



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

# News Release

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## **Mississippi River Commission schedules Public Hearing in St. Louis, August 14**

St. Louis -- The Mississippi River Commission is conducting its annual low-water inspection trip August 9-21, 2009. As part of the inspection trip, a series of public hearings are being held at various locations along the Mississippi River. The commission, established by Congress in 1879, holds the hearings to maintain a dialogue, and to exchange viewpoints and ideas with stakeholders and the public. A public hearing is scheduled at the St. Louis Riverfront, Mo., August 14 at 9 a.m.

Traditionally during the inspection trip, the commission travels the length of the Mississippi River stretching from Minnesota to New Orleans. However, in the last five years the commission has incorporated visits to the other major river basins feeding into the Mississippi. As part of its 381<sup>st</sup> session, the Presidential commission will visit the Illinois River basin to share information and learn from interest groups regarding the management of the river system. The commission will make five stops in Illinois at Ottawa, Peoria, Beardstown, LaGrange and Alton.

Five public hearings have been scheduled aboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI in selected towns so commission members have the opportunity to meet with local residents and hear their concerns, ideas and issues. The hearing places, dates and times are as follows:

- August 14      9:00 a.m.      St. Louis, Mo., at City Front
- August 17      9:00 a.m.      Tiptonville, Tenn., at River Park
- August 18      9:00 a.m.      Memphis, Tenn., at Mud Island
- August 19      9:00 a.m.      Greenville, Miss., at City Front
- August 21      9:00 a.m.      Morgan City, La., at Port Commission Dock

All hearings 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 Mississippi Valley, including flood control and the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, environmental issues, recreation and navigation.

The agenda for the August 14 public hearing is as follows:

1. MRC president and Mississippi Valley Division commander, Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, 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.

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2. St. Louis District commander, Col. Thomas E. O'Hara, will present an overview of current projects in his district for the commission.
3. Local organizations and members of the public will have an opportunity to make presentations or offer views or comments to the commission on any issue affecting programs or projects of the commission and the Corps.

The purpose of the public meetings is to maintain a dialogue, an exchange of viewpoints and ideas flowing between the public, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the commission. This process allows the public a greater voice in shaping federal management policy of the river. 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.

The MRC, established 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 Mississippi River Commission include making recommendations on policy and work programs, studying and reporting on whether modifications or additions are needed for flood control and navigation projects, providing recommendations on any matters authorized by law, and making semi-annual inspection trips. The jurisdiction of the commission includes 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.

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Editor's Note: Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh is typically available for media interviews 15 minutes before the public hearing and typically right after. If you are interested in arranging an opportunity to interview Brig. Gen. Walsh please contact the St. Louis District's Public Affairs Office at 314-331-8002/8068. Additional information about the Mississippi River Commission is available online at the Mississippi Valley Division's website: <http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil> Media are also welcome to contact the division's Public Affairs Office at 601-634-5760.