



# News Release

## US Army Corps of Engineers®

Mississippi Valley Division/  
Mississippi River Commission  
[cemvd-pa@mvd02.usace.army.mil](mailto:cemvd-pa@mvd02.usace.army.mil)

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**Contact:** Public Affairs Office  
**Phone:** 601-634-5760 / 7783

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## MRC High-Water Trip Report #2

On Board the Motor Vessel Mississippi, April 8, 2003 – Emphasizing the key Mississippi River Commission Theme that “It takes a nation to manage the Mississippi River,” Brig. Gen. Don T. Riley, president-designee of the Mississippi River Commission, opened the second public meeting of the 365<sup>th</sup> session of the MRC at Mud Island, Memphis, Tenn.

This High Water Inspection Trip is an opportunity for the commission to meet with concerned citizens, stakeholders and partners along the lower Mississippi River to hear their concerns and receive input and feedback from the public who attend the four scheduled public meetings held along the river.

“While it is clear that we don’t always agree with each other, that is one of the great things about this process – getting around the table to discuss the issues,” said Riley during his opening presentation to those assembled at the meeting on board the MV Mississippi. “One of the first things I instructed all of my district engineers to do was don’t hold back from your stakeholders and get them involved early on in the process. And deliver what you promise.”

One of the more promising goals of the Mississippi River Commission is in its partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build and maintain synergistic relationships with all interests. The interaction with Congressional, Federal and state interests, local boards, non-governmental organizations and the public is crucial to the decision-making process of the MRC. The commission is comprised of seven Presidential-appointed commissioners, with the president of the commission serving in a dual capacity as the Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in past years.

The topics of those addressing the commission at this second public meeting focused primarily on flood control, ecosystem management, and the overwhelming constituent desire to see an increase in the President's budget to support the Corps requirements of \$435 million worth of recognized work. Critical among those issues addressed was the impacts of rapid development in the greater metropolitan Memphis area presented to the MRC by Ms. Cynthia Buchanan, deputy Director of Public Works for the City of Memphis.

“Memphis experienced record rainfall in 2001 and 2002,” said Buchanan. “That rainfall represented a 40% increase from previous years, and included at least five events of five inches in 24-hours.”

“The Corps came to our rescue during imminent danger.”

Buchanan went on to praise the Corps ability to look at non-conventional solutions to assist the city of Memphis with such priority projects during these periods of imminent danger as bridge erosion, potential toppling of a transmission tower on an eroding bank, gas and sewer line exposure, as well as assistance with the Nonconnah Creek and Wolf River development and erosion impacts.

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MRC Commissioner R.D. James commended Ms. Buchanan on the city's partnership with the Corps stating that the rivers in the greater Memphis metropolitan area will become a resource the city of Memphis can be proud of.

Also addressing the commission was Mr. Ron Melinchuk, Regional Director of State and Federal Programs for Ducks Unlimited. Melinchuk cited the Corps partnership in the lower Mississippi Valley as one of Ducks Unlimited principle areas of concentration.

Melinchuk went on to cite the partnership between the Mississippi Valley Division and Ducks Unlimited by pointing out to the commission that the existing Memorandum of Agreement is now being touted for modeling in other high emphasis areas of Ducks Unlimited.

“This memorandum of agreement has allowed Ducks Unlimited to spring into new opportunities of partnership,” said Melinchuk.

A total of 121 interested parties attended the second MRC Public Hearing. It was the final hearing for Brig. Gen. David Fastabend, Commander of the Northwest Division of the Corps of Engineers. Brig. Gen. Fastabend departs this summer to assume new duties at Fort Monroe and Training and Doctrine Command.

The MRC holds its third Public Hearing this morning at Greenville, Miss.