



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Rock Island District

Midwest Flood of 2008 Levee Repairs and Related Issues

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We have received many comments during the June 2008 Midwest Flood recovery efforts, some positive and quite honestly some not so positive. We certainly appreciate any feedback on our efforts to assist the region with recovering from the devastating floods. We know there are many areas where improvements can be made and with your assistance we can focus on addressing the most important issues first.

One recurring theme from the comments received so far are the challenges that communities and levee sponsors are having with sorting out which federal and state agency has what recovery assistance program. Equally challenging is figuring out what those programs can do for the impacted citizens.

As I reflect back on the past year and the numerous floods we experienced here in the Midwest, there is one event that sticks out in my mind that was a positive step toward sorting out federal, state, and local roles and responsibilities during flood response and recovery efforts. That was the March 2008 Upper Midwest Interagency Flood Mitigation Workshop held in Rock Island, IL. This was the first regional workshop that brought together government agencies at all levels to discuss the many challenges of coordinating an integrated flood fight effort.

With that in mind, it is our intent to conduct a second workshop in March 2009, to serve as a

platform for identifying lessons learned from the 2008 floods. We are still in the early planning stages of this workshop so information at this point is limited. We'll include information on this workshop in future newsletters as it becomes available.

Public Law 84-99

Last week a Public Law 84-99 work session for Corps of Engineers Emergency Managers was conducted by the Corps' Washington DC Headquarters office. A couple of notable items from the session: 1) Updates to PL 84-99 policies and regulations are needed, and hopefully will be done in the summer of 2009; 2) The Corps is losing institutional knowledge in PL 84-99 due to retirements, personnel turnover, and lack of funding.

An update to policies under PL 84-99 would focus on clarification of those issues in the grey areas that we encountered during the levee repair process. We hope to capture and submit as many of these issues as we can for consideration during the proposed update. Issues like Unwatering, flood fight damages, cost sharing, drainage ditches, boils and seepage, and betterments, etc. are all up for discussion and clarification.

Funding for the management of the PL 84-99 program has been very limited over the past several years. This has contributed somewhat to our dwindling base of experienced PL 84-99 program managers. One of our

lessons learned from this past year is that we need more people knowledgeable in the PL 84-99 program to better serve customer needs. This will be extremely challenging with the limited funding we receive. Response and recovery efforts will continue to be fully funded as long as Congress provides money that supplements the disaster program, but our ability to conduct the day-to-day activities associated with disaster planning, training, and exercising will continue to be limited. We value our relationship with our customers and stakeholders and will continue to provide the service you expect of us as much as possible with the limited funding we receive.

Alternatives to Repairs

In the last issue we introduced you to the Interagency Levee Task Force and corresponding Working Groups. In this issue we would like to explain the process for requesting assistance through the task force.

Levee sponsors and owners seeking assistance should follow the interagency process established at the state Joint Field Office. The intent is to provide a coordinated "one-stop shopping" process for the applicant seeking federal assistance for levee restoration, repair and other assistance.

Applications for assistance should be filed through a Joint Field Office. The Interagency

Levee Work Groups will then review each request to determine the agency responsible for handling the request.

For example, an applicant can request both debris removal and levee repair. Debris removal is covered by the FEMA Public Assistance program, while levee repairs fall under the jurisdiction of either the Natural Resources Conservation Service (Department of Agriculture) or the Corps Public Law 84-99 program.

If the determination is made that the levee repair does not fall within either the Corps or NRCS program, the work group will determine if there is any assistance available under the FEMA Public Assistance program or if another agency such as the Economic Development Administration may have grant funding available to assist.

Alternatives for reducing vulnerabilities will be considered for all levees to be repaired under the Corps PL 84-99 program and the NRCS program, to include non-structural actions such as permanent evacuation of flood-prone areas, installation of flood warning systems and/or creation of natural and artificial flood water storage basins.

Below is contact information for requesting assistance through the five established Joint Field Offices:

Illinois JFO: (217) 535-3001

Indiana JFO: (317) 570-3000

Iowa JFO: (515) 251-3501

Missouri JFO: (573) 632-2100

Wisconsin JFO: (608) 243-0700

We encourage you to visit the ILTF website at

www.iwr.usace.army.mil/iltf, for more information about this program.

Contracting Corner

During the initial emergency stage of the June 2008 flood event, emergency contracting procedures were implemented. This included using existing federal supply contracts, a web based contractor information page, and previous market research. After a Presidential Declaration of a Disaster, The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288 (the Stafford Act), was used which allowed the Corps to set aside normal contracting requirements for debris clearance, distribution of supplies, and emergency area assistance to local contractors. Contracts awarded during the initial phase of the flood emergency ensured responsiveness to the emergency situation and addressed only the most immediate emergencies.

We now have transitioned into the next phase of flood recovery, which involves repair and reconstruction of damages incurred during the Flood of 2008. This phase will last into early 2009. Because of the need to award reconstruction contracts quickly, current solicitations that are advertised have shorter than normal length of advertisement, an immediate notice to proceed and an aggressive contract completion schedule. In order to allow continuous service, options have been included in some of the contracts. Although the reconstruction efforts present unusual and compelling urgency, the Corps must solicit from as many potential sources as practicable under the circumstances. Contractors interested in current solicitations should monitor www.fbo.gov. Contractors are required to be registered at www.ccr.gov before a contract can be awarded.

Levee Repair Status

The Rock Island District has developed a website dedicated to presenting information related to the PL 84-99 levee repairs. The site is located at <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/PublicAffairsOffice/MidwestFlooding2008/Home.htm>. It contains general information, a status report, news releases, and various other pieces of information related to recovery efforts from the June 2008 flood.

Below are just a few progress highlights to date:

Lima Lake DD (IL): Contract awarded for pump station repairs on 4 Dec – Bleigh Const. Dredging suspended on 17 Dec due to weather.

Hunt DD (IL): Maintenance pumping contract option was awarded on Dec 3 to facilitate pump station repair progress.

Indian Grave DD (IL): Breach repair contract is awarded and underway, Dredge Iowa will mobilize to site as soon as dredging is done at Lima Lake.

Two Rivers (IA): A contract to enhance the temporary line of protection near Oakville was awarded on Dec 9 to Fye Excavating.

Union Township (MO): All breaches are anticipated to be closed by the end of this week.

Gregory DD (MO): Repair of Fox River breaches 1 - 3 complete.

Mississippi-Fox DD (MO): Construction is beginning for breach repairs.

Green Island/Roger Tarr (IA): Breach and levee repair contract is awarded. Contractor began work on 10 Dec.

City of Des Moines Levee (IA): Levee repairs are underway and making good progress, scheduled completion is 23 Dec.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will the Interagency Levee Task Force impact the process of rebuilding the levees to the pre-flood stage or the communities' ability to get higher levees?

A: No. Damaged floodplain management systems will be restored to their pre-flood level of protection if that is what the local sponsor desires. Improvements or higher levels of protection are not to be considered or evaluated as part of this recovery effort, however local sponsors can provide funding for improvement to existing structures.

Q: Who has the final approval on anything that comes out of the ILTF?

A: Consideration and approval of recommendations will be a joint decision with the project sponsors and the federal and

state agencies implementing the repair of the damaged project.

Q: What is FEMA doing to address levee issues?

A: FEMA is responsible for identifying flood risks in areas behind levees through flood analysis and flood hazard mapping projects, including updating the Nation's flood hazard maps through an effort called Flood Map Modernization. In addition, FEMA has criteria for recognizing levees as providing protection against the 1-percent-annual chance flood. However, FEMA does not actually examine or analyze structures to determine their performance in a given flood event. The levee owner must provide documentation to show that a levee meets current design, operations, and maintenance criteria. If the levee cannot be shown to meet FEMA criteria, the levee will not be mapped as providing adequate protection on the Flood Insurance Rate Map

(FIRM) currently in effect. In addition to identifying risks behind levees, FEMA works in conjunction with its Federal, State, local, and professional/technical partners to bolster flood risk mitigation in communities across the country. Finally, because the risks associated with levees are real, FEMA strongly encourages flood insurance protection and adherence to evacuation procedures in all areas behind levees.

Points of Contact

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