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Corps Of Engineers To Restore Levee

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MEMPHIS – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced today it will make repairs at the Birds Point-New Madrid Floodway levees' upper and middle crevasses to a protection level of 55 feet on the Cairo, Ill., river gage as funding is provided.

“Our engineers have determined that we can go to this higher level of protection and not increase the risk to the flood risk management system in the area of the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers,” Maj. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division and President of the Mississippi River Commission said. “This will reduce the risk of overtopping the levee to six percent in any given year.”

Walsh added that the Corps remains committed to fully restoring the system to a protection level of 62.5' on the Cairo gage.

Plans call for the levee to be rebuilt using clay construction, but will also include a contingency plan to install HESCO bastions in an emergency flood fight effort to reach the 55' level of protection in the event field conditions prevent workers from constructing a clay embankment in time for high water threatening the 55 foot elevation.

HESCO bastions are wire baskets lined with a fabric and filled with sand. They were developed as a quick way to erect low height levees.

Maj. Gen. Walsh and members of the Mississippi River Commission will visit the floodway on Friday, Oct. 21.

Photo Above: Maj. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division and President of the Mississippi River Commission, in May at Bird's Point. (SMT File Photo by Annabeth Miller)

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