



# LOUISIANA MARITIME ASSOCIATION

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Issue Date: February 7, 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. Today's meeting was conducted via a hybrid of teleconference and in person participation. The agenda provided by the MVN is attached.

### Maintenance Forum Notes February 7, 2024

#### 1) Introductions

**2) Southeast Waterways Update:** The President's Budget Request (P Bud) Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 24) is \$4.75 Million for the Southeast Waterways.

**Tiger Pass:** The USACE advised that it now intends to consolidate a cutterhead dredge contract to dredge a portion of Tiger Pass and the shallow-draft channel on Baptiste Collette (same dredge). The consolidated cutterhead dredge contract is expected to be advertised in April (2024). The cutterhead will be used to dredge the previously dredged portion of the shallow-draft channel on Baptiste Collette reach, from approximately Mile 6.0 to Mile 10.2 where the previous dredge contract was cancelled due to the proximity of the pipelines or "undocumented utility" obstructions. The USACE has been unable to dredge or accurately survey the areas of Tiger Pass beyond Mile 10.2 and this new dredge contract would restore the channel just before these obstructions. The USACE then plans to contract a bucket or clam shell type dredge to remove the sediment over the obstructions. Updated surveys are posted online out to Mile 9.75, survey vessels remain unable to go past this location due to the extremely deficient channel conditions.

**Baptiste Collette:** The USACE will advertise a consolidated bid opening for a cutterhead dredge for Baptiste Collette in April 2024 to partner with the contract to dredge Tiger Pass. The USACE advises mariners transiting this shallow-draft channel to utilize the online channel surveys, noting several shoals.

**3) Mississippi River Conditions Update:** The FY 24 P Bud for Operations and Maintenance of the Mississippi River Ship Channel is just over \$185 Million.

**New Orleans Gauge (Carrollton Gauge):** The stage this morning was 9.6 feet. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) Extended Streamflow Prediction (28-Day) for the Carrollton Gage issued today forecasts stages will rise until cresting at 10.7 feet on February 12 and then begin a slow fall to March 6, 2024.

**4) Baton Rouge Gauge:** The stage this morning was 28.5 feet. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) Extended Streamflow Prediction (28-Day) for the Baton Rouge Gage issued today forecasts stages will crest at 30.9 feet on February 12 and will then begin a slow fall to 19.1 feet on March 6 (2024).

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

The latest survey details for the Crossings Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans are included in the attached agenda. The USACE completed channel maintenance dredging for the Fiscal Year 2023 on December 5, 2023, when the industry dustpan dredge WALLACE McGEORGE (Pine Bluff Sand & Gravel) completed the last dredge assignment of the season at Baton Rouge Front (Mile 229.5 AHP).

#### B. New Orleans Harbor:

The USACE expects to dredge the New Orleans Harbor in the summer of 2024 during a period of low river stage. The cutterhead dredge CAPTAIN FRANK (Weeks Marine) last dredged the New Orleans Harbor from May 16 to June 16 (2023).



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## **C. Saltwater Sill:**

The USACE provided an update on the condition of the saltwater sill that is degrading as expected due to the significantly increased river stages and higher flows. An updated multibeam survey was scheduled to be performed today and the expectations are that the sill will soon degrade enough to open the channel up to two-way traffic (normal conditions) and remove the buoys that mark the one-way transit deep-draft channel.

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

There are presently no dredges working in Southwest Pass. The cutterhead dredge ALASKA (Great Lakes Dredge & Dock - GLDD) completed channel maintenance dredging on Saturday, February 3, 2024. The dredge was used to fill in a recurring crevasse near Mile 7.5 Below Head of Passes on the western side or right descending bank. The USACE hopper dredge WHEELER completed dredging under Readiness Exercise #1-2024 and is scheduled to perform Readiness Exercise #2-2024 from March 12 to April 1 (2024). There are two early award hopper dredge contracts for 2024, one awarded to Manson Construction (GLENN EDWARDS) expected to report by the end of the month and the second was awarded to GLDD with the DODGE ISLAND expected to begin dredging in March (2024).

**D. Head of Passes, Hopper Dredge Disposal Area (HDDA):** The USACE awarded the Hopper Dredge Disposal Area (HDDA) Contract #2-2022 to Weeks Marine to remove 6 million cubic yards of sediment from the HDDA. The cutterhead dredge CAPTAIN FRANK completed this contract on January 18, 2024, and the submerged dredge pipeline was successfully refloated and removed on February 1, 2024. The removed sediment was beneficially used to create approximately 500 acres of new marsh in the West Bay Receiving Area.

## **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 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 in SWP started on October 4, 2023, and is expected to be completed by the end of the year. The USACE, contractors and pilots report the rock installation in SWP is going fine due to communication with the navigation industry and pilots. The work in SWP is a priority. The rock work in South Pass is also ongoing.

## **G. South Pass:**

The USACE has no plans to dredge in South Pass in Fiscal Year 2023. South Pass was last dredged by the cutterhead dredge ROBERT M. WHITE (Manson Construction) 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, March 6, 2024.

## **CPRA Mid-Barataria Diversion Construction Update:** (Brief discussion after Maintenance Forum Agenda)

Representatives from engineering firms performing work for the Coastal Protection Restoration Authority discussed the proposed schedule of work to begin the waterside construction of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion. The referenced schedule indicated work would start by March. The navigation industry and pilots requested a meeting to review the proposed scope of work inside the river more thoroughly, to properly vet the details and determine proper transit restriction requirements. The Crescent River Port Pilots offered their meeting room to hold this discussion.

*Sean M. Duffy, Sr.*

Sean M. Duffy, Sr.  
Maritime Advocate  
Executive Vice President