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St. Louis District

News Release

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Sand Boil Found in East St. Louis, Ill.

St. Louis, Mo. – A small sand boil was found in East St. Louis this afternoon, Thursday, June 19 by a Corps of Engineers inspection team. The boil is being countered by the Metro East Sanitary District (MESD) with technical assistance from the Corps of Engineers. The boil has been assessed as manageable.

Sand boils occur when high river elevations on the outside of the levee create enough hydrostatic pressure to push fine particles of soil to the surface inside the levee along with the water flow.

If left unchecked this groundwater flow could erode the levee foundation and weaken the levee.

This sand boil was discovered during an inspection of the levee and illustrates the value of vigilance that is part of the normal procedures during high water events.

At this time no more sand boils have been identified. At the elevation of the water at the time, it seems this is an isolated event. But careful scrutiny of the levee system will continue until the river level falls.

The Corps has previously indicated concerns over deficient under seepage protection on Metro East levees. That protection would be best afforded by additional relief wells which are designed to intercept this seepage while it is deep under ground and bring it to the surface in a controlled manner. The end goal agreed on by the Corps, the Levee District and surrounding communities is to restore aging elements and add more relief well protection to reduce the likelihood of sand boils.

In announcing the finding of the sand boil, District Commander, Col. Lewis Setliff, who was at the scene, emphasized that the boil is manageable with well-practiced counter procedures of building a sand bag ring levee around the boil. He commended the Corps personnel for their vigilance.

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