



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Memphis District

News Release

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Corps moves barges from Memphis to Missouri to continue implementation of the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway Operation Plan

MEMPHIS, Tenn., April 26, 2011 – The Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, began moving barges loaded with equipment and materials used to operate the Birds Point-New Madrid (BP-NM) Floodway from Memphis to Missouri this afternoon (April 26). The decision by Mississippi River Commission President, Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh, to move the barges will allow the Memphis District to continue with the next phase of the Floodway operation plan.

“I strongly suggest people in the Floodway closely monitor information that might be coming from their local or state emergency management officials on things they need to do to reduce risk,” Col. Vernie Reichling, Commander of the Corps’ Memphis District said.

The Floodway is part of a flood risk management plan for the Lower Mississippi River designed to minimize damage and save lives from historic flood levels and is located on the west bank of the Mississippi in southeast Missouri, just below the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Its purpose is to lower flood stages and pressure on the entire system during major flood events. The floodway is 35 miles long and varies from 4 to 12 miles in width. Its area comprises about 133 thousand acres, or 205 square miles of land.

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Barges-2/2/2/2

The Commander of the Memphis District has the responsibility to plan and operate the BP-NM Floodway upon direction from Mississippi River Commission (MRC) President. The 1928 Flood Control Act gives the President of the MRC the authority to operate the BP-NM Floodway when the Mississippi River reaches 58 on the Cairo, Ill., gage with the prediction to rise to 61 feet.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the MRC are coordinating closely with other government agencies, communities, stakeholders, contractors and organizations. Operation of the Floodway in accordance with deliberate and condition-based steps in the BP-NM Floodway Operations Plan is integral to protecting the safety and well being of local citizens along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

The State of Missouri is responsible for warning, evacuation, and rescue of the occupants of the Floodway, traffic control, control of access into the Floodway area, and any necessary law enforcement.

No decision can be made at this time whether or not to artificially open the floodway. However, as set forth in the operation plan, preparation for that event is necessary at this time in order to carry out the activation of the floodway, should flood pressures on the comprehensive system require activation.

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