



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

News Release

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Additional damage identified in Prairie du Rocher Levee District gravity drain

St. Louis, Mo. – During work being carried on late yesterday at the scene of the gravity drain malfunction in the Prairie du Rocher Levee District, a hole was confirmed to have developed on the water side of the levee at the drain's location. Work to counter this development has already begun and is reducing the flow considerably.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood fighting experts on scene note that this kind of development is not unheard of, they are aware of techniques to counter it. Their assessment is that there is no increased danger of failure of the levee.

The site is the location of the gravity drain gate previously reported to have apparently partly given way in Randolph County, Ill. The gate is in a 6-foot diameter drain pipe structure that normally allows rain water to flow from the inland side of the levee. It was closed to keep high water from flowing backward from the flooding Mississippi River at the time.

Prairie du Rocher Levee District employees took immediate steps to halt the water flowing through the drain pipe by placing two 4 by 10-foot concrete bridge pavement sections side-by-side on the inside end of the drain. This reduced the flow considerably, enabling additional steps to be taken.

The next measure was to build a gravel ring levee around the inside of the main levee to confine leakage to the immediate area of the levee. This work went forward over night. As of 6 a.m., the ring was near completion and sufficient materials were stockpiled on scene to finish the job.

The hole is located in the river between the concrete gate valve structure at its river end and the levee itself. It appears to be related to a possible hole in the drain pipe, a corrugated metal pipe that extends under the levee and into the Mississippi River. Possible causes include corrosion or separation of a joint, although that will probably not be determined until after the river goes back down.

On noting evidence of the scour, Corps of Engineers experts onsite called for the Corps survey vessel, Motor Vessel (M/V) Boyer to be dispatched to survey the water side of the levee.

M/V Boyer was trucked to the site and launched to conduct high resolution multiple beam sonar imaging of the underwater area outside of the levee.

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Work is underway by the Levee District. They are placing gravel into the river, building a temporary access road to enable trucks to deliver and place larger rock into the hole. This will prevent further growth of the hole and should further reduce flows through the pipe.

Corps of Engineers geotechnical engineers remained on scene over night with the Drainage District's personnel. These experts have lauded the Levee District for the swift and decisive actions they have taken to date.

The Prairie du Rocher Levee provides a 100-year level of protection and is otherwise thought to be functioning as designed during the current regional flooding. It was designed in the early 1950s.

Regional Mississippi River levels have been stable since yesterday and the National Weather Service is projecting them to stay that way for several days before a gradual lowering of river stages begins. Very large quantities of water remain in fields and other flood plain areas, including behind overtopped levees and it will take many days for this accumulated flooding to drain and proceed down stream on the Mississippi.

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Informational Sites

Updated information about the Mississippi River is available on the web by visiting the Corps' website at www.rivergages.com. This web site includes links to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and National Weather Service websites that track Mississippi River flow and projected rainfall amounts.

St. Louis District Flood Fight Page:

<http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/floodfight/>

Rock Island District Flood Fight Information:

<http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/MidwestFlooding2008/Home.htm>

Graphic of Lock Locations:

<http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/9FootStaircase.gif>

Graphic of Mississippi River 9-foot Staircase:

<http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/LockLocationMap.pdf>

U.S. Coast Guard

<http://www.uscgstormwatch.com>

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