



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to host public meeting for Wood River Levee interim risk reduction measures near Melvin Price Locks and Dam

St. Louis – Wednesday, March 31 – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District will host a public meeting at 3:00 p.m., on Friday, April 2, at the National Great Rivers Museum to update the Alton, East Alton and surrounding communities on the current status of the portion of the Wood River Levee that is protecting them and to describe actions that will be taken to maintain the level of risk at an acceptable level.

On Friday, March 26, 2010, the river levels forecasted caused the St. Louis District to activate our interim plan necessary to reduce risk to public safety for the area protected by the levee. The interim plan is described as a series of proactive measures that were originally announced to and agreed upon with local leaders last fall. Early phases, including installing additional monitoring equipment and more frequent visits by engineers, have already been initiated.

The next precautionary step, increased ponding levels in the wetland area, is underway now. Additional risk reduction measures include “air lifting” the existing relief wells to relieve ground water pressure, and, if necessary, construct rock dikes to raise the ponding area without impacting the Alton combined sewer system.

“If pressures between the river and land on the east side of the levees are not reduced in this manner, engineers would expect to see greater movement of soil materials – sand boiling – from the ground below the levee,” said Col. Thomas O’Hara, District Commander for the St. Louis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “If left unchecked, this could damage the foundation of the levee, further weakening it.”

The Corps of Engineers is committed to resolving the uncontrolled underseepage issue as quickly as possible. The permanent solution that we implement needs to be based upon a deliberative and objective process. We will work to implement the best possible solution. We will also continue to maintain our focus on public safety and ensure that it remains the number one priority.

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Note to Editors: Additional background information and actions being taken around the Wood River Levee adjacent to Melvin Price Locks and Dam was contained in a press release dated Saturday, March 27, 2010. If you did not receive this release, it can also be found online at: <http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/pa/news-2010.html>