



U.S. Army
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Media Advisory

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Army Corps of Engineers to hold press conference to announce increase in barrier operating parameters

Chicago - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will host a press conference at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, August 12, 2009 to announce a planned increase in the operating parameters for the electric fish dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal near Romeoville, Ill. The barrier is designed to deter the passage of invasive species, especially Asian carp, between the Great Lakes and Illinois River watersheds.

The press conference will take place at the Chicago Harbor Lock, 108 North Streeter Drive, Chicago (on the river just south of Navy pier). Interested media can also participate via conference call at (888) 622-5357, participant passcode 221560. Slides being used for this press conference will be available at www.lrc.usace.army.mil.

In addition to the Army Corps, participants will include representatives from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Corps of Engineers made the decision to increase operating parameters based on the latest, best information available, including results from preliminary genetic water testing obtained July 31st which indicate that Asian carp are closer to the barrier than previously thought. Recent research undertaken at the Corps of Engineers research laboratory indicates that the optimal operating parameters are two volts per inch, 15 Hertz frequency and 6.5 milliseconds pulse rate.

To prepare the barrier for the increase, the Corps of Engineers will begin operational testing of the equipment at 8 a.m. Wednesday, August 12, 2009. Operational testing is expected to be complete by Friday, August 14 but will continue until barrier preparation is finalized. In coordination with the Coast Guard, the Army Corps will be conducting navigation safety tests at the new operating parameters as early as practicable. The timing of the increase is tied to the barrier contractor's ability to change the parameters in a safe manner.

"Once we received the genetic testing results on July 31st, we immediately began making preparations to be able to increase the operating parameters," said Maj. Gen. John Peabody, commander of the Corps of Engineers Great Lakes and Ohio River Division. "The earliest we could make the changes was this Friday, so we used the available time to consult with other state and federal agencies and partners. It is clear to us that this is the appropriate action."