



LOUISIANA MARITIME ASSOCIATION

Issue Date: January 12, 2024

Members,

RE: USACE MISSISSIPPI RIVER MAINTENANCE FORUM MEETING NOTES

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 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. This meeting was conducted via teleconference, usually these meetings are conducted in person with the option to attend virtually. The agenda provided by the MVN is attached.

Maintenance Forum Notes January 10, 2024

1) Introductions

2) Southeast Waterways Update: The President's Budget Request (P Bud) Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) is \$3.75 Million, and the P Bud for FY 24 is \$4.75 Million.

Tiger Pass: The USACE continues to develop adaptive strategies to safely dredge around the pipelines and anomalies previously identified at approximately Mile 9.75 feet. The previous dredge contract was cancelled at this location due to concerns about multiple unidentified utility obstructions. Tiger Pass remains severely deficient, but the USACE hopes to advertise a bid opening for a cutterhead dredge contract in the March timeframe. The cutterhead would most likely be used to dredge/re-dredge the channel back to Mile 9.75 and from that point onward a bucket dredge could be used to remove material over the obstructions with an approved utility location survey effort to be conducted as an important hurdle to be cleared prior to dredging past Mile 9.75 feet on the shallow-draft channel. The cutterhead contract could be combined with the dredge contract for Baptiste Collette. Tiger Pass remains severely deficient, the prospective contract would remove nearly 2 million cubic yards of material to be beneficially used for marsh restoration in the area.

Baptiste Collette: The cutterhead dredge ROBERT M. WHITE (Manson Construction) completed dredging Baptiste Collette on December 10 (2022). The USACE advises mariners transiting this shallow-draft channel to utilize the online channel surveys, noting several shoals, with the largest shoal reported from Mile 8.5 to Mile 9.5 (9.0 feet with +3.5 feet on the gage). The USACE expects to utilize the FY 24 funds to award a cutterhead dredge contract to restore authorized dimensions across Baptiste Collette. The contract advertisement is expected to occur in the first quarter of 2024 (March) with most of the removed sediment to be beneficially used with a portion designated to extend one of the recently created bird islands in the vicinity (Gunn Island). The two cutterhead contracts may be merged into one contract to secure a dredge and reduce costs (mobilization/demobilization).

3) Mississippi River Conditions Update: The FY 24 P Bud is slightly more than \$185 Million.

New Orleans Gauge (Carrollton Gauge): The stage on Wednesday morning was 2.6 feet, the reading at 1300 hours today was 2.28 feet with a 24-hour change of +0.55 feet. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) Extended Streamflow Prediction (28-Day) for the Carrollton Gage issued today forecasts stages will continue to rise until cresting at 7.8 feet on January 28 and will then resume a slow fall to 4.7 feet on February 9. The Carrollton Gage has remained below 6.0 feet since May 2023 and is expected to eclipse that level on January 22 (2024). The higher river stages should have a positive impact on repelling the saltwater wedge.

Baton Rouge Gauge: The stage Wednesday morning was 9.4 feet, the reading at 1400 hours today was 9.38 feet with a 24-hour change of + 0.44 feet. Today's NWS extended forecast indicates stages will continue a rise to 21.5 feet on January 27 and are then projected to begin a slow fall to 11.6 feet on February 9 (2024).

***NWS long range projections only account for precipitation forecast to occur over the next 48-hours.**

A. Crossings Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans:

The latest channel surveys for the Crossings Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans are included in the attached agenda. The USACE completed FY 2023 dredging operations on the Crossings in early December 2023. The USACE will begin dredging on the Crossings in FY 2024 in the spring dependent upon channel conditions after a significant period of high river stages on the Baton Rouge Gage (typically dredging begins in late spring or early summer).



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B. New Orleans Harbor:

The cutterhead dredge CAPTAIN FRANK dredged under contract in the New Orleans Harbor from May 16 to June 16 (2023). The USACE expects to dredge the Harbor in the summer of 2024 during low water.

C. Saltwater Sill:

The USACE contracted Weeks Marine to build the saltwater sill at Mile 63.8 AHP with the cutterhead dredge J.S. CHATRY. Weeks completed the barrier's construction to the targeted elevation – 55 feet during dredging operation from July 11 to July 27 (2023). The USACE completed the augmentation of the saltwater sill to a higher elevation to the height of (-30 feet) with a 620-foot wide deep-draft channel with one-way coordinated vessel traffic (depth of previous sill -55 feet) with dredging operations from September 24 to October 15 (2023). The one-way traffic through the saltwater sill notch will continue until the river rises high enough to significantly wash away the constructed sill. The USACE last measured the saltwater sill at Mile 63.3 AHP on January 2, 2024, the sill continues to work.

D. Southwest Pass (SWP):

The cutterhead dredge ALASKA (Great Lakes Dredge & Dock) continues work under Southwest Pass Cutterhead Dredge Contract #1-2023 for channel maintenance dredging in Southwest Pass. The cutterhead dredge is now working on assignment from Mile 5.0 Below Head of Passes (BHP) to Mile 8.0 BHP along the right descending bank.

The USACE also awarded the following two Early Award Hopper Dredge Rental Contracts for Fiscal Year 2024, Southwest Pass Hopper Dredge Rental Contract #2-2023 to Manson Construction (GLENN EDWARDS) and Southwest Pass Hopper Dredge Rental Contract #11-2023 to Great Lakes Dredge & Dock (ISLAND CLASS).

D. Head of Passes, Hopper Dredge Disposal Area (HDDA):

The USACE recently awarded Head of Passes Hopper Dredge Disposal Area Contract #2-2022 to Weeks Marine to remove sediment from the Hopper Dredge Disposal Area (HDDA). The cutterhead dredge CAPTAIN FRANK continues dredging on assignment in the HDDA and has removed approximately 5.75 million cubic yards of sediment. The submerged dredge pipeline was installed during channel closures in late September, dredging operations started on October 1 (2023). The removed sediment is being beneficially utilized for marsh restoration in the West Bay Receiving Area. Weeks expects to complete this assignment by January 21, 2024, and the pipeline removal is being planned for January 23. Additional details on the pipeline removal operations are forthcoming.

E. Southwest and South Pass Stone Foreshore & Jetty Repairs:

The USACE awarded a large rock contract to Pine Bluff Sand & Gravel for foreshore rock work protection in both Southwest Pass and South Pass. There are portions of this work where larger rocks (5,000 pound) will be used, the previous contracts used rocks that were reported to be 2,200 pounds. The rock construction will be trickier this time because of the larger rocks, the work in SWP started on October 4, 2023. The USACE, contractors and pilots report the rock installation in SWP is going fine due to enhanced communication with the navigation industry and pilots. The work in SWP is a priority – estimates are the contract will be completed in October 2024.

G. South Pass:

The cutterhead dredge ROBERT M. WHITE (Manson Construction) dredged under South Pass Cutterhead Dredge Rental Contract #1-2020 from April 3, 2021 to February 8, 2022.

4) Next Meeting:

The next Forum meeting is scheduled for 0900 hours on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, this meeting is expected to be conducted via the hybrid option (in-person with teleconference options).

Sean M. Duffy, Sr.

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Attachment