



LOUISIANA MARITIME ASSOCIATION

Issue Date: March 6, 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 a hybrid of in person with a webinar option, next month's meeting will be virtual/telecon only due to meeting space being unavailable. The agenda provided by the MVN is attached.

Maintenance Forum Notes March 6, 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 intends to combine a cutterhead dredge contract to work Baptiste Collette first and then to address the more complicated shoaling on Tiger Pass. The contract advertisement is now expected to occur in May with dredging expected to begin on Baptiste in June (2024) including the merged contract for Tiger Pass. The USACE continues to develop adaptive strategies to safely dredge around the pipelines and anomalies previously identified at approximately Mile 9.75. There are areas of the channel reduced to +1.0 feet or more offset by 3.5 feet Mean Low Gulf (gage reading) yielding about 2 feet of water or shallower. The previous dredge contract was cancelled at the Mile 9.75 location due to concerns about multiple unidentified utility obstructions. Tiger Pass remains severely deficient, but the USACE intends to have the cutterhead restore the shallow-draft channel up to the point the previous contract ceased where the unidentified utility obstructions (anomalies) are located. The next phase would be to employ advanced survey technology to locate and identify the depth of cover over the utility pipelines/flowlines (anomalies) and employ a bucket dredge under contract to remove the material over the obstructions and then to issue another dredge contract to restore the channel beyond the obstructions. Tiger Pass remains severely deficient, the prospective contracts would not be sufficient to restore fully authorized channel dimensions. The removed material will be beneficially used for marsh restoration in the area.

Baptiste Collette: The cutterhead dredge ROBERT M. WHITE (Manson Construction) last dredged Baptiste Collette in December 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) and a second shoal noted at Mile 10.75 reduced to 10 feet plus the gage. The USACE expects to utilize the FY 24 funds to award the merged cutterhead dredge contract to restore reduced channel dimensions on Baptiste Collette and Tiger Pass. Much of the removed sediment will be beneficially used with a portion designated to extend one of the recently created bird islands in the vicinity (Gunn Island). The dredge contract for Baptiste Collette's first assignment is expected to be to remove the two shoals noted above and restore reduced channel dimensions across this shallow-draft channel. Merging the contracts should help reduce the overall 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 this morning 6.0 feet. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) Extended Streamflow Prediction (28-Day) for the Carrollton Gauge issued yesterday forecasts stages will continue an erratic fall the next week or so and then start a slow rise cresting at 7.0 feet on March 16 and will then resume a slow fall to 6.0 feet on April 2 (2024). The Carrollton Gauge is forecast to remain above 6.0 feet in this forecast. The 28-day forecast has not update yet today but there is considerable precipitation forecast across the Mississippi and Ohio River Basin over the next 72-hours.

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

Baton Rouge Gauge: The stage this morning was 19.6 feet. Yesterday's NWS extended forecast indicates stages would fall over the next five days and the rise to 20.8 feet on March 15 and then resume a slow fall to 18.1 feet on April 2 (2024).

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 will monitor shoaling that continues to form during erratic river stages, no dredge activity for the time being, 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 and is monitoring shoaling near the Julia Street Cruise Terminal.

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 had the buoys removed on February 23 as the high river stages had degraded the sill sufficiently. The pilots reported no issues for vessels transiting over the saltwater barriers that washes away in higher river stages (as planned). There are no further transit restrictions related to the saltwater sill and the saltwater encroachment is no longer a concern due to the higher river stages.

D. Southwest Pass (SWP):

The hopper dredge GLENN EDWARDS (Manson Construction) began dredging on March 4 at the Head of Passes (Mile 2.2 Above Head of Passes [AHP] to Mile 1.0 Below Head of Passes [BHP]) The GLENN EDWARDS is working on Southwest Pass Hopper Dredge Rental Contract #2-2023 the first of two Early Award Hopper Dredge Rental Contracts for Fiscal Year 2024. The second of the two early award hopper contracts is expected to begin later this month when the hopper dredge DODGE ISLAND (Great Lakes Dredge & Dock) is scheduled to begin work under Southwest Pass Hopper Dredge Rental Contract #11-2023. The USACE hopper dredge WHEELER is expected to work in SWP under Readiness Exercise #2-2024 from March 12 to April 1 (2024).

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

The cutterhead dredge CAPTAIN FRANK (Weeks Marine) completed Head of Passes Hopper Dredge Disposal Area Contract #2-2022 on January 18, 2024, and the final section of submerged dredge pipeline was removed on February 1, 2024. The USACE will continue to monitor conditions in the HDDA to determine when another dredge event will be required, not expected until after high river dredging.

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 is trickier this time because of the larger rocks, the work in SWP started on October 4, 2023, but is presently delayed due to rock availability. 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 South Pass is ongoing completion of the SWP contract is not expected until next year (2025).

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, April 3, 2024, this meeting will be conducted through web or teleconference options only (not in person).

Sean M. Duffy, Sr.

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Attachment