NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS **BUILDING STRONG®**

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Area rivers to crest above flood stage, Corps of Engineers warns

St. Louis, Mo. -- The rain that has pounded the region during October marks the month as the rainiest October on record in St. Louis. As a result, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water control managers and the National Weather Service are monitoring are streams and rivers, both for flash flooding and for longer term impacts on the main rivers of the region.

While predicted river flows and elevations are no where near record highs, the Mississippi Missouri and Illinois Rivers are predicted to reach flood stages as early as Saturday. The Mississippi River at St. Louis is currently predicted to crest at 35.0 feet, Monday. Flood stage in St. Louis is 30.0 feet. For comparison, on July 1, 2008, the river in St. Louis crested at 38.67 feet.

The Corps of Engineers in St. Louis is closely coordinating with Corps Districts north and south of St. Louis, as well as with the National Weather Service. According to District Commander, Col. Thomas O'Hara, "While local rain can cause localized flash flooding, main river floods are usually the cumulative results of rainfalls upstream as well as here. The local flood risk reduction systems are functioning well and we believe they will continue to do so. But it's prudent to keep the public's safety in uppermost in our mind and we are."

Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District Water Control Office operations chief Joan Stemler said, "Rain that has fallen in recent days has saturated the ground. As a result, almost everything that is falling now is running off almost immediately and rivers are rising area-wide. Our reservoir lakes are rising as well, although for now they are well able to hold inflows that we will release later when the rain stops and rivers come down."

The Corps of Engineers partners with local levee districts and area government organizations as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for flood fighting if necessary.

The Corps also operates locks and dams on the Mississippi River. While these are not flood control structures and have only minimal impact on flooding, they are operated to minimize flooding while continuing to support navigation. In all instances, public safety is the Corps number one mission.

The region last faced wide spread flooding in 2008, but just as last summer, localized flash flooding is always a threat.

Corps of Engineers reservoir lakes also are experiencing high water from the rain. Boaters are being cautioned to be aware of floating debris that enters lakes from the rivers that form them and visitors are being warned to avoid flood prone areas. At Wappapello Lake in southeastern Missouri, some low lying camp grounds have been closed due to rising waters.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers safety experts and other authorities want to remind long time residents and inform newcomers of several measures they may take to best ensure their own safety.

- Keep up with weather reports and other notices. The media works to get the most up to date information out. Listen to and watch news reports so you are not caught unprepared. If local emergency authorities advise any action, follow their directions immediately.
- If you live in a flood-prone area have a plan. Know what you will take with you, where you will go and who you will inform when you get there.

- Don't drive into water on roads. Road surfaces may be damaged or gone and rapidly flowing water can move a car into danger without warning. If you encounter water on the road, turn around and seek another route. There is no short cut to safety.
- Floods are not tourist events. Stay away from them and ensure Children do so as well. Watch them on TV instead of being in them.

You may track river and other weather data on at least two web sites.

http://mvs-wc.mvs.usace.army.mil/dresriv.html

http://www.crh.noaa.gov/lsx/

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Note to editors:

There is a common misconception that the dams associated with locks on the Mississippi River play significant roles during flooding. They are in fact, low flow control structures and are in place to hold adequate depths for navigation when river flows are low. As we approach high water events, the dam gates are operated in a manner to minimize flooding while supporting navigation, but during river floods the gates are fully open and we are at what is termed "open river." The dams have no further influence on water levels past that point.

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