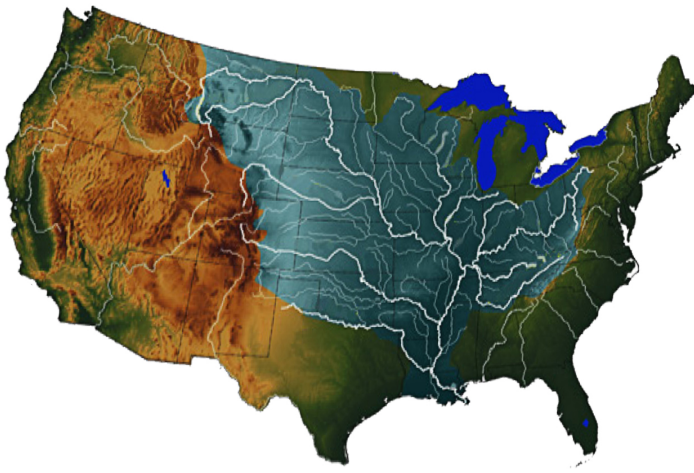




BIG RIVER COALITION

5600 Janice Avenue
Kenner, LA 70065

Direct Line: (504) 338-3165
sean.duffy@bigrivercoalition.org

May 20, 2025

LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER (LMR) DREDGING UPDATE 52025

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 mid-June (2025).

DUSTPAN DREDGES(S) WORKING ON THE CROSSINGS ABOVE NEW ORLEANS:

HURLEY: The USACE dustpan dredge HURLEY is scheduled to commence dredging at Baton Rouge Front Crossing (Mile 231.0 Above Head of Passes [AHP]) today. The dustpan dredge is on scene at Baton Rouge Front and expected to commence dredging soon.

WALLACE McGEORGE: The industry dustpan dredge WALLACE McGEORGE (Pine Bluff Sand & Gravel) is expected to commence dredging at Alhambra Crossing (Mile 190.5 AHP) tomorrow.

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

NEWPORT: The NEWPORT (Manson Construction) is undergoing minor maintenance but is expected to resume dredging this Thursday (May 22, 2025). 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 Cubits Gap (Mile 3.3 AHP to Mile 1.8 AHP). The hopper dredge commenced dredging operations in SWP on April 7, 2025.

GLENN EDWARDS: The hopper dredge GLENN EDWARDS is undergoing minor repairs but is also expected to resume dredging on Thursday (May 22, 2025). 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 is working in SWP from Mile 10.4 Below Head of Passes (BHP) to Mile 12.2 BHP under Readiness Exercise #4-2025. The WHEELER is tentatively scheduled to work Readiness Exercise #5-2025 from June 9 to June 20 (2025) in SWP.

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

The USACE recently advertised a bid opening for a cutterhead dredge to work on channel maintenance in the New Orleans Harbor. The apparent low bidder was Weeks Marine, additional details will be provided when the contractual details are available.

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

R.S. WEEKS: The R.S. WEEKS (Weeks Marine) is currently dredging at Mile 13.18 BHP and is concentrating on the heaviest shoaling in the assignment from Mile 12 BHP to Mile 13.5 BHP. The cutterhead will complete this reach first and then focus on the full assignment starting at Mile 9.0 BHP and extending to Mile 15.0 BHP on the western side of the Channel. The cutterhead began dredging in SWP on May 3, 2025.

BIG RIVER COALITION

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 CPPRA 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.
Sean M. Duffy, Sr.
Executive Director