



News Release

US Army Corps of Engineers®

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Mississippi River Commission
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Release #: 04-19

For Release: September 29, 2004

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Mississippi River Commission recommends replacement of La.'s Bayou Sorrel Lock

VICKSBURG, Miss., September 29, 2004 – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi River Commission (MRC), conducted a public meeting Monday (September 27), concerning the Final Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement of the Bayou Sorrel Lock Replacement project in Louisiana. The project is being managed by the Corps' New Orleans District.

The purpose of the public meeting was for the commission to consider the project report as it pertains to the impacts on the Mississippi River and the Mississippi River and Tributaries project. The lock is 25 miles south of Baton Rouge.

During the 90-minute meeting, the commission reviewed the project, concurred in the findings and recommendation of the New Orleans District Engineer, and voted unanimously to recommend implementation of the project.

Commission members present at the public meeting were Brig. Gen. Robert Crear (President-designee of the Mississippi River Commission and Division Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division), Mr. Sam Angel, Mr. R.D. James and Mr. Clifford Smith. Commission member-designees Brig. Gen. William Grisoli and Rear Admiral Samuel P. De Bow, Jr., participated via teleconference.

The next step in the process is for the MRC Report to be transmitted to the Corps' Headquarters in Washington, D.C., for inclusion in the Chief of Engineers' Report. The report will be mailed this week. The package will then be forwarded to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works for transmitting to Congress for authorization.

“The project will solve the deficient portion of the levee system at the lock, and will significantly increase navigation efficiency,” said Gen. Crear. “Our team at

Bayou Sorrel project recommended

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the New Orleans District, as well as the commission staff, have worked to minimize the constant problem of bank erosion on the waterway above and below the lock.”

The New Orleans District completed the project feasibility report in December 2003 for the \$88.5 million replacement of the Bayou Sorrel Lock on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway alternate route, which links Morgan City and Port Allen (Baton Rouge). A feasibility report is required to present a project to Congress for construction authorization.

The 191-page report recommends a lock 75 feet wide and 1,200 feet long. The lock at present measures 56 by 797 feet. The greater dimensions would double the lock’s surface area to 90,000 square feet and help to reduce delays for towboats and barges.

The report addresses erosion, a concern of the residents of Bayou Sorrel. Rock would be placed along 1.5 miles of the waterway north of the lock, on both sides, to improve erosion control. The Corps would also place 27 mooring buoys in the channel to prevent waiting vessels from damaging the bank.

Flood control would be a major feature in the replacement of the lock, which was built to allow vessels to pass through the East Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee. The levee has been raised to eight feet above the lock, and the new lock would close the gap.

The Mississippi River Commission, established in 1879, is responsible for navigation, flood control and other water resources development on the Mississippi River.

The commission has statutory authority to operate on the Mississippi River from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minn., to Head of Passes, La. This authority is dependent upon Congressional authorization and funding of projects. The projects considered and implemented by the MRC may be part of the existing Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project or separate projects.

The MR&T project was authorized by Congress following the 1927 flood. It is the comprehensive flood-control and navigation plan for the lower Mississippi valley, below Cape Girardeau, Mo. District offices located in St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans, La., conduct the programs and activities overseen by the commission.



At tables, l to r: MRC Commissioners Sam Angel, Brig. Gen. Robert Crear (president-designee), R.D. James and Clifford Smith, review documents pertaining to the Bayou Sorrel Lock project.