



# LOUISIANA MARITIME ASSOCIATION

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Issue Date: August 5, 2015

Members,

## **RE: CORPS' MISSISSIPPI RIVER MAINTENANCE FORUM MEETING NOTES**

The Corps' Mississippi Valley New Orleans (MVN) holds monthly meetings to discuss channel conditions and related issues directly with the maritime industry. These meetings are usually scheduled for 0900 hours on the first Wednesday of the month. LAMA encourages our members to attend these meetings, which are open to the public. The agenda for this meeting as provided by the MVN is attached.

### **Maintenance Forum Notes August 5, 2015**

#### **1) Introductions**

#### **2) Southeast Waterways Update**

The MVN last surveyed Tiger Pass in December 2014. Those surveys indicated a controlling depth of 5.5 feet Mean Low Gulf (MLG) near Mile 10. Tiger Pass has not been dredged since 2012. Although, the channel remains deficient, funding to dredge the channel or to preform the required jetty repairs remains unavailable. Baptiste Collette was surveyed earlier this week and a controlling depth of 6.6 feet MLG was identified between Mile 9 to Mile 10 after vessels reported touching bottom in this reach. MVN intends to dredge Baptiste Collette to reduced dimensions because of limited funding. The dredging will be conducted when the river stage recedes further. Based on the extended river stage predictions this dredging should begin in September (2015).

#### **3) Mississippi River Conditions Update**

Current Stages: New Orleans 14.92 feet (A steady fall has begun, 8.7 feet by September 1, 2015)  
Baton Rouge 35.1 feet (A steady fall has begun, 23.4 feet by September 1, 2015)

##### **A. Crossings Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans:**

The latest survey results for the Crossings are listed in the attached agenda. The Crossings are in fair condition due to the elevated river stages. However, the MVN reports that up to 22 feet of sediment material (shoaling) covers the majority of the Crossings and that funding for Fiscal Year 2016 will be utilized as channel recovery will go into October. The best estimate indicates the dustpans will begin dredging at Belmont Crossing (Mile 154 Above Head of Passes [AHP]) and Red Eye Crossing (Mile 224 AHP) in early September based on the extended river stage predictions.

##### **B. New Orleans Harbor:**

The representatives for the Port of New Orleans indicated that there is considerable shoaling around the Julia Street Cruise Terminal. The MVN indicates there is approximately 15 feet of sediment material in this area. Dredging operations will commence as the stage level recedes to approximately 10 feet on the Carrollton Gauge (New Orleans). The extended river stage predictions indicate this stage level will be reached towards the end of August 2015.

##### **C. Southwest Pass (SWP):**

There are three dredges currently working the deep-draft navigation channel in the area of SWP. The channel conditions continue to be impacted by the record high river stage for the month of July.

The three dredges (2 hoppers and 1 cutterhead) being utilized in this reach of the ship channel are the two hopper dredges: NEWPORT and WHEELER and the cutterhead dredge ALASKA. The industry hopper dredge NEWPORT is presently working in the area of Head of Passes (Mile 1 to Mile 2 Below Head of Passes [BHP]). The MVN Corps' hopper dredge WHEELER is presently working from Mile 15 BHP to Mile 17 BHP. The industry cutterhead dredge ALASKA is dredging at Mile 7.98 BHP on the eastern side of the channel (left descending bank). Efforts to maintain the channel without draft or transit restrictions will depend on the efforts of the two hopper dredges as the stage levels fall. The cutterhead dredge ALASKA is expected to complete its contract on August 9, 2015.



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## **D. South Pass:**

The latest surveys continue to show that this channel remains deficient and, based on limited funding there are no immediate plans to dredge South Pass.

## **E. Head of Passes, Hopper Dredge Disposal Area (HDDA):**

The MVN detailed that through channel maintenance with a cutterhead dredge contact in the HDDA that 9.6 million cubic yards of material was removed from the HDDA. This material was beneficially placed in the environmental sensitive area surrounding the bird's foot delta of the Mississippi River. The MVN and non-federal sponsor Plaquemines Parish in a joint project known as BUDMAT (Beneficial Use of Dredged Material) removed an additional 2.2 million cubic yards from the HDDA and beneficially placed this material to a new higher elevation standard within the West Bay receiving area. The BUDMAT program benefitted from the submerged dredge pipeline that was placed under the navigation channel to allow material to be pumped from the HDDA (east side of channel) to the West Bay receiving area (west side). The submerged pipeline will be removed over the next few months when the river stage level is much lower. LAMA will alert our membership prior to the pipeline removal, the removal is not expected to require a full river closure.

## **4) Mississippi River Gages:**

The MVN gave a presentation on the conversion of gages in the area of Southwest Pass being recalibrated to the North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88). The gages will also display a correction to adjust to the previously used datum of Mean Low Gulf. The transference between different datum can prove challenging but LAMA staff will continue to monitor the impact(s). The presentation utilized today is attached for your reference.

## **5) Mississippi River 50 ft Deepening Study Update:**

The Senior Project Manager from MVN gave a brief discussion on the status of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Supplement 2) for the Mississippi River Ship Channel, Gulf to Baton Rouge, Louisiana General Reevaluation Study. The feasibility study will be completed in early 2018 and navigation stakeholders are working to assist the Corps and non-federal sponsor the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development in the data collection process.

## **6) Next Meeting:**

**The next Forum meeting is scheduled for 0900 hours on Wednesday, September 2, 2015, at the MVN District Office in District Assembly Room A.**

Sean M. Duffy, Sr.  
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Executive Vice President

Attachments