



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Mississippi Valley Division

*The
Mississippi
Valley
Division*

Introduction to the MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION

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The Mississippi Valley Division's (MVD) boundaries straddle the world's third largest river as it meanders from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The "Mighty Mississippi" serves as a continental funnel that collects vast flows from 41 percent of the nation's interior. As North America's most important waterway, the division's civil works along the Mississippi represent critical investments in our nation's future. The division's effectiveness in orchestrating the river's immense power greatly profits America's economy, environment and defense.

MVD manages approximately one quarter of the Army Engineers' civil works budget, an average of \$1 billion annually. MVD's borders encompass 370,000 square miles, 28 million people and portions of 12 states bordering the 2,348-mile river.

Although it separates the nation geographically, the division advances a unified river management philosophy that balances the competing demands on one of this nation's greatest treasures. 🌿

Head of Passes, Louisiana

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION

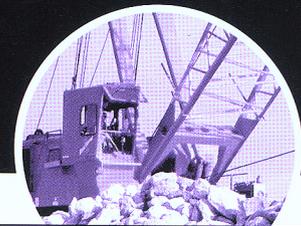


Although Army Engineers began surveying and snagging operations on the Mississippi River as early as 1824, MVD's origins trace back to the formation of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) in 1879. Established by an act of Congress to develop a flood control and navigation plan for the entire length of the Mississippi River, the Commission's focus shifted to the lower river following an extraordinary event – the Great Flood of 1927 – unrivaled at the time as our nation's worst peacetime disaster. Raging high waters covered 26,000 square miles from Cairo, Ill., to the Gulf of Mexico, claimed 500 lives, killed thousands more by contaminating drinking water, and drove more than a half million people from their homes.

No river has played a greater part in the development and expansion of America than the Mississippi.

In 1928, Congress directed the Corps and MRC to develop a flood control system that would prevent another flood of this proportion in the lower valley. A comprehensive approach to the river's management advocated by Maj. Gen. Edgar Jadwin resulted in the development of the Mississippi River and Tributaries project (MR&T). 🌿

dredge photo copyright C.C. Lockwood



THE MR&T PROJECT

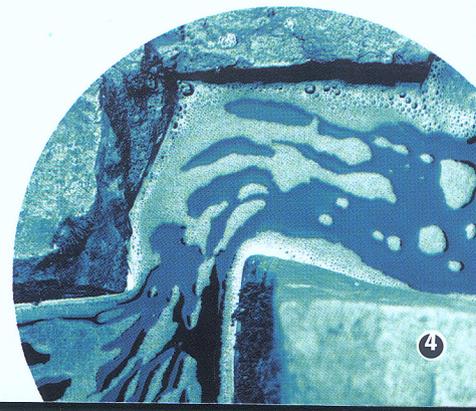
The Mississippi River levees are designed to protect the alluvial valley against the project flood by confining flow to the leveed channel, except where it enters the natural backwater areas or is diverted purposely into the floodway areas

The main stem levee system, comprised of levees, floodwalls, and various control structures, is 2,203 miles long.

The MR&T project's comprehensive flood control, navigation and environmental protection components include – levees, berms, floodwalls, reservoirs, channel control structures, floodways, canals, pumping plants, dikes, dredges and revetments. All of the elements work together to provide reliable flood control, a dependable navigation channel and environmental protection to the Mississippi Valley.

Foremost among the flood control works is the 3,500-mile levee system, a fortress wall of compacted soil and clay that rivals the Great Wall of China's length. MR&T levees currently protect more than four million citizens, 1.5 million homes and 33,000 farms from the river's destructive high waters.

The Mississippi River levee system stands as one of mankind's greatest construction achievements and wisest investments. For example, taxpayers have invested \$10 billion in the MR&T project since 1928. During the same 72-year period, the \$10 billion investment prevented over \$244 billion in flood damages. 🌿



MVD's STRUCTURE & OPERATION

The six districts comprising MVD are the St. Paul District, Rock Island District, St. Louis District, Memphis District, Vicksburg District and New Orleans District. Each district is headquartered in its namesake city and each engages in civil works missions. Although each district faces unique engineering challenges along different geographic sections of the river, all take part in the division's regional approach to managing the Mississippi's water resources.

Among the numerous missions performed by the six districts are: urban and rural flood control, navigation, environmental protection and restoration, and emergency management and recreation.

Combined, the division and six districts employ more than 5,500 full-time military and civilian employees, with an annual payroll of approximately \$326.5 million. The six districts also award approximately \$650 million in contracts each year to make a significant impact to local and regional economies. Through partnerships, contractors and the Corps achieve the nation's missions in a timely, cost-effective manner. ❄

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Major Missions

Navigation

Flood Control

Environmental Protection and Restoration

Emergency Management

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NAVIGATION

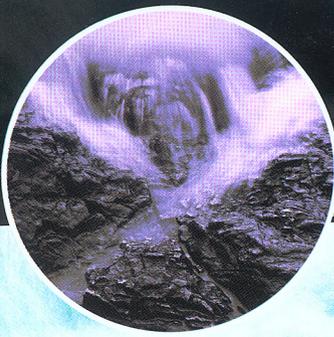
Navigation is one of MVD's most beneficial missions to the nation's economy. More than one billion tons of commerce move each year on the 11,000 miles of fuel-taxed inland waterways. Of that total, more than half travels up and down the Mississippi.

Commercial tows face a variety of navigation conditions on the Mississippi. North of St. Louis, Mo., barges move through a system of 29 locks and dams, while below St. Louis the river is free flowing. South of Baton Rouge, La., the river is deep enough to accommodate ocean-going vessels.

Because of the savings involved with barging bulk goods, a reliable commercial navigation channel saves the nation over one billion dollars each year in fuel and shipping costs. The lower shipping costs also keep American products competitive in the world marketplace.

A nine-foot channel is maintained above Baton Rouge for the length of the Mississippi River, and its principal harbors. During annual low-water periods, dustpan, hopper and cutterhead dredges are used to keep the channel open.

Channel control structures, such as dikes, wing dams, closure dams and concrete revetments, concentrate water flows to maintain adequate channel depth. MVD emphasizes working in a manner that will maintain a safe, reliable navigation channel, while minimizing or avoiding adverse environmental, recreational and cultural impacts. 🌿



Flood Control

During the past 60 years, the nation has invested billions of dollars for the building, restoring and upgrading of thousands of miles of levees, floodwalls, channel improvements and floodways by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps' efforts have significantly reduced loss of lives, damage to property and relieved human suffering and financial losses.

Reservoirs are another method used for flood control and protection. They are used for storing water, thereby, reducing water levels downstream. When used in conjunction with levees, reservoirs help protect property and lives in both urban and rural areas.

A number of Corps reservoirs also provide hydropower, water supply and recreational opportunities.

Various aspects of MVD's flood protection program include: building smaller, cost-shared projects for local communities; providing flood hazard information, technical assistance and planning, and guidance to other federal agencies, states, local governments, and private individuals; using our technical expertise in water and related land resource management to help states tackle water resource needs; improving planning of flood protection projects and resource management by using state-of-the art Geographic Information Systems; and exploring innovative ways to incorporate environmental protection and restoration features into structural and non-structural flood protection works. ❄



PROTECTION *Environmental* AND RESTORATION

MVD has a variety of ongoing environmental enhancement projects that protect endangered species and replace wildlife habitat lost to man's encroachment. From preserving one of the nation's largest wetland habitats in Louisiana, to the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program, MVD is protecting natural resources for future generations.

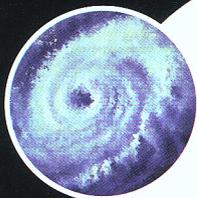
For example, MVD and the state of Louisiana have joined forces in the battle to prevent the annual loss of 20,000 acres (over 30 square miles) of coastal wetlands to saltwater intrusion and erosion. When ideal water conditions are restored, more than 1.4 million acres of coastal wetlands, and nearly 110,000 acres of marshland will be saved over a 50-year period.

The upper Mississippi River system contains a rich variety of environmental, recreational, navigation and flood control features. It is the only river system in the United States formally recognized by Congress both as a significant ecosystem and commercial navigation system. The Environmental Management Program (EMP) was created with the dual purpose of assuring a healthy ecosystem, while also obliging the river's vital economic role.

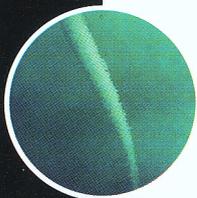
EMP has since evolved into a national model for the management of large floodplain river ecosystems. The program's extensive monitoring and focused research are also advancing our understanding of the river's complex physical, chemical and biological interdependencies. Many of the EMP's habitat projects represent true progress in providing ecosystem sustainability. ❄



Emergency MANAGEMENT



MVD stands ready to respond to disasters of all kinds that demand the Corps' emergency management expertise. From hurricane recovery work to earthquake preparedness, MVD is ready to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency in meeting emergency needs of the American people.



Because of the enormous costs a catastrophe creates for communities, both economically and psychologically, emergency management is a key mission for the Corps of Engineers. Additional indirect costs from disasters include business shutdowns, loss of income and tax revenue, transportation delays and impacts on other government programs from diversion of tax dollars to disaster response, relief and recovery.



MVD strives to protect people and places, but when disaster strikes, it is ready to provide rapid and effective emergency response and recovery teams. There is no room for delay in giving people back their lives. ❄️



RECREATION

Genuine partnerships between the Army Engineers and a multitude of public and private organizations are critical to improving the Mississippi River's environmental and economic values into the 21st Century.

The Corps of Engineers is the nation's leading provider of water-based recreation, managing approximately 11 million acres of land and water at 456 reservoirs in 43 states. MVD manages 33 of those reservoirs totaling approximately 1.8 million acres of land and water.

In 1998, MVD recorded approximately 35 million visitor hours at our projects, with over \$5 million in user fees collected. When considering the 35 million visitor hours logged at the division's 639 recreation facilities, this amounts to more than \$3 billion of tangible economic benefits to the local and regional economies from this highly demanded service for people.

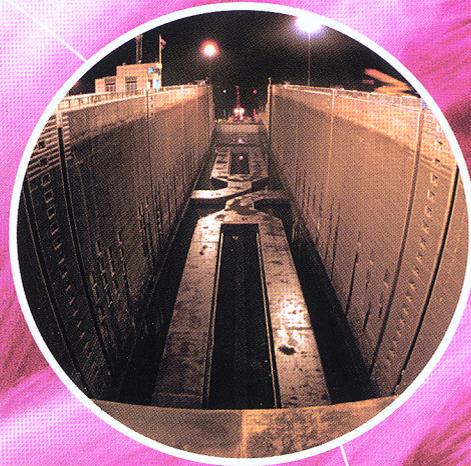
States recognize the importance of our lakes and other water-based recreation sites to their economic health. 🌿



Future CHALLENGES

One of MVD's greatest challenges in the next century will be repairing or replacing the 29 locks and dams between Minneapolis, Minn., and St. Louis, Mo.

Most of the structures were constructed during the Great Depression with a design life of 50 years, and over the past half-century, time, weather and increased barge traffic have taken a toll. 🌿



An equally important challenge will be to balance all of the competing interests vying for control of the Mississippi River's destiny. Today, genuine partnerships between the Army Engineers and a multitude of public and private organizations are critical to improving the Mississippi River's environmental and economic values into the 21st century. Only sound engineering and trust and cooperation between partners will successfully determine an acceptable future for America's greatest river. Without our partners' support and guidance, future opportunities will be lost, and the nation may never fully realize the Mississippi River's full economic and environmental potential. 🌿

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