



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Corps' officials meet with Illinois leaders to discuss low water operations

**VICKSBURG, Miss., December 18, 2012** - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division Commander Maj. Gen. John Peabody and St. Louis District Commander Col. Chris Hall met with state and local representatives yesterday in Alton, Ill., to discuss current and future actions the Corps will take to maintain a safe and reliable navigation channel during low water.

The meeting, which was led by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), was also attended by Capt. Byron Black, U.S. Coast Guard commander of the Upper Mississippi River Sector, Rep. Jerry Costello (D-Ill.), Rep. John Shimkus (R-Ill.), Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon (D-Ill.) and river industry representatives.

“We’ve been preparing for this since early summer, which means continuous collaboration with our partners the U.S. Coast Guard and the navigation industry to help provide a safe and reliable channel on the greatest, navigable watershed in the world,” Peabody said.

Peabody explained the removal of 890 cubic yards of limestone that began this week near Thebes, Ill., is just one phase of the action the Corps is taking to improve the navigation channel for the river industry. With the removal of the rock, Peabody said, the Corps’ expects that restrictions on barges will not be necessary at this time.

“We remain cautiously optimistic that if we do have any interruptions, it will be short in duration as we continue to maintain a safe and reliable navigation channel,” Peabody said.

The Corps also began increasing releases from Carlyle Lake December 15 to help provide the depth necessary for river commerce to pass Thebes before the rocks can be removed. The full extent of the releases is expected to reach Thebes by Dec. 24. This will provide an additional six inches of depth in this critical reach of the river. Releases will continue if needed until the river level increases through precipitation, or until Carlyle Lake reaches its winter pool elevation. With the additional release schedule, Carlyle Lake is expected to reach its winter pool level in approximately three weeks.

Peabody said the Corps is also looking at the possibility of additional releases from other reservoirs, if that becomes necessary.

During the meeting, Hall explained the dredging actions the Corps is undertaking and plans to continue through the low water. “The Dredge Potter has dredged more than 6 million cubic yards of material on the Upper and Lower Mississippi since it began operations in June.”

“We will continue dredging problem areas, conducting channel patrols and surveys to keep commerce safely moving on the Middle Mississippi,” Hall said.

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