



**THE
LITTLE RIVER
DRAINAGE DISTRICT**

**FLOOD CONTROL & DRAINAGE
SINCE — 1907**

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**STATEMENT OF
THE LITTLE RIVER DRAINAGE DISTRICT
MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION LOW-WATER HEARING
CARUTHERSVILLE, MISSOURI
August 15, 2016**

Major General Michael Wehr, President
Mississippi River Commission

General Wehr and Members of the Commission:

My name is W. Dustin Boatwright. I am the Chief Engineer of The Little River Drainage District (LRDD) headquartered in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. LRDD is a major contributor to the St. Francis Basin watershed. The Corps is authorized to make major improvements within the watershed of the St. Francis Basin, which is an integral part of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project (MR&T).

All authorized work in our District for new construction and enlargements has been completed. The remaining responsibility of the Corps of Engineers is to maintain those features Congress authorized.

LRDD has presented and requested attention maintenance items 1-6 below on several occasions in the past. The following will provide an update on each of those. Item 7 has not been discussed in the past. LRDD respectfully requests your consideration and action on all of the following:

1. Excavation maintenance on the following channels, which are under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Memphis Districts major maintenance responsibility: Ditch No. 1 Upper, Ditch No. 251 (North of Highway EE), Ditch No. 290, Ditch No. 39. All four channels serve as main drainage outlets for nearly 1.2 Million acres of runoff in southeast Missouri. All four channels are in poor condition with heavy vegetation growth, shoaling, and sedimentation. The current condition is causing damage to private property, state and county roadways, and LRDD's upstream channels. Update: Recently I was informed Ditch No. 290 is scheduled for a channel cleanout in the Spring of FY 2017. In addition Ditch No. 251 is scheduled for a survey to be conducted in FY 2017. We look forward to future action on Ditch No. 39 and Ditch No. 1 Upper.
2. Repair to the active erosion on Ditch No. 1 along the left descending bank approximately one-half (1/2) mile upstream of Highway "62" in New Madrid County, Missouri. The

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channel continues to undercut the levee on the eastside bank of the channel. The levee has provided protection from flooding for nearly a century. There are homes and farms will be devastated if the levee were to breach. Update: Nearly two years ago I was informed of plans to correct this erosion with Memphis District's hired labor crew. Recently we were informed the Memphis District plans to survey this location in FY 2017.

3. Repair of levee Slides on the Headwater Diversion Channel Levee resulting from the historic winter flood of 2016. Recently we were informed the most critical slides are scheduled for repair in the fall of 2016. The remaining slides will be addressed as funding allows.
4. Repair and armor scours along the Castor River Diversion Channel near the toe of the West Basin Levee System. The scours were caused by the historic winter flood of 2016. Recently we were informed the scours will be surveyed by the Memphis District in FY 2017.
5. Repair to an active scour on the levee separating the Ditch No. 81 watershed from the Ditch No. 1 watershed near Hornersville, Missouri. Update: Recently we were informed Memphis Districts hired labor crew is scheduled to armor the location with riprap this fall.
6. Provide technical support for the electrical work updates to the Treasure Island Pump Station. Currently, the transformers are located on power poles. In order to make the structure more resilient LRDD and Pemiscot-Dunklin Electrical Cooperative made plans to place the transformer on a concrete pad more than 1 ft. above the top of the levee. It was noted the Memphis District designed and inspects this facility. As of today this work is nearly complete. I would like to thank the Memphis District for their assistance.
7. Alter the Big Lake Gate Structures system operation plan to utilize the latest technology to improve the conveyance of runoff through the system. The current system is utilizing gages mounted directly on the gate structures which trigger automatic operation once the channels reach a set elevation at the structure. This is an old system and has worked well during its time. However with today's technology this system can be improved to benefit both upstream and downstream drainage along with wildlife management in the area. With the current trend of high intensity, short duration rainfall events once runoff arrives at the gate structures we see a rapid rise & fall in the channel along with heavy sediment loads entering Big Lake Wildlife Refuge. This is not a good situation for the upstream and downstream landowners, or the fish and wildlife in Big Lake.

LRDD proposing to work with the Memphis District and the Big Lake National Wildlife Refuge to alter the operation plan by utilizing upstream gages along four (4) to five (5) key location in the upper reach of the LRDD system in conjunction with forward weather forecasting to alter the gate operation days before runoff reaches the structures to improve conveyance of runoff through the St. Francis Basin system. The proposed

operation alteration will provide additional runoff storage, less extreme rise and falls in channel/lake elevation, and downstream conveyance over a longer time period which will decrease flooding potential. The result is undoubtedly a win-win.

This concludes the request of the Little River Drainage District. Please give these items careful consideration. At this time I have a few general comments I would like to make.

Following the winter of 2016, a resolution in support water infrastructure investment for flood control and navigation (commerce) began spreading throughout the Valley. The resolution supports three (3) big picture messages for the entire Mississippi River Valley. To date thirty-eight (38) resolutions have been passed with more than 155 individual groups signing on to support the effort including cities, drainage districts, levee district, river conservancy districts, and shallow draft ports, deep draft ports, and private businesses throughout the entire Mississippi Valley. The resolutions passed to date represent nearly 17 million acres, more than 7.2 million people in 10 states throughout the Mississippi Valley. The passage provides broad support from elected officials (board members, commissioners, mayors) who represent businesses, agriculture, households, and other stakeholders. As presented at the High-Water hearing in April 2016 the following three (3) key messages are outlined in the resolution.

1. The support of yearly federal funding of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project for operation and maintenance in the amount of \$500 Million, and \$2 Billion to recapitalize, repair, and restore the system before the next flood event. The system, in place today, will not pass the “project design flood”.
2. The support of federal legislation providing local levee and drainage districts, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Mississippi River Commission, the authority to streamline the federal regulatory process (red tape) to spend federal and local dollars directly on projects, not on permits and not environmental studies, to protect people, to protect property, and provide reliable commercial navigation (commerce). Many of these projects have been in place for nearly 100 years yet we are having to “reinvent the wheel” prior to operation and maintenance activities.
3. The support and delivery of a comprehensive flood control approach for the upper Mississippi River Basin north of Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Moving forward we must be proactive rather than reactive. It is easy to start things but much more difficult to finish them. It is time to finish the MR&T project and recapitalize the system we have in place. History has proven we cannot wait until we are staring a disaster in the eye. In 1927 the people of the Valley stared the Mighty Mississippi’s wall of water in the face and lost. The result, more than 16 million acres flooded and a country left devastated. That year alone 1/3rd of this great nations GDP was lost to never be recovered. 500 people dead. 700,000 people were without a home. 3000 miles of railway destroyed. 2000 miles of roadways destroyed.

41,000 buildings inundated. Today the stakes are even higher. Failure is simply not an option. We must finish the MR&T project.

Many thought the flood of 1927 was not possible. Many today think the project design flood is not possible. The current weather trends are proof it is possible. Eventually, the project design flood will come. Whether or not the system passes the flood is up to the people in this room. We have been given ample warning. Rainfall events today are higher in intensity and shorter in duration than any other time in our history. These extreme rainfall events have caused flooding all over our country and all over the world. Consider this since 1993, we have seen 16 of the top 20 historic crests on the Mississippi River near Cape Girardeau, Missouri. The current storm event devastating Louisiana, as we speak, should be enough to initiate immediate action.

The key to the long term success of the MR&T project has been the triad (the local people, the Mississippi River Commission, and the US Congress). There is no question in my mind this Commission stands ready to finish the project and recapitalize the system. A vast majority of the local people throughout the Valley are ready to finish the project and recapitalize the system. This has been proven by the overwhelming support of the resolutions passed. The final piece of the triad is needed to move forward, we need the buy in and support of the US Congress. It is up to us in this room to make it happen. We are the voters and constituents of our representatives in Washington DC. If we stand together we will succeed. Once we have the 3rd piece of the triad with ample funding and the order to finish/recapitalize the MR&T project our leaders at the US Army Corps of Engineers will undoubtedly execute the order seamlessly. The US Army Corps of Engineers civilians, the best engineers on earth, will design and build the system as directed. The time is now. We cannot afford to wait. The rest of the world cannot afford for us to wait. Other countries don't eat unless we succeed. Without food we have chaos. We must protect this God given alluvial jewel, the Mississippi Valley, for our future generations.

This concludes my remarks. Thank you each of you for your vision, your leadership, and most importantly your partnership in protecting our alluvial empire, the Mississippi Valley.



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