c. In accordance with 33 CFR 202.75h, precedence at locks shall be given to vessels owned by the United States, licensed commercial passenger vessels operating on a published schedule or regularly operating in the "for hire" trade, commercial tows, rafts and pleasure craft, in the order named.

d. Navigation system managers may expedite the lockage for recreational vessels by locking them through with commercial vessels, except when vessels carrying volatile cargoes or other substances are likely to emit toxic, flammable or explosive vapors. If the lockage of pleasure craft cannot be accomplished within the time required for three (3) single lockages, a separate lockage of pleasure craft shall be made.

e. Navigation system managers may depart from this procedure to achieve optimum utilization of the lock or in accordance with the order of precedence stated in paragraphs (d) (2) and h of section 207.75.

f. Recreational boaters are encouraged to utilize the public boat ramps to access the upstream or downstream portions of the MKARNS, due to possible extended waiting periods that may be experienced due to scheduled maintenance outages or while a commercial tow progresses through a locks.

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g. Commercial users of the system will be encouraged to adjust their schedules to allow for daily closure windows to occur, where applicable.

8. Enforcement.


a. Failure to comply with directions given by the navigation system manager(s) pursuant to the regulations in this section may result in refusal of lockage.

b. All boating laws are in effect, enforceable by Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, Oklahoma Highway Patrol, Marine Division Officers.

9. Responsibilities.

a. This lockage policy is to be communicated to the public, commercial tow industry, and private and state recreation stakeholders to maintain an open forum on this policy's guidelines, through respective communications plans developed by Tulsa District Public Affairs Office.

b. Project Offices with Navigation missions, Public Affairs and Operations Technical Support Offices will be responsible to ensure public availability of information and guidance for the safe and efficient use of locks.


MICHAEL J. TEAGUE
Colonel, EN
Commanding