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Mississippi Valley Division prepares for 2012 flood season, continues Operation Watershed recovery work

VICKSBURG, Miss., January 9, 2012 – After the monumental flood of 2011, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division carefully inspected and completed damage assessments reports for all levees, channel improvements, navigation channels and structures associated with the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project, one of this country's most comprehensive and successful flood control systems. From the damage assessments, a prioritized list of critical repairs was developed based on threat to human life and safety, as well as economic impacts. The recently approved Disaster Relief Appropriations Act has designated \$802 million for repairs to the MR&T.

“In eager anticipation of these much needed flood recovery funds our teams, partners and contractors are rapidly mobilizing to aggressively implement a broad array of repairs in the coming months” said Scott Whitney, Regional Flood Risk Manager for MVD. With the coming flood season fast approaching and winter site conditions unsuitable for active construction, there will be many areas not fully repaired, resulting in increased risk within the system. This increased risk will require extra vigilance and advance preparedness in the coming months given the post-flood condition of MR&T levees, floodwalls, water control structures and navigation channels.

Taking into account the vulnerable condition of the MR&T project and projected National Weather Service Spring forecast, the Corps mobilized a Regional 2012 Flood Preparedness Team in mid December to develop plans to manage, mitigate and communicate flood risks throughout the MR&T system. This regional effort will identify key risks within the MR&T, ways to minimize risk, and effectively communicate this information to partners, stakeholders and the public. An interagency workshop is scheduled for February 22-23 in Memphis to carefully coordinate, refine and communicate this team's findings, tools and recommendations across the broad array of those public officials with shared responsibility for the protection of the lives and livelihoods from flooding events.

The 2012 Flood Season Preparedness Team has a lot to do in a very short time. When the project is complete, there will be valuable information to share as well as means to share it. “Our primary goal with this collaborative effort is to be fully prepared to help protect the lives and livelihoods of people living within the Mississippi River Valley,” stated Henry DeHaan, Flood Preparedness Team leader.

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