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Memphis' dredge Hurley plays critical role in Corps' low water operations

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Dec. 18, 2012 – As part of the regional team working to keep the Mississippi River open for commerce during unprecedented low water conditions, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' dustpan Dredge Hurley is currently operating near Uncle Joe Light, river mile 42.5, on the Upper Mississippi River. The Hurley is based in USACE's Memphis District.

The Hurley is joining the USACE Dredge Potter in keeping the channel open as the Middle Mississippi River reaches historic lows. The Potter has been dredging the river since early July, pumping more than 6 million cubic yards of sediment out of the navigation channel so far.

The Mississippi River Valley and the Missouri River Basin are experiencing a drought equal to or worse than any of the past five decades. One of the impacts of the drought is that it has reduced how much water is flowing in these river systems.

Between St. Louis and Cairo, Ill., where the Ohio River joins the Mississippi, USACE is combining years of innovative engineering, around-the-clock-dredging, ongoing surveying, and rock removal to keep commerce moving on the open river despite record lows.

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Dredge-2/2/2/2

The dredge Hurley is a 353-foot-long, 108-foot-wide dustpan dredge. Its two 1,500 horsepower motors drive pumps that can remove as much as 5,000 cubic yards of sand and sediment from the river bottom each hour using a vacuum-cleaner type head and deposit it safely outside the navigation channel via a long floating pipeline. It can dredge as deep as 75 feet if conditions require.

The Hurley is one of two dredges working to prevent river navigation restrictions in the Middle Mississippi. The Corps' dredge Potter is currently at Arsenal Island, river mile 174.3, working an additional critical reach of the river. Dredging with the Potter has been ongoing since early July.

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For more information, visit www.mvs.usace.army.mil/lowwater

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