MISSISSIPPI RIVER CITIES AND TOWNS INITIATIVE MAYORS ADDRESS SPRING FLOODING WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES

Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative, National Weather Service (NWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to Hold Joint Press Conference and Address Spring Flooding

St. Louis, MO – Record spring snow melt is affecting the Upper Mississippi River, and recent flooding has captured national interest. From the Summit of the Americas this week, MRCTI mayors addressed these mounting concerns with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and National Weather Service. The mayors, in Denver this week for the summit, discussed the distinct differences between 2023 and previous years:

1) The 2023 flood is being primarily fed by the melting of a historic snowpack.
2) The drought of fall 2022 has created slack in the system and in the soil for water.
3) There have not been torrential rain events yet exacerbating the situation.
4) Communities have new infrastructure on the ground to on-board and mitigate risks along the river.

MRCTI is working closely with the US Department of Agriculture, the Department of Interior, and other agencies to support natural infrastructure deployments at scale to systemically mitigate the flooding that the Mississippi River is experiencing. In total, projects involve the establishment of permanent conservation assets across eight states and 30 cities. The Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act can support this work like never before.

The MRCTI mayors are in Denver this week for the Summit of the Americas. **Mayor Errick Simmons of Greenville, MS, and Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative** said, “MRCTI is a major contributor to the Summit of the Americas where the Amazon and Mississippi River Basins are coming together to build a sustainable climate-positive future for our regions.”

The assembled mayors pointed out that Congress has a valuable opportunity to scale-up the 2023 Farm Bill and use conservation for climate resilience at a level not seen previously. “By making farm programs such as the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative a permanently funded program and making critical changes to the Emergency Watershed Protection Program could help us in this work,” said **Mayor Bob Gallagher of Bettendorf, IA.**

La Crosse, Wisconsin, has sustained near-record flood levels as of 4/26/2023. **Mayor Mitch Reynolds, Mayor of La Crosse, WI,** said, “We are managing this event better than some in the recent past because we have new infrastructure in place to better mitigate for damages including, new pumps, pipes, and additional flood slack as we have moved communities out of harm’s way over the past several years following what Mayors up and down the Mississippi are doing to create more room for the river and on-board natural infrastructure to absorb risk at corridor scale.”

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Video Archive:
A video of today’s press conference is available to view – click here and will be available after 2:00 p.m. CT – 4/27/2023

Press Conference Participants:
- Hon. Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, IA
- Hon. Mitch Reynolds, Mayor of La Crosse, WI
- Hon. Errick Simmons, Mayor of Greenville, MS (invited) and MRCTI Co-Chair
- Hon. Melisa Logan, Mayor of Blytheville, AR and MRCTI Arkansas State Chair
- Col. Jesse Curry, Rock Island District, USACE
- Lt. Col. Rob Wilkins, St. Paul District, USACE
- Mike Welvaert, NWS North Central River Forecast Center

The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI)
MRCTI is a coalition of 103 mayors from across the Mississippi River Corridor. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. The Mississippi River moves nearly $1 trillion in product annually and is the #1 food-producing river basin in the world. The river’s resources support 1.5 million jobs and create $496.7 billion in annual revenue. https://www.mrcti.org/