



BIG RIVER COALITION

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LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER (LMR) DREDGING UPDATE 51525

Members,

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) began Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 25) channel maintenance dredging on the Mississippi River Ship Channel with the industry hopper dredge GLENN EDWARDS (Manson Construction) on March 2, 2025. The most recent crest on the Mississippi River at the Carrollton Gage was recorded at 16.67 feet on May 1, 2025 at 1800 hours. River stages continue to recede but are expected to remain above 10 feet into June (2025).

INDUSTRY HOPPER DREDGE(S) WORKING in the area of SOUTHWEST PASS (SWP):

NEWPORT: The NEWPORT (Manson Construction) is working on assignment upriver from the Venice Jump between Mile 13.0 Above Head of Passes (AHP) to Mile 12.0 AHP. The NEWPORT is working on the second FY 25 Early Award hopper contract (Gulf Coast Regional Hopper Contract Early Award #2-2024).

DODGE ISLAND: The DODGE ISLAND (Great Lakes Dredge & Dock) is working on assignment at the Head of Passes (Mile 0) to Mile 1.0 Below Head of Passes (BHP). The hopper dredge commenced dredging operations in SWP on April 7, 2025.

GLENN EDWARDS: The hopper dredge GLENN EDWARDS is dredging on assignment from Mile 14.6 BHP to Mile 16.0 BHP. The GLENN EDWARDS is working under Southwest Pass Hopper Early Award #1-2024, the first of the two Early Award hopper dredge contracts for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 25). **The Bar Pilots adjusted their flocculation based high tide transit restrictions for inbound vessels with drafts of 38 feet or greater on May 7, 2025.** The official Notice is attached. The flocculation event is reported to be improving some as is typical as river stages decrease, but the transit restriction/recommendation remains in effect.

GOVERNMENT HOPPER DREDGE(S) WORKING IN SOUTHWEST PASS (SWP):

WHEELER: The USACE hopper dredge WHEELER continues dredging in the New Orleans Harbor under Readiness Exercise #4-2025. The WHEELER is dredging the 50-foot access channel for the Nashville Avenue Wharf and is expected to depart in June for scheduled maintenance and repairs.

CUTTERHEAD DREDGE(S) WORKING IN THE NEW ORLEANS HARBOR:

The USACE advertised a bid opening for a cutterhead dredge to work on channel maintenance in the New Orleans Harbor today. The apparent low bidder was Weeks Marine, additional details will be included in the next update.

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CUTTERHEAD DREDGE(S) WORKING IN SOUTHWEST PASS (SWP):

R.S. WEEKS: The R.S. WEEKS (Weeks Marine) is currently dredging at Mile 12.75 BHP and is concentrating on the heaviest shoaling between Mile 12 BHP to Mile 13.5 BHP. The cutterhead will work this reach first and then focus on the full assignment starting at Mile 9.0 BHP and extending to Mile 15 BHP on the western side of the Channel. All material removed will be beneficially used to create marsh along the bank line in SWP. The cutterhead began dredging in SWP on May 3, 2025.

MAXIMUM DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS PER PILOT ASSOCIATION: (UNCHANGED SINCE July 7, 2023)

The updated maximum draft recommendation for each Pilot Association as adjusted by the Mississippi River Ship Channel Deepening is detailed below:

Associated Branch Pilots of the Port of New Orleans (Bar Pilots): The Bar Pilots returned their maximum draft recommendation to 50 feet (freshwater) on July 6, 2023. The Bar Pilots originally increased their maximum draft recommendation to 50 feet (freshwater) on March 16, 2022, prior to the temporary reduction to 49 feet from May 22 to July 6 (2023).

Crescent River Port Pilots Association (CRPPA): The CRPPA raised their maximum draft recommendation to 50 feet (freshwater) in coordination with the Bar Pilots on July 7, 2023, after also temporarily reducing their maximum draft to 49 feet (freshwater).

New Orleans Baton Rouge Steamship Pilots Association (NOBRA): The NOBRA returned their maximum draft recommendation to 50 feet (freshwater) from Mile 175 AHP to Mile 88 AHP on July 7, 2023. The maximum draft recommendation from Mile 175 to 180 remains 47 feet and from Mile 180 to Mile 233.8 it remains 45 feet.

Associated Federal Pilots and Docking Masters of Louisiana (Federal Pilots): The Federal Pilots increased their maximum draft recommendations to the following to match the draft adjustment to 50 feet by the other Pilot Associations.

1. 50 feet from Sea Buoy to Mile 175 AHP
2. 45 feet Mile 175 AHP to 232.4 AHP
3. 40 feet Mile 232.4 AHP to 233.8 AHP

The controlling maximum freshwater draft for the MRSC from Mile 175 AHP (Smoke Bend) to the Southwest Pass Sea Buoy is 50 feet (freshwater) remains unadjusted since July 7, 2023.

Sincerely,

Sean M. Duffy, Sr.

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Executive Director