



LOUISIANA MARITIME ASSOCIATION

Issue Date: April 3, 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 only the USACE plans to conduct the meetings virtually only until August due to room limitations at the USACE New Orleans District. The agenda provided by the MVN is attached.

Maintenance Forum Notes April 3, 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. The datum for both shallow-draft channels has been adjusted from Mean Low Gulf (MLG) to Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) a difference of + 3.0 feet on Tiger Pass and + 3.5 feet on Baptiste Collette.

Tiger Pass: The USACE expects to advertise a consolidated cutterhead dredge contract to work on both Baptiste Collette and Tiger Pass by the end of the month. The contract is designed to remove major shoals but is not expected to restore the new authorized channel dimensions on both channels. The dredge is expected to start work on Baptiste Collette first and then move over to Tiger Pass. The plan at Tiger Pass is for the dredge to safely dredge up to the pipelines and anomalies previously identified at approximately Mile 9.75 feet. Beyond Mile 9.75 the USACE would most likely work with bucket dredge or similar equipment to remove material over the obstructions with a utility location survey effort to be conducted as an important component of dredging beyond Mile 9.75. In the MLLW datum the authorized channel dimensions for Tiger Pass are now 17 feet on the inside and 19 feet on the jetty end (outside). The latest surveys in MLLW indicate areas of the channel are reduced to 1.0 feet to 3.0 feet.

Baptiste Collette: The USACE intends to advertise a bid opening for a consolidated cutterhead dredge contract that should have a dredge working on Baptiste Collette by June 2024. The USACE advises mariners transiting this shallow-draft channel to utilize the online channel surveys, noting several shoals, especially with additional shallow-draft traffic expected due to the closure of the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal Lock for repairs. 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 of Gunn Island. The new authorized channel dimension on Baptiste Collette are 17.5 feet on the inside and 19.5 feet on the outside (jetty end).

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

New Orleans Gauge (Carrollton Gauge): The stage at 0800 hours this morning was 6.9 feet with a 24-hour change of -0.43 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 slowly fall to 6.0 feet by April 8 and then remain steady a few days before beginning a rise to 8.8 feet on April 23 and will then resume a slow fall to 6.2 feet on May 1.(2024).

Baton Rouge Gauge: The stage was 22.67 feet with a 24-hour change of - 1.04 feet. Today's NWS extended forecast indicates stages will continue a slow fall to 19.8 feet on April 6 and remain near 20 feet until April 12 and then begin a rise to 27.9 feet on April 29 and then to resume a slow fall to 19.7 feet on May 1 (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 will begin dredging on the Crossings in Fiscal Year 2024 in the spring dependent upon channel conditions dredging typically begins when the river stages are low on the Baton Rouge Gage and after significant rises.



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B. New Orleans Harbor:

The USACE hopper dredge WHEELER dredged in both Southwest Pass and along the Erato and Julia Street Cruise Terminals under Readiness Exercise #2-2024 from March 12 to April 1, 2023. The USACE also expects to dredge the Harbor in the summer of 2024 during low water with a normal cutterhead dredge contract.

D. Southwest Pass (SWP):

The industry hopper dredge GLENN EDWARDS (Manson Construction) continues dredging under assignment on Southwest Pass Hopper Dredge Contract #2-2023 the first of the two early award hopper dredge contracts issued in Fiscal Year 2023 for work in Fiscal Year 2024. The dredge is presently working on assignment from Mile 9.3 Below Head of Passes (BHP) to Mile 12.0 BHP.

The USACE also awarded a second Early Award Hopper Dredge Rental Contract for Fiscal Year 2024, to Great Lakes Dredge & Dock for the DODGE ISLAND under Southwest Pass & Calcasieu Hopper Dredge Contract #11-2023. The hopper dredge has now completed work on the Calcasieu River and was reported to be working in Galveston for 3 to 4 weeks, the USACE indicates the dredge is not need in SWP at this time and will reassess the situation when the work in Galveston is completed.

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

The USACE has funding to dredge the HDDA in Fiscal Year 2024 if needed, the USACE will continue to monitor the surveys of the HDDA. Dredging the HDDA may not be needed this year, but the USACE has funds if the material does build up.

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 contracts will be completed by April 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. The USACE does not expect to dredge South Pass this Fiscal Year, based on inadequate funding.

4) Next Meeting:

The next Forum meeting is scheduled for 0900 hours on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, this meeting will be conducted virtually only.

Sean M. Duffy, Sr.

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Attachment