

Water Level Management Update

Volume 4, Issue 2

May 2001

A Flood of Record and a Drawdown in one year ... Could it Happen?

After a spring of flooding many people are wondering if the proposed Pool 8 drawdown will happen this year. The answer is, "Probably." Water elevations and flows from 1965 indicate that a severe flood does not preclude a drawdown. In fact, the water levels from 1965, about a foot higher than this year, suggest it would have been a good year to conduct a drawdown.

At this point, we need to watch the water levels to see if they are going down quickly enough to give us an indication that the flows at Lock and Dam 8 will be at or below 70,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) by mid-June. At this writing they are at 90,800 cfs.

If the answer is positive then another question comes into play. Can the Corps of Engineers keep up with the dredging that typically follows a big flood and do the additional dredging necessary to keep the main channel of Pool 8 open during the drawdown? This question may be much harder to answer because flood waters often move significant amounts of sediment around and determining where, how much, and when dredging events may occur is unknown. The Corps of Engineers is currently conducting a survey of main channel depth.

Finally, backwater recreational access dredging should be done prior to drawdown. The contractor hired to do this work will survey the backwater dredging sites this week and begin dredging after Memorial Day. The contract requires that all dredging be done by June 30, but the dredging is only expected to take two to three weeks to complete.

Should everything fall into place the Corps of Engineers will use two control points in Pool 8 to manage the water level reduction from mid-June to mid-September, 2001. The main point of control will be

Lock and Dam 8 where water levels will be reduced two-tenths of a foot a day for about eight days until the level is reduced by eighteen inches. A second point for controlling the reduction is at the La Crosse Gage (Isle La Plume) where the maximum reduction will be six inches or a 4.2 reading on the gage. The use of two control points will help ensure minimal inconvenience for both barges and recreational use.

Public Meetings

Since the prediction is favorable for this year, river resources managers would like to provide another series of public meetings for people to hear and understand more about the drawdown. At these meetings people will be able to get general information about the proposed drawdown as well as get specific questions answered by the river resource managers. Slide presentations as well as question and answer sessions will run continually during the open house meetings.

Tuesday, May 29, 2001

Brownsville, MN

Community Center, 5-7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 30, 2001

Stoddard, WI

Village Hall, 180 N. Main, 5-7 p.m.

Thursday, May 31, 2001

Onalaska, WI

US Fish and Wildlife Service - 555 Lester Dr., 5-7 p.m.

How much of a reduction will I notice?

How much river users will notice the water level reduction will depend on where they are located within Pool 8 and what the river flows are. Below are two examples of what you could expect at different locations and different water flows.

At approximately, 42,000 cubic feet per second or relatively high flows.

- La Crosse Gage (River Mile 696.8)– no impact from current low flow conditions (4.7 at the gage)
- Root River (River Mile 693.7) – no impact from current low flow conditions
- Brownsville, MN (River Mile 689.0) – one inch reduction from current low flow
- Stoddard, WI (River Mile 685.9) – 13 inch reduction from current low flow
- Genoa, WI (River Mile 679.2) – 18 inch reduction from current low flow

At approximately, 28,000 cubic feet per second or

relatively normal flows.

- La Crosse Gage – 6 inch reduction from current low flow (4.2 at the gage)
- Mouth of the Root River (River Mile 693.7) – 11 inch reduction from normal summer low flow
- Brownsville, MN – 17 inch reduction from normal summer low flows (-1.4')
- Stoddard, WI – 17 inch reduction from normal summer low flows (-1.4')
- Lock and Dam 8 – 18 inch reduction from normal summer low flows (-1.5')

Once river flows go below 28,000 cfs during the drawdown the water level at Lock and Dam 8 may be allowed to rise to maintain a maximum reduction at the La Crosse Gage of 0.5 feet (4.2 on the La Crosse Gage).

Get Pool 8 Drawdown Updates When You Want:

You have two ways to get updated information on the drawdown for Pool 8.:

You can call us at 1-800-218-8917.

- Weekly updates
- Leave a message for the River Resource Managers

You can find the project on the web at www.mvp.usace.army.mil/

- Click on Environmental Protection
- Click on Mississippi River Water Level Management Study on the left.
- Other links can be found on this page.

Timing is everything

- ⇒ The drawdown will begin on either June 11 or June 18, 2001.
- ⇒ It will take about eight days to reduce the water level.
- ⇒ Depending on river flows the reduced water level will remain until September 17th.
- ⇒ After September 17, the water level will be raised to normal operating level at a rate of about 3 inches per day.
- ⇒ If river flows go below 28,000 cfs during the drawdown the water level at Lock and Dam 8 may be allowed to rise to maintain a maximum reduction at the La Crosse Gage of 0.5 feet.
- ⇒ Should water levels rise due to a summer rainstorm the Corps of Engineers will try to reduce water as quickly as possible without jeopardizing the plant growth.

June 2001

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September 2001

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Reminder:

Use caution while boating when the water level is reduced for the drawdown. Large floods such as the one we experienced this year move sand, silt and trees around. Be careful as you boat through any off channel areas.

**Water Level Management
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