

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division

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Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, Continues Flood Response

ST. LOUIS, Mo., March 20, 2008 -- Summary: The Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District continues its response to rising river levels in the area. Since Wednesday additional flood fight teams have been dispatched and the District is cooperating with U.S. Coast Guard guidance to restrict recreational boats near the St. Louis harbor. River stages are approaching crests to the west and here, and St. Louis District reservoirs are successfully holding back large amounts of storm water.

Members from four of the District's seven flood fight teams have been activated and are providing engineering and technical expertise to levee districts and communities impacted by rising river levels.

As of today, 199,000 sandbags have been distributed to county emergency management offices, which in turn are handling distribution to the public. Some 150 rolls of plastic sheeting have also been issued to assist to flood proof properties.

The Mississippi River at the St. Louis gage reached flood stage – 30 feet – this morning, and is forecasted to crest tomorrow.

The U.S. Coast Guard announced today that the Upper Mississippi River, between Chain of Rocks and the J.B. Bridge in Saint Louis, was closed to all recreational boaters. The U.S. Coast Guard press release noted, "This closure is a result of the difficulty of navigating towing vessels through the Saint Louis area and dangers to small craft due to the extreme high water and heavy debris." The Corps is cooperating by restricting recreation vessel passage southward from the Chain of Rocks locks at Granite City until the Coast Guard lifts this restriction.

At Cape Girardeau the Mississippi River is forecasted to crest on Sunday at 44.5 feet. The Cape Girardeau Floodwall is built to provide protection to 54.3 feet. While the Corps does not anticipate issues with the flood wall, they do have personnel available to provide assistance or technical advice for the city.

Forecasts for the Meramec River at the Valley Park gage have not changed since yesterday. The river is still forecasted to crest on Saturday at 40 feet and St. Louis District personnel remain available to Valley Park officials for technical advice and assistance.

Army Corps of Engineers personnel are also closely monitoring agricultural levees in the southern reach of the St. Louis District in Illinois and Missouri.

The Kaskaskia Lock and Dam in Modoc, Ill., is expected to cease service once the Kaskaskia River reaches an elevation of 380.5 elevation at the lock. At this elevation, lock personnel remove the lock's gears and motors to protect them from flood damage. This is being closely coordinated with local businesses that use the lock.

The District's southernmost lake, Wappapello Lake in Wappapello, Mo., is experiencing high water from the St. Francis River and other impacted tributaries. Wappapello Lake, and surrounding areas, experienced a 100 year rain event for a 24 hour time period this week. The lake's inflow yesterday was 110,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) and today they increased the discharge of water at the dam to 10,000 cfs. The storage of this rainwater has prevented destructive flooding downstream. The release of 10,000 cfs has been carefully coordinated with downstream residents and property owners, as well as Congressional representatives. High water discharges are necessary due to this extreme weather event. Currently the lake's elevation is 384 feet and it is forecasted to crest at 388 feet, which is still 7 feet below the emergency spill way.

In Illinois, Lake Shelbyville and Carlyle Lake are working successfully as a system, reducing flood levels on the Mississippi River south of Chester, Ill. Yesterday inflows at Shelbyville were 8,380 cfs and 20,000 cfs at Carlyle Lake. Controlled releases of that storm water, currently 2,000 cfs at Shelbyville and 5,000 cfs at Carlyle, are restoring future flood capacity of both lakes while moderating flooding that would otherwise result downstream.

The Mississippi Valley Division includes portions of 12 states and encompasses 370,000 square miles. The [Mississippi Valley Division](#) includes six district offices, which are responsible for conducting programs and activities and are located in St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans, La.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a major Army command with a broad set of missions and capabilities. One of its missions is to provide assistance, within its authorities, when natural disasters or other emergencies occur.

Emergency preparedness and response is primarily a state and local responsibility. However, in instances when the nature of the disaster exceeds the capabilities of state and local interests, the Mississippi Valley Division may provide help to save human life, prevent immediate human suffering or relieve property damage.

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