



News Release

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Mississippi Valley Division
Mississippi River Commission

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Mississippi River Commission Schedules Low-water Inspection Trip

VICKSBURG, Miss., July 15, 2005 -- The Mississippi River Commission will conduct a low-water inspection trip August 15-26, 2005.

The MRC will spend week one on the Ohio River, beginning August 13 in Huntington, WV, and ending August 19 in Paducah, Ken. Commission members will spend the first week listening to and meeting with local interests, partners and other stakeholders, as well as inspecting and reviewing the status of major regional projects and studies.

Commission members will get a first-hand look at locks, dams and navigation facilities on the Ohio River system in order to prepare a report to the Chief of Engineers, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and Congress.

Commanders of both Northwestern Division (whose boundary encompasses the Missouri River) and the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division are on the commission because of their roles as commanders of major tributaries of the Mississippi River.

The Ohio River contributes roughly 60% of the water that flows into the lower Mississippi River. That is why flood damage controls on the Ohio River are so important to the lower Mississippi communities. The Corps' water management experts participate in the operation of the Ohio River as a system in order to protect communities throughout the entire Ohio River watershed - on the tributaries of the Ohio, the Ohio mainstem and the lower Mississippi River.

During the second week of the inspection trip, four public meetings have been scheduled aboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI in selected towns along the river so Commission members have the opportunity to meet with local residents and hear their concerns, ideas and issues. The meeting places, dates and times are as follows:

- August 22 9:00 a.m. Cairo, Ill., at the City Front
- August 23 9:00 a.m. Memphis, Tenn., at the Mud Island River
Park Landing
- August 24 9:00 a.m. Greenville, Miss., at the City Front
- August 26 9:00 a.m. Morgan City, La., at the Port
Commission Dock

All meetings are open to the public. Local interests are 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 will be as follows:

1. President of the Commission will present a summary of national and regional issues affecting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Commission programs and projects on the Mississippi River and its tributaries.
2. District Commander will present an overview of current project issues in his district.
3. Local organizations and members of the public will have an opportunity to make presentations or offer views or comments on any issue affecting programs or projects of the Commission and the Corps as noted above.

The MRC, organized 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, as established in 1879, included 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 meetings is to maintain a dialogue and 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 first hand the issues and concerns 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.