



Red River Valley Flood Fight

In early March of 2009, when it became apparent that communities along the Red River of the North would face record flooding, both the governors of North Dakota and Minnesota requested assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Under Public Law 84-99, the Corps of Engineers may provide assistance to communities to save human life, prevent immediate human suffering or mitigate public property damage during floods.

The Corps' St. Paul District was part of a large force made up of local, state and federal responders and thousands of volunteers that worked together for more than a month-and-a-half to prevent flood damages throughout the basin. Six basin cities, including Abercrombie, Fargo, Lisbon and Valley City in North Dakota and Moorhead and Oakport Township in Minnesota, faced floods of record, yet no city lost more than a few homes.

By the end of the fight, the district had distributed 11.3 million sandbags, 4,201 rolls of plastic and 136 pumps, as well as let 50 contracts, built approximately 70 miles of emergency levee and spent more than \$27 million. More than 125 Corps personnel were on the ground in the Red River Valley throughout the fight, and more supported the flood fight from the district's headquarters in St. Paul, Minn. Corps' economists estimated that the flood fight saved more than \$3 billion in damages.

The Fargo/Moorhead area was the focus of much of the St. Paul District's effort. About \$59 million was spent by local, state and federal agencies to fight the flood in this metropolitan area, \$20 million of which was spent by the St. Paul District. Approximately \$2.99 billion in damages was prevented by the flood fight efforts. About \$2.1 billion in damages were prevented in Fargo alone.

Flood Fight Cleanup

Following the flood fight, the Federal Emergency Management Agency tasked the Corps of Engineers with removing temporary flood protective measures used during the spring flood fight in the affected counties within Minnesota and North Dakota. This is no small feat. In Fargo alone, this meant cleaning up 31 miles of clay and secondary levees, 10 miles of HESCO Bastion Concertainer® secondary levees and 2.5 million sandbags.

The Vicksburg and Mobile districts' debris planning and response teams took on this mission mid-April and completed it in mid-November 2009. Supported by St. Paul District staff, the Vicksburg team began planning the cleanup before the second crest of the Red, when the predicted crest had been reduced considerably and it was known that many of the contingency levees would not be reached. The first crew was on the ground, cleaning up levees in Fargo, April 22. Much of the mission was completed by mid-summer. However, with the extensive flooding along the James River through June, communities in North Dakota had additional time to consider requesting assistance. Communities along the Sheyenne River requested assistance in August 2009 and that work was completed in November. FEMA provided \$20 million for these recovery efforts and additional support for other flood recovery efforts.

Recovery operations are expected to cost around \$30 million – still cheaper than what it would have cost had these cities been under water. The work on the ground is considered complete.