



# LOUISIANA MARITIME ASSOCIATION

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Issue Date: February 4, 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 today's meeting is attached.

### **Maintenance Forum Notes February 4, 2015**

#### **1) Introductions**

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

The most recent surveys for Tiger Pass were taken in December 2014, those surveys indicated a controlling depth of 5.5 feet Mean Low Gulf (MLG) near Mile 10. Tiger Pass remains deficient throughout, and no funding is available for dredging this channel or to perform the needed repair of the jetties. The December 2014 surveys of Baptiste Collette indicate a controlling depth of 9 feet between Mile 9 to Mile 10 (jetty end). The MVN received \$1.9 million to dredge this channel from the Fiscal Year '15 Work Plan and intends to begin dredging in August. MVN intends to dredge this channel prior to the scheduled dewatering operations of the IHNC Lock. Baptiste Collette will be utilized as an alternate channel for shallow-draft traffic when the IHNC Lock is out of service during the dewatering and repairs. The lock dewatering is tentatively scheduled to begin on August 1, 2015.

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

Current Stages: New Orleans 3.3 feet (Predictions indicate stage levels to remain steady)  
Baton Rouge 11.5 feet (Predictions indicate stage levels to remain steady)

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

The latest surveys for the Crossings are included in the attached agenda. The Crossings are in good condition, and there are currently no transit/channel restrictions. The MVN anticipates dredging on the Crossings in July 2015, depending on actual river conditions.

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

The representatives for the Port of New Orleans indicated that the channel remains in fair condition, although there is some shoaling around the Julia Street Cruise Terminal. The MVN intends to dredge the New Orleans Harbor in July 2015, depending on actual river conditions.

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

The cutterhead dredge G.D. MORGAN is presently the only dredge working the deep-draft navigation channel on the Lower Mississippi River ship channel. The cutterhead's present assignment is from Mile 3.6 to Mile 12 Below Head of Pass (BHP) on the western side of SWP. The dredge is presently dredging at Mile 4 BHP. The channel conditions in SWP continue to deteriorate with full depth availability reduced to 400 feet (750 feet authorization) in the Head of Passes area.

The MVN discussed concern over not receiving any bids to their last two hopper dredge contracts. The first no bid situation (December 17, 2014) was somewhat addressed by securing the cutterhead G.D. MORGAN, but hopper dredges must work in tandem with the cutterheads to keep the channel open. Since the second no bid response (January 22, 2015) the MVN has initiated the emergency protocol or the "Red Flag procedure" and is presently waiting on Corps' Headquarters to approve this request. If



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the Red Flag request is approved MVN's hopper dredge WHEELER would be utilized to begin restoring SWP with dredging expected to start on March 19, 2015. The channel maintenance for SWP over the next few months will require additional hopper dredges. Navigation industry representatives have been working with the Louisiana delegation throughout the day to request assistance in securing the WHEELER, a decision is expected over the next 24-hours.

## 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.

## 4) Updated AIS Rule:

The Coast Guard's Sector New Orleans' Waterways Management Chief, Lieutenant Commander Jamie Gatz discussed increased requirements for the Automatic Identification System (AIS) regulations. The focus was mainly to advise that all dredges working on the Lower Mississippi River would be encouraged to comply with new and upcoming AIS requirements to increase navigational safety. Dredges and other vessels presently excluded from the AIS requirement will soon be required to have a working Class A AIS.

## 5) Bayou Dupont Update:

The dredging contractor working the Bayou Dupont restoration project discussed the need for an upcoming channel closure to lay a pipeline across the Mississippi River at approximately Mile 66 Above Head of Passes. **The pipeline placement will require one 12-hour closure of the navigation channel in the immediate area. The closure date remains tentative but will most likely occur around February 20, the closure is expected to last from 0600 to 1800 hours.** The contractor will provide a one-week notice to confirm the actual closure date. Additional closure information will be distributed upon receipt.

The cutterhead dredge R.S. WEEKS has beneficially placed 3.3 million cubic yards of material along Bayou Dupont. This restoration project should be completed by September 2015. A second closure will be required when the project is completed to remove the same pipeline.

## 6) Next Meeting:

The next Forum meeting is scheduled for 0900 hours on Wednesday, March 4, 2015, at the MVN District Assembly Room A.

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Attachment