Shortly after its creation, the MRC began coordinating local efforts, setting standards for levee construction, and allocating funds to the cash-strapped levee districts.

In that process of face-to-face interaction and open dialogue, the MRC evolved into a springboard for Mississippi Valley interests to have a greater voice in shaping federal policy - a vehicle that continues to operate to this day through semi-annual high- and low-water inspection trips each spring and fall.

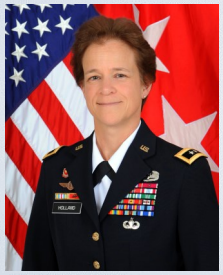
Since 1882, these inspection trips and public meetings have been conducted aboard vessels named *Mississippi*.

The current vessel, Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI V, has been in use since 1993

In fact, it can be argued that the practice of addressing issues and concerns through the formal public hearing process, so critical in the federal government's civil works mission today, began in the Mississippi Valley with the creation of the MRC.

Public meetings, then... and now

CURRENT COMMISSIONERS

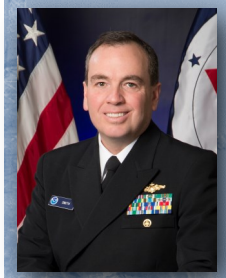


Maj. Gen. Diana M. Holland
President
Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division
Vicksburg, Miss.

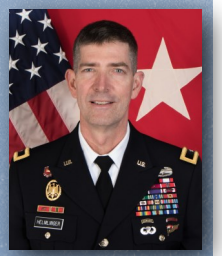
Hon. Norma Jean Mattei, Ph.D.
Senior Civilian/Civil Engineer

Hon. James A. Reeder
Civilian/Civil Engineer
Memphis, Tennessee

Hon. Albert Riley James
Civilian Member
New Madrid, Missouri



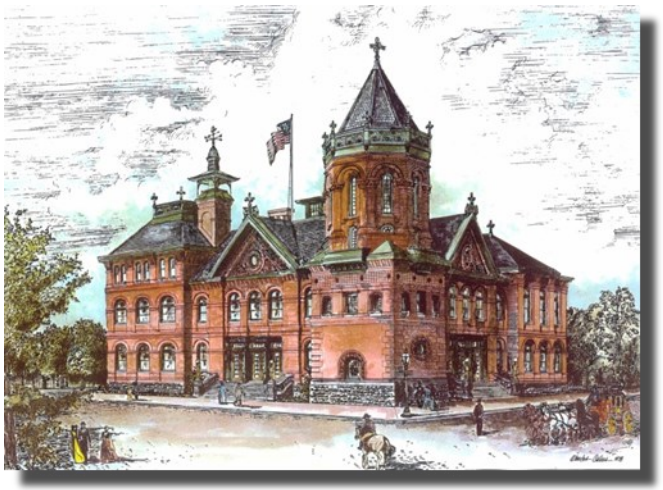
RDML Shepard Smith
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Silver Spring, Maryland



Brig. Gen. Peter D. Helmlinger
Corps of Engineers
Northwestern Division
Portland, Oregon

Brig. Gen. Robert F. Whittle, Jr.
Corps of Engineers
Southwestern Division
Dallas, Texas

MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION HISTORY



Oct 2020

003MRC

The MRC has a proud heritage that dates back to 1879, when Congress established the seven-member commission to remake the Mississippi River into a reliable commercial artery while protecting adjacent farms and towns from its powerful floods.

Today the MRC has largely realized its ambitious assignment through the prosecution of the comprehensive river management program known as the **Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project** - a project brought about by the greatest flood in recorded history of the lower Mississippi River.

The Great Flood of 1927 drove 700,000 people from

their homes, inundated 26,000 square miles, and forced an overhaul of the flood control plan for the lower Mississippi River.

The MR&T project is arguably the most successful civil works project ever undertaken.

Since the initiation of the project, the nation has invested total of $16.2 billion, with damages prevented reaching $1.54 trillion, and 95 to 1 return on investment.

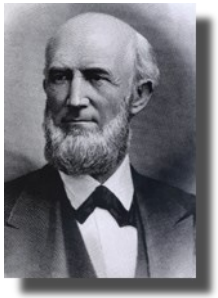
Early levee

Early dike works

The 1879 congressional legislation that created the MRC granted the body extensive authority and jurisdiction on the Mississippi River from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minnesota, to the Head of Passes near the Gulf of Mexico.

The legally mandated membership of the MRC called for three officers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, one member from the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (now the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), and three civilians—each nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

This mix of membership reflected a national desire to mend a growing rift between the military and civilian engineering communities epitomized during the early 1870s through the between Brig. Gen. Andrew A. Humphreys, the Chief of Engineers, and James B. Eads, the internationally renowned civilian engineer and original member of the Mississippi River Commission.



James B. Eads

BG Andrew A. Humphreys

While there were many reasons for creating the MRC, one of the most pressing issues involved the need for federal assistance for the flood-plagued Mississippi Valley. For decades the national legislature had toyed with the concept of federalizing flood-control efforts, but opponents to such a move argued that protecting private property from overflow at federal expense was unconstitutional.

These arguments consistently won the day, therefore, flood control remained a function of the individual states. In response, local interests at the state and county level organized levee districts. These insufficiently financed efforts, however, lacked centralized coordination and mostly proved inadequate because, as noted by James P. Kemper, a longtime student of the Mississippi River, "floodwaters will not respect political boundaries."

With the establishment of the MRC, the federal government finally appeared as an active agent on the river capable of transcending the regional issues that had hampered the development of a more effective flood-control system.

1939 MRC members