

# BIG RIVER COALITION, LLC



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Members,

### **RE: USACE MISSISSIPPI RIVER MAINTENANCE FORUM MEETING NOTES**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Mississippi Valley New Orleans (MVN) monthly Maintenance Forum meeting was virtually hosted today to discuss channel conditions and related issues directly with the maritime industry. These meetings are usually scheduled for 0900 hours on the first Wednesday every month. The USACE will no longer hold these meetings in person and expects to conduct future meetings virtually (only). The USACE did not have an agenda for today's meeting, the format below follows the historic USACE Agenda format.

#### **Maintenance Forum Notes March 4, 2026**

##### **Latest River Stage Updates:**

**New Orleans Gauge (Carrollton Gauge):** The river stage at New Orleans at 0900 hours this morning was 3.8 feet with a 24-hour change of + 0.18 feet. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) Extended Streamflow Prediction (28-Day) for the Carrollton Gage issued today forecasts that stages will crest at 5.4 feet on March 22 and then begin a slow extended fall to 3.6 feet on April 1 (2026).

**Baton Rouge Gauge:** The stage at 0900 hours this morning was 13.45 feet with a 24-hour change of + 0.34 feet. The NWS 28-Day extended forecast indicates stages will crest at 16.6 feet on March 21 and will then begin a slow fall to 8.6 feet on April 1 (2026).

There are **indications** due forecasted precipitation that the river stages could be higher in a second crest, long-range forecast are in no way an exact science and one strong storm system can change them quickly. The 168-Hour National Weather Service Quantitative Precipitation Forecast (QPF) forecasts predict heavy precipitation across the Mississippi and Ohio River Basins. A forecast for Cairo includes a possible rise to just below 40 feet, that stage could translate to over 10 feet on the Carrollton Gage, stage at Cairo take approximately 20-days to reach the Carrollton Gage (New Orleans). Long-range forecasting is far from an exact science but additional reports on river stages should be expected.

##### **1. Crossings Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans:**

The USACE did not provide the usual information for the Crossings Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans but the BRC, LLC has attached the latest survey sheet issued on January 7, 2026. There are no dredges working on the Ship Channel at this time, 2026 dredging will start during low water – historically summer months. The USACE expects to dredge at Wilkerson Point (Mile 237 AHP to Mile 232 AHP) with the industry pan dredge WALLACE McGEORGE during an expecting increase in river stages, this is an important area on the shallow-draft channel.

##### **2. New Orleans Harbor:**

There are no plans to dredge the New Orleans Harbor until the low water (summer) months, but the USACE continues to monitor the channel with a focus on the newly deepened approaches to 50-feet (completed in 2025).

##### **3. Saltwater Sill**

The USACE measured the toe of the saltwater toe of the wedge at Mile 23.7 Above Head of Passes (AHP) on March 2, 2026. The USACE continues to track the location of the saltwater wedge and monitor the condition of the saltwater sill. Sill reported to be in fairly good shape and increased river stages should continue to repel the wedge, forecasted higher river stages will degrade the sill which the USACE actively monitors.

##### **4. Southwest Pass (SWP):**

The industry hopper dredge NEWPORT (Manson Construction) is dredging on the jetty end of SWP, there are hours left over on a hopper dredge contract with Manson Construction and two FY 26 Early Award Contracts for hoppers also scheduled. The NEWPORT is working on a Regional Contract and will most likely return to the Calcasieu River soon. The second Early Award Contract is for a large hopper dredge, and it is expected Manson will respond with their new largest hopper dredge the FREDERICK A. PAUP by the end of the month.

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## 5. Head of Passes, Hopper Dredge Disposal Area (HDDA):

The USACE awarded the HDDA maintenance contract to Great Lakes Dredge & Dock (GLDD) to remove sediment from the HDDA. GLDD installed the submerged cross channel dredge pipeline on November 22, 2025, with the cutterhead dredge TEXAS. The TEXAS dredged in the HDDA from November 26, 2025 to January 27, 2026. GLDD's cutterhead dredge ALASKA is expected to arrive the HDDA by this weekend and will resume the work on this contract by next week. The TEXAS removed 2.7 million cubic yards (mcy) with 1.3 mcy remaining on the base contract. The USACE will likely award an option for an additional 2 mcy (estimated) to the contract, if so, the expected project completion would be in May/June (2026) timeframe. Upon completion of dredging operations, GLDD will remove the submerged dredge pipeline. The pipeline removal will require at least one scheduled 12-hour complete channel closure.

## 6. Southwest and South Pass Stone Foreshore & Jetty Repairs:

The USACE indicated there was no funding for additional rock work at this time, but future supplemental funding might become available.

## 7. South Pass:

The USACE expects to issue a bid opening for a cutterhead dredge to perform channel maintenance in South Pass later this year (after high river).

## 8. Baptiste Collette:

No update. The USACE plans will utilize funds in Fiscal Year 2026 to dredge Baptiste Collette, later this year. The shallow-draft channel is in decent condition, but surveys should be checked before transiting.

## 9. Tiger Pass:

The USACE did reference making progress on identifying the obstructions that have delayed dredging in Tiger Pass, but there are no definite plans. The USACE completed Phase 1 dredging with the cutterhead dredge NIMITZ from Mile 6.5 to Mile 9.75 (December 7, 2024 to January 25, 2025). Phase 2 dredging beyond Mile 9.75 the USACE continues to wait for accurate surveys of the pipelines or anomalies that have prevented dredging beyond Mile 9.75 the last few years.

## Next Meeting:

The next Forum meeting is scheduled for 0900 hours on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, this meeting will be conducted virtually only.



*Sean M. Duffy, Sr.*

President and CEO