



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Louis District®

News Release

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Corps dredge moves north to restore Mississippi River channel

St. Louis, Mo. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in St. Louis has been informed by the U.S. Coast Guard that three tows reported bumping the river's bottom at river mile 161 on the Mississippi, eight miles south of the Jefferson Barracks Bridge. The St. Louis District's Dredge Potter has been ordered to the site to reestablish a safe, dependable navigation channel.

After receiving reports from the Coast Guard, Lance Engle, dredging project manager for the Corps, sent the Motor Vessel Pathfinder to survey the trouble spot and mark the best available channel for mariners. The Pathfinder's crew arrived on scene yesterday afternoon and buoyed a 250-foot-wide by 9.4 foot deep channel. Based on preliminary information gathered by the Pathfinder's crew, Engle determined it was necessary to send Dredge Potter north.

The dredge is expected to arrive on site this evening around 9 p.m. Potter left less critical work on the lower reach of the Middle Mississippi River near Jones Chute. Capt. James Pierce reported that northerly progress was stalled at river mile 99.1 due to fog but the Potter was underway this morning and expected to be positioned for dredging operations by late this evening.

Rains in the Upper Mississippi basin early this week are contributing to a temporary rise on the river, giving some relief to the ongoing low water situation, but without additional rainfall that will be short lived. The U.S. Coast Guard has issued a safety advisory to all mariners instructing them to transit river miles 161 - 162.5 with extreme caution.

St. Louis District is authorized to maintain a minimum 9-foot deep, 300-foot wide navigation channel on 300 miles of the Mississippi River from Saverton, Mo. to Cairo, Ill., the lower 80 miles of the Illinois River and on the lower 36 miles of the Kaskaskia River.

This mission is accomplished in several ways. The channel patrol boat, MV Pathfinder, identifies possible dredging locations by performing channel reconnaissance surveys. MV Pathfinder also assists the Coast Guard with buoy positioning on the navigable waterways within the St. Louis District boundaries.

Another method used by our Engineering Hydraulics Branch is designing and building structures in the river, such as dikes and revetments that maintain sufficient depths in the waterway. Locks and dams also play a vital role in maintaining navigation on the upper Mississippi River.

Water management and dredging round out the tools used to maintain the channel.

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CORPSDREDGE/2-2-2

Dredging in the St. Louis District is accomplished by using hydraulic pipeline dredges, -- Dredge Potter and Dredge America. A hydraulic dredge mixes large quantities of water with the excavated material (almost always sand in the St. Louis District) to create a slurry which is then pumped out of the navigable channel.

Dredge Potter is a dustpan dredge, a type of dredge specifically designed by the Army Corps of Engineers for work on the Mississippi River. The dustpan is very efficient in excavating sand material from the river bottom.

Dredge America is a cutterhead dredge operated by a contractor. This type of dredge is used to excavate hard material and pump it a long distance.

Dredging is coordinated with other agencies so that our operations are done with as little disruption as possible and in an environmentally sensitive manner. The Corps, Coast Guard, National Weather Service and barge industry representatives are having as-needed telephone conferences to discuss low water levels and take necessary actions to prevent losses and damage.

Editor's note: These points of contact and email addresses are points of contact for media wishing to follow this story. Potter will be working near St. Louis and we can arrange a media visit on Thursday. At this time we do not know how long the work near St. Louis will take:

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Web Resources

River Stages available online at <http://mvs-wc.mvs.usace.army.mil/>

River Industry Bulletin Board available online at <http://www.ribb.com/navnotice.html>