

**STATE OF THE
LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY**

MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETINGS

March 2002

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by
Brigadier General Edwin J. Arnold, Jr.
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This is a report on the state of the Lower Mississippi Valley for the 362nd session of the Mississippi River Commission. Meetings held during this session provide local interests an opportunity to express views to the Commission, and provide the Commission opportunities to inspect Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) projects along the river at or near high-water conditions.

Public meetings are scheduled in the lower valley at Cairo, Illinois; Memphis, Tennessee; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

All Commission meetings are open to the public and with advance notice of time and place. Notices are printed in the Federal Register and all known interested parties are sent a copy. In addition, the news media are sent releases.

This report provides an update on current river and weather conditions and summaries of the overall status of the MR&T project, including programs, funding, environmental initiatives of interest, and benefits of the project.

River and Weather Conditions

As we approach the spring flood season, stages along the Middle Mississippi River are near normal with a general rising trend that is typical for this time of year. On the Lower Mississippi, stages remain moderately high, particularly along the lower reaches, as the river recedes from the early February crest. A 600,000-cfs flow increase out of the Ohio River during the latter part of January caused the Cairo gage to crest on February 3 at 43.3 feet, just shy of the 44-foot bankfull stage.

Current snow cover in the Mississippi Basin is minimal and is limited to southern Iowa, southeastern Nebraska, and central Kansas, with maximum depth of about 6 inches; ground

conditions are abnormally dry to exceptionally dry in the upper half of the Missouri Basin and near normal in the remainder of the Mississippi Basin; the upper tributary basin reservoir systems have most of their flood control storages vacant, with the Missouri Basin mainstem reservoirs using only 78 percent of their conservation storages; and the precipitation outlook is for normal amounts through April for the entire Mississippi Basin.

The current situation in some of the tributary basins such as the Yazoo Basin is not so optimistic. Currently, over 200,000 acres of agricultural lands are flooded with the four Yazoo Basin Lakes using 75 percent over their available flood control storage. Outflows are being made at maximum rates possible without flooding homes and businesses. The severely constrained channel capacities in the Upper Yazoo Basin will present a significant challenge to the Corps this spring in managing the overall flood control capabilities of the lakes while still providing for the effective evacuation of floodwaters from downstream croplands in time for the planting season.

With the possible exception of moderately high stages along the lower reaches of the Mississippi River, all other indicators give cause for optimism that this spring, like the previous spring, will be free of a major flood event on the Mississippi. However, it is very early in the flood season and much will depend on future weather conditions.

Overall Project Status

We are currently reporting the Mississippi River and Tributaries project as 87 percent physically complete. To date, the nation has invested about \$10.8 billion for planning, design, construction, and operation and maintenance of the MR&T project. For this investment, the project has accumulated savings in flood damages of more than \$258 billion.

Additionally, the MR&T project provides approximately \$885 million in navigation savings to the region annually. Completion of the remaining 13 percent of the project is necessary for proper functioning of the project to handle the project design flood. Of the 2,059 miles of levees on the main stem of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers, 310 miles are not up to required grade and section. Some of the levees

in Louisiana and Mississippi are 4 to 6 feet deficient in grade. There are 115 miles of seepage control measures such as berms or relief wells yet to be constructed to prevent levee failure from underseepage. Much still remains to be done on improvement works in the main channel in the form of revetment, dikes, and dredging to assure that the present alignment of the river remains stable for navigation and flood control. Much work remains in tributary basins. Of 1,668 miles of levee authorized in tributary basins, 1,203 miles are complete to required grade and section.

The current estimate for authorized construction work remaining on the MR&T project after Fiscal Year 2003 is \$6.2 billion. There are several ongoing planning studies that will likely result in authorization of additional project features. The current Federal cost of operating and maintaining the completed portions of the MR&T project is approximately \$139 million per year. The estimated completion date is 2031, based on current funding levels.

Funding

For Fiscal Year 2002, the initial MR&T appropriation was \$346 million, \$66 million more than the budget request of \$280 million. The President's Fiscal Year 2003 budget includes \$288 million for the MR&T project, a 17 percent decrease over the level appropriated for Fiscal Year 2002. This request includes a contingent adjustment of \$7.0 million for full funding of Federal retiree costs. Funding status tables are attached at the end of this report.

Environmental Initiatives

Although most of the projects in the Mississippi Valley are for flood control and navigation purposes, environmental aspects are given major consideration. Project impacts on the environment are identified, and a balance of environmental, economic, and engineering factors has to be attempted.

The Lower Mississippi River Environmental Program (LMREP), established in 1982, continues to provide environmental information to support the design, construction, and operation of the Mississippi River Levees and Channel Improvement features of the MR&T project. This effort is the

keystone of the environmental stewardship aspect of the MR&T project.

The goal of the LMREP is to develop general environmental inventory data for the Lower Mississippi River and floodplain and to develop environmental engineering design considerations for levees, channel training dikes, and revetments. To achieve these goals, system-wide habitat mapping and intensive vegetation, fish, invertebrate, and wildlife field investigations have been conducted. A geographic information system has been developed to store the maps and to conduct habitat spatial analyses. Aquatic habitat maps of the river channel for 1915 and for 10-year intervals from the 1930's to 1990's have been completed and are being used to assess historic habitat trends and to evaluate project effects on endangered species such as the least interior tern and the pallid sturgeon. Terrestrial habitat and land cover maps have been prepared for 1982 and 1992 and have been used to delineate jurisdictional wetlands and plan levee construction work to avoid and minimize environmental impacts.

Information derived from the LMREP is being used to modify MR&T designs to promote environmental sustainability. Techniques developed from LMREP are now routinely used to design borrow pits that are productive fish or wildlife areas. Weir sections are now routinely incorporated into many stone dike channel training structures to reduce sedimentation and improve habitat conditions during low discharge periods. Articulated concrete mattress revetment, used to stabilize the banks of the Lower Mississippi River, is now grooved during the casting process, at no cost, to increase surface area and provide a favorable substrate for growth of aquatic insect larvae that are important components of the aquatic food web.

In South Louisiana, we are continuing environmental initiatives begun under the Coastal Wetlands Planning Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA). The 11th Project Priority List under CWPPRA was adopted on January 6, 2002. In concert with our sister Federal agencies on the CWPPRA Task Force, we are making positive contributions to coastal restoration. Approximately 105,000 acres of wetlands will benefit from 121 authorized projects. Twelve projects are scheduled to begin construction in Fiscal Year 2002 and eighteen in Fiscal Year 2003. The Corps will construct one CWPPRA project in Fiscal Year 2002, the Flexible Dustpan Demo at Head of Passes Project and in Fiscal Year 2003 will construct four projects: West Bay Sediment Diversion,

Opportunistic Use of Bonnet Carre Spillway, Freshwater Bayou Canal-Belle Isle to Lock and Delta Building Diversion, North of Fort St. Philip.

General Investigations Program

Funds in the amount of \$6 million are requested for Fiscal Year 2003 under the General Investigations category to provide for nine activities. These funds will provide for the continuation of two flood damage prevention feasibility studies and two environmental feasibility studies; continuation of collection and study of basic data; completion of two flood damage prevention feasibility studies; and continuation of one and completion of one preconstruction engineering and design project.

The Alexandria, Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico study area encompasses about 1,700 square miles extending through nine parishes from Alexandria, Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico. Alexandria has experienced numerous floods in its metropolitan area and has had widespread flooding throughout the basin in most rural and agricultural areas. The first phase of the feasibility study, which will address flooding problems in the Alexandria area, will be initiated in Fiscal Year 2002 upon execution of the feasibility cost sharing agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the Rapides Parish Gravity Drainage District No. 1 scheduled in March 2002. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue the feasibility phase.

The Donaldsonville, Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico study area is located in southeast Louisiana and the basin is subject to rainfall, tidal, and hurricane flooding resulting in structural, agricultural, and environmental damages. A feasibility cost sharing agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and Lafourche Basin Levee District was signed on February 6, 2002. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue into the feasibility phase of the study. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue the feasibility phase.

The Germantown, Tennessee, study area is located in the City of Germantown in Shelby County, Tennessee. The principal purpose of this study is to identify a feasible solution to the flooding, erosion, and water quality problems plaguing this area. A feasibility cost sharing agreement was executed

with the City of Germantown on October 29, 2001. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue the feasibility phase of the study. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to complete the feasibility phase of the study.

The Millington and Vicinity, Tennessee, study area is located in Shelby County, Tennessee. Reconnaissance phase studies have been accomplished as part of the Memphis Metropolitan Area reconnaissance study. Feasibility studies are focusing on Big Creek, a tributary to the Looshatchie River. Increased runoff and erosion is being experienced in the vicinity of Millington due to extensive development in adjacent cities and counties north and east of the city. Locals have also indicated a need for environmental enhancement and recreational features to deter additional development in the Big Creek floodplain. A feasibility cost sharing agreement is scheduled to be signed with the City of Millington, Tennessee, in April 2002. Fiscal Year 2002 funds will be used to continue into the feasibility phase of the study. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to complete these studies.

The Tensas River Basin, Louisiana, study area is bounded by the Mississippi River on the east and the Macon Ridge on the west, and extends southward from near Lake Providence, Louisiana, to its confluence with the Ouachita River near Jonesville, Louisiana. Parts or all of Catahoula, Concordia, East Carroll, Franklin, Madison, and Tensas Parishes lie in the Tensas River Basin. Flooding, water use, and the decline in the environmental resources continue to be problems in the basin. The need to balance the competing demands is becoming more critical for this area to ensure the wise and efficient use of the basin's water resources. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to initiate a reconnaissance study. Fiscal Year 2003 funds in the amount of \$200,000 could be used to complete a reconnaissance study for the purpose of identifying measures to address the flood control, water supply, and environmental needs.

The Spring Bayou, Louisiana, area encompasses at least 43 lakes and streams and includes two state wildlife management areas and two national wildlife refuges. This ecosystem is rapidly degrading from pollution of water, sedimentation, rampant growth of exotic aquatic plants and frequent, excessive flooding. Upon certification of the reconnaissance report, Fiscal Year 2002 funds will be used to continue into

the feasibility phase of the study. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue the feasibility phase of the study.

The Coldwater River Basin Below Arkabutla Lake, Mississippi, area is located in northwest Mississippi approximately 30 miles south of Memphis, Tennessee. Increased development within this segment of the Coldwater River Basin has created pressure on area streams to meet water quality standards while maintaining flood damage reduction goals. In particular, the potential sponsors want to implement specific projects and develop guidelines for future development that will improve the aquatic environment and conserve water resources for use in agricultural production and habitat restoration. Upon certification of the reconnaissance report, Fiscal Year 2002 funds will be used to continue into the feasibility phase of the study. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue the feasibility phase of the study.

The Southeast Arkansas study area includes the Boeuf-Tensas and Bayou Bartholomew areas of southeast Arkansas. Counties included in the study area are Jefferson, Lincoln, Drew, Ashley, Chicot, and Desha. Flooding between November 1982 and January 1983 caused damages in excess of \$47 million to approximately 1,170,000 acres of primarily agricultural lands in the Boeuf-Tensas Basin. Extensive agricultural farming has heavily utilized groundwater resources in the area. The study will address current flooding, agricultural water supply, and ecosystem restoration problems and needs. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue the feasibility study. Funding for this study has been excluded from the Fiscal Year 2003 budget.

The Morganza, Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico project will provide hurricane protection for Terrebonne and northwest Lafourche Parishes. The Houma Navigation Canal Lock (HNCL) was approved for initiation of preconstruction engineering and design (PED) prior to completing the feasibility study for the remaining portions of the study. The funds available in Fiscal Year 2002 are being used to complete the feasibility report for the remaining portions of the study and continue PED for the HNCL. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue PED on the HNCL and initiate PED for other project features.

The Wolf River, Memphis, Tennessee, Basin was authorized for construction by Section 101(b) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000. The project is located on the

Wolf River in the vicinity of Collierville, Tennessee. The primary purpose is ecosystem restoration. The project sponsors are the Chickasaw Basin Authority and Shelby County, Tennessee. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue PED. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to complete PED. The project will be ready for construction in Fiscal Year 2003.

The Bayou Meto Basin, Arkansas, project area is located in east-central Arkansas in the alluvial valley of the Mississippi River. The project is located in Lonoke, Prairie, Jefferson, Pulaski, and Arkansas Counties. The project includes water supply needs to sustain agriculture, improvements to reduce flooding and improve water management, and environmental restoration and enhancement features. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue the general reevaluation. A draft general reevaluation report is scheduled to be completed in September 2002. Funding for this project has been excluded from the Fiscal Year 2003 budget.

The Reelfoot Lake, Tennessee and Kentucky, project area is located in northwest Tennessee and southwest Kentucky. Authorized project features include a new spillway at Reelfoot Lake, with associated water level management plan; inlet and outlet channel, bridge relocation and closure of the existing spillway; circulation channels within Reelfoot Lake; a sediment retention basin on Reelfoot Creek; waterfowl management units; and restoration of Shelby Lake. Average annual benefits are estimated to be in excess of 5,600 habitat unit values and over 6 million waterfowl use days. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to complete the flooding impact analysis report, which will include a summary of the flooding impacts of the proposed spillway and its operation. The report will be coordinated with the Governor of Kentucky and the Kentucky delegation. PED activities were initiated in August 2000 with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency as the local cost sharing sponsor. The spillway has been designed as the first item of construction. However, funding for this project as a new construction start has been excluded from the Fiscal Year 2003 budget.

Construction Program

For the Mississippi River and Tributaries construction program \$125.9 million is requested for Fiscal Year 2003, a decrease of \$68.7 million over the amount allocated in Fiscal

Year 2002. These funds allow continuation of 15 construction projects.

During the first 5 months of Fiscal Year 2002, construction contracts for 21 items were awarded at a cost of about \$23.6 million which, when added to work underway at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2002, amounts to 73 items under contract valued at \$188.0 million. During the remainder of Fiscal Year 2002, we plan to complete designs and award an additional 39 contracts having a construction value of \$82.0 million. Thus, the total volume of construction underway in Fiscal Year 2002 is expected to consist of 112 contracts valued at \$270.0 million. Our estimated construction expenditures for Fiscal Year 2002 are approximately \$92.6 million.

The Mississippi River Levees project is a component of the main stem system for the control of floods on the Mississippi River. The levee system provides protection for 23,620 square miles and partial protection for an additional 3,780 square miles of land in the alluvial valley subject to flooding by the project flood. The value of lands and improvements protected by authorized works against the design flood is \$139.4 billion in 2000 dollars. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to initiate six items, initiate and complete five items, continue three items, and complete seven items. Funds requested for Fiscal Year 2003 will be used to initiate eight items, initiate and complete two items, continue seven items, and complete four items.

There are 1,610 miles of authorized levees on the main stem of the Mississippi River. A total of 1,361 miles of these levees are in place to grade and section. For the levees not to grade, 26 miles are under construction, and an additional 27 miles are scheduled to be awarded during the remainder of Fiscal Year 2002. After Fiscal Year 2002, there will be approximately 189 miles of levee which require raising and approximately 7 miles (Obion Levee extension) of new levee which will complete the system.

Design studies indicate that approximately 652 miles of seepage control measure are required. There are 537 miles complete, leaving a balance to complete of 115 miles.

Some reaches of the mainline Mississippi River Levees are inadequate to safely convey project design flood flows. Correction of these inadequacies in levee grade and/or section

is given a funding priority within the Mississippi River and Tributaries program. Critical levee enlargements are now underway in Louisiana and Mississippi. The status of the levee work is summarized on Tables 1 and 2 which are attached to this report.

Under the Channel Improvement project, another component of the main stem system, about 1,038 miles of the 1,085 miles of authorized bank protection have been completed.

During the 2001 channel improvement construction season, articulated concrete mattress (ACM) revetment was placed at six locations on the Mississippi River, three locations on the Atchafalaya River, and one location on the Red River. Dikes were constructed at seven locations, bendway weirs were constructed at two locations, stone paving was constructed at one location, and foreshore protection was constructed at one location on the main stem Mississippi River.

Work planned for the Mississippi River during the 2002 season includes ACM revetment at six locations, stone dikes at eight locations, bendway weirs at one location, and foreshore protection at one location. ACM revetment is scheduled at three locations on the Atchafalaya River. ACM revetment is tentatively planned at one location within the lower 31 miles of the Red River. Annual maintenance and reinforcement work on these rivers will also be completed.

A total of 228,733 squares of ACM was placed during the 2001 revetment season. We estimate that approximately 225,000 squares will be placed during the 2002 revetment season. Funds requested for Fiscal Year 2003 will be used to place 1.9 miles of revetment and construct eight dikes.

There are 449 miles of authorized levees in the Atchafalaya Basin project. All of these levees are in place, about 388 miles are to design grade and section, and the remaining 61 miles require raising. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to initiate four levee items and one pumping station contract; continue bank stabilization; complete four levee items and one drainage structure; and reimburse local interests for construction of the Bayou Yokely pumping station. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to initiate two levee contracts; initiate and complete one contract; continue one levee and pump station contract and bank stabilization work; and complete two levee contracts.

On the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway System, Louisiana, project, programmed work provides for acquisition of 50,000 acres in fee for public access and easements on 338,000 acres for flowage, developmental control, and environmental protection. Approximately 36,998 acres of fee land have been acquired and 143,729 acres of easements have been negotiated. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to acquire additional easements and complete acquisition of lands in fee; execute the project cooperation agreements and construct the Simmesport Boat Launch, and initiate construction of the Myette Point boat launch; and continue design work on other management and recreation units. Funds requested for Fiscal Year 2003 will be used to continue easement lands acquisition; initiate Buffalo Cove Management Unit and Lake End Park boat launch; initiate and complete Bayou Sorrel and Bayou Pigeon boat launches; and complete Myette boat launch.

The Francis Bland Floodway Ditch (Eight Mile Creek), Arkansas, project includes channel improvements to provide 100-year flood protection to the urban area of Paragould, Arkansas, and maintain current 3-year protection levels in the downstream rural area. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to initiate two railroad relocation contracts and initiate construction of an urban channel improvement item. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue this construction.

The Grand Prairie Region, Arkansas, project area is located in east-central Arkansas. The project addresses the problems of depletion of the alluvial aquifer with resulting losses to the agricultural-based economy and opportunities for environmental restoration and enhancement. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue construction of the on-farm features only. Funding for this project has been excluded from the Fiscal Year 2003 budget.

The Helena and Vicinity, Arkansas, project is an urban flood control project, which will provide approximately a 25-year level of protection for the downtown business district of the City of Helena and for the adjacent residential area. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue the last item of channel enlargement work. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue this work.

The St. Francis Basin project provides protection against headwater floods of the St. Francis and Little Rivers to an area of over 1.4 million acres and against backwater floods of

the Mississippi River to an area of over 500,000 acres. Fiscal Year 2002 and Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue project construction; continue planning, engineering and design for future construction items; and continue land acquisition, including mitigation lands.

The Louisiana State Penitentiary Levee, Louisiana, project is located near Angola, Louisiana, approximately 40 miles northwest of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The project provides for improving about 12 miles of existing levees along the Mississippi River, which currently provide flood protection to the penitentiary. By improving the existing levees to Federal standards, risk of flooding with its attendant property damage and threat to the lives of up to 5,100 inmates, 1,750 employees, and 527 residents will be reduced. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to continue one levee item and complete two levee items. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to complete the remaining levee contract downstream of Camp C and complete project construction.

The Mississippi Delta Region, Louisiana, project consists of two freshwater diversion structures designed to divert freshwater from the Mississippi River into coastal bays and marshes for fish and wildlife habitat enhancement. The completed Caernarvon structure on the east bank of the Mississippi River is preserving about 16,000 acres of wetlands in the Breton Sound estuary. When completed, the Davis Pond diversion structure on the west bank of the Mississippi River will preserve an estimated 33,000 acres of wetlands. Additionally, 777,000 acres of marshes and bays in the Barataria estuary will be benefited by the project. Funds for Fiscal Year 2002 are being used to complete the Davis Pond diversion structure and to initiate the site operations building and two levee items. Funds requested in Fiscal Year 2003 will be used to continue one levee contract, complete the site operations building, and complete one levee contract.

Current activities on the Tensas Basin, Arkansas and Louisiana, project are in the Sicily Island portion of the Red River Backwater area. The Sicily Island area consists of about 100,000 acres of land and rural development in Catahoula and Franklin Parishes in east-central Louisiana. This area is subject to frequent flooding caused by backwater from the Mississippi and Red Rivers and floods from the Ouachita and Tensas Rivers. The project will provide 100-year protection to the Sicily Island area. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to complete construction of one levee item and one

channel item, which will complete construction of the Sicily Island project.

The completed Horn Lake Creek, Mississippi and Tennessee, project provides a 25-year level of protection to existing residential development along Cow Pen Creek, but only a 1-year level of protection to existing developments along Horn Lake and Rocky Creeks. WRDA 2000 included authorization to perform a reevaluation to determine the feasibility of modifying the project to provide additional urban flood protection along Horn Lake Creek. If found justified, the project modification can be constructed in accordance with the approved report. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to initiate the reevaluation. A design agreement was executed with the Horn Lake Creek Drainage District in October 2001. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue the reevaluation, which is scheduled for completion in Fiscal Year 2004.

On the Yazoo Basin, Mississippi, project work on the reformulation study is continuing. This study involves four portions of the Yazoo Basin project and is estimated to cost \$32.4 million. Based on results of completed reformulations for the Upper Steele Bayou and Upper Yazoo Projects portions, the reformulation effort has, to date, been completely successful in that project costs have been reduced by \$75 million, environmental impacts have been reduced, and environmental and local interests are satisfied. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to finalize the report on the Yazoo Backwater Area; continue construction of channel improvement items and reforestation on Upper Yazoo Projects; continue lands and reforestation and complete Swan Lake Levee Item 66A/B on the Big Sunflower project; and complete the Demonstration Erosion Control program work on bank stabilization, grade control structures, levees, floodwater retarding structures, and channel improvement. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue ongoing construction contracts and purchase mitigation lands on Upper Yazoo Projects. Funding for the Demonstration Erosion Control project has been excluded from the Fiscal Year 2003 budget.

The St. Johns Bayou-New Madrid Floodway project in Missouri consists of 137 miles of rural channel improvement, 6.7 miles of urban channel improvement, two pumping stations, and mitigation. The first phase consists of 27.6 miles of channel improvement in the St. Johns Basin, and the two pumping stations, one in the New Madrid Floodway Basin and one in the St. Johns Basin. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used

to continue the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) coordination. Before construction on remaining items can be initiated, NEPA processing must be completed and water quality certification obtained from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Remaining construction work for Phase 1 includes approximately 23.3 miles of channel improvements and two pumping stations. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to continue SEIS coordination.

The Nonconnah Creek project is located within the Memphis, Tennessee, metropolitan area. The project includes three separable elements authorized in WRDA 1986--flood control, environmental enhancement, and recreation--along 18.2 miles of stream. WRDA 2000 conditionally authorized the extension of the flood control element for an additional 5 miles upstream and the hiking/biking trails included in the recreational element for an additional 18.2 miles, if the Secretary determines them to be feasible. Fiscal Year 2002 funds are being used to initiate one channel improvement contract and continue reevaluation of the conditionally authorized extension of the flood control and recreation elements. Fiscal Year 2003 funds will be used to complete one channel improvement item and reevaluation studies.

The West Tennessee Tributaries, Tennessee, project is located on the Obion and Forked Deer Rivers and their major tributaries. Ninety-three miles of the authorized 225 miles of channel enlargement have been completed, and 13,527 acres of the authorized 32,000 acres of the mitigation lands have been acquired. Fiscal Year 2002 and 2003 funds will be used to continue coordination activities with the sponsor and the State of Tennessee.

Maintenance Program

Funds available in Fiscal Year 2002 are being used on 35 completed projects for operation of projects and repairs of levee slides, repairs to revetments, harbor dredging, and dredging of the Mississippi River. The Fiscal Year 2003 request for Mississippi River and Tributaries maintenance is \$162.1 million, which is a decrease of \$2.3 million from the funds allocated in Fiscal Year 2002. This request will allow continuation of necessary operations and maintenance activities on 35 completed projects. Of the \$162.1 million request, \$103.0 million, or 64 percent, will be used for

operation and maintenance of main stem levees, channels, and harbors. This work consists of Mississippi River main stem channel and harbor dredging, and repairs of levee slides, banks, dikes, and revetments. Another \$55.3 million, or 34 percent, is for operation and maintenance of tributary river basin projects; \$2.8 million, or 2 percent, is for mapping and inspection of completed works, and \$1.0 million is included for facility protection.

Opposition continues to the implementation of the Big Sunflower River maintenance project. The prior Federal Court litigation before the Federal District Court in Washington, D.C., concluded with a ruling in favor of the United States and the local sponsors. The local sponsor levee boards and communities in the Delta that benefit from this project intervened in that Federal Court litigation. No appeal was taken. In a separate legal action, the Sierra Club and a local landowner challenged the water quality certificate issued by the State of Mississippi for this project. The full Commission of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Chancery Court of Hinds County, Mississippi, both affirmed the issuance of the water quality certificate. The plaintiffs appealed to the Mississippi State Supreme Court. On April 19, 2001, the State Supreme Court issued an opinion vacating the decision of the Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality and remanding the case to the Commission for further action. The state and the sponsors have filed motions for reconsideration on May 3, 2001. The Court has not yet ruled on those motions. The latest action is that Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, Inc., issued a Notice of Intent to Sue on February 21, 2001, on behalf of Concerned Parents of Leland, the Sierra Club, American Rivers, and Friends of the Earth. The Notice alleges violations of the Clean Water Act.

Benefits of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project

Flood damages prevented by the MR&T project for Fiscal Year 2001 were \$13.9 billion (\$1.37 billion for the Vicksburg District, and \$2.7 million for the St. Louis District, \$347.0 million for the Memphis District, and \$12.1 billion for the New Orleans District).

Navigation tonnage moving on the Mississippi River from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to the mouth in 2000, the last year for which we have records, was 518,897,000 tons. That amounts

to 213,685,198,000 ton-miles of traffic. Transportation benefits for the MR&T project are \$884,704,000 annually.