



Mississippi River Commission

The Mississippi River Commission (MRC) was established June 28, 1879. Its mission was to develop a plan that would "correct, permanently locate, and deepen the channel and protect the banks of the Mississippi River, improve and give safety and ease to navigation thereof, prevent destructive floods, promote and facilitate commerce, trade, and the postal service." Its members consist of three general officers from the Corps of Engineers (one serving as president); one member from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); and three civilians, two to be civil engineers. Since its creation, the presidential appointed MRC has retained this unique composition.

For nearly a half century the MRC functioned as an executive body reporting directly to the Secretary of War. The disastrous 1927 flood added specific MRC responsibilities. The subsequent 1928 Flood Control Act created the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project (MR&T), a comprehensive, complex plan for improving the river and portions of its tributaries between Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and Head of Passes. The act designated that the MRC serve as advisory body with its president responsible for prosecuting the plan and reporting to the Chief of Engineers.

The general duties of the MRC include making recommendations on policy and work programs, studying and reporting on the need for modifications or additions to the MR&T, conducting public hearings, and making inspection trips along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. The work of the MRC is directed by its president and carried out by six Army Engineer Districts at St. Paul, Rock Island, St. Louis, Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans.

The MRC headquarters, originally located at St. Louis, Missouri, was moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1929. Since that time, the MRC president also has served as division engineer of the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division. The MRC statutory authorities are contained at 33 U.S.C. Sections 641-653a.

MRC Commissioners

* Brig. Gen. Edwin J. Arnold, Jr., President-designee	Corps of Engineers	Vicksburg, MS
Mr. Sam Angel	Civilian	Lake Village, AR
Mr. R. D. James	Civilian/Civil Engineer	New Madrid, MO
Mr. William Clifford Smith	Civilian/Civil Engineer	Houma, LA
* Brig. Gen. Steven R. Hawkins	Corps of Engineers	Cincinnati, OH
* Col. (P) David A. Fastabend	Corps of Engineers	Portland, OR
* Rear Adm. Nicholas A. Prahl	NOAA (Coast and Geodetic Survey)	Norfolk, VA
Col. Thomas A. Holden Jr.	Corps of Engineers (Secretary)	Vicksburg, MS

* Designated members (not yet confirmed).

August 2001