



**DELBERT HOSEMANN**  
*Secretary of State*



ENHANCE \* PROTECT \* CONSERVE

**Mississippi River Commission  
Low-Water Inspection Trip  
Public Statement  
August 21, 2019**

**Background & Opening of Bonnet Carré Spillway & Morganza Floodway**

- 41% of our country's water drains through the Mississippi River and through Louisiana.
- Prior to the last five (5) years, the Bonnet Carré Spillway had only been opened a total of ten (10) times since 1937.
- 2011 – present: The spillway has been opened five (5) times, twice in 2019 on February 27, 2019, (opened for 44 days) and on May 10, 2019, (opened for 79 days).
- The operation of the Spillway is no longer infrequent and is being operated significantly more than it was originally intended.
- The Morganza Floodway has been opened twice – 1973 and 2011.
- Impacts to Mississippi Sound and State of Mississippi: extremely low salinities; introduction of agricultural and industrial compounds; extreme nutrient loads; extreme sediment loads; invasive species introductions; loss of shrimp, blue crab, oyster, finfish; habitat degradation of marsh grass and seagrass as well as oyster reef mortalities; revenue loss for fishermen; and tourism loss.

**Legal Authority to Build and Operate the Bonnet Carré Spillway & Morganza Floodway**

- 1927 - House Document 90: Section 113 states that no more than 1.5 million cubic feet per second could safely pass down the main channel of the River. Sections 114–115 state that the Bonnet Carré Spillway is designed to control the discharge into Lake Pontchartrain so as to maintain a flow passing New Orleans at no more than 1.25 million cubic feet per second and will begin when the River stage reaches 20 feet on the Carrolton gauge. Section 115 states the control structure's use would be “infrequent” and for “limited periods of operation,” specifically intended for use once every five (5) years for one to three months in duration.
- 1928 - Flood Control Act of 1928: Act adopted and incorporated House Document 90.
- 1935 - House Committee Document 1: Authorized Morganza Floodway. Section 28 provides it will be operated when the predicted flood exceeds the safe capacity of the leveed channels.
- Operating Manuals of the Bonnet Carré Spillway and the Morganza Floodway
- 2014 - Instructions for Water Control of the Morganza Floodway: Authorizes operation to maintain the river stage at or below 57 feet and discharge at or below 1.5 million cubic feet per second.
- Louisiana has also asked for additional water and sediment to be diverted from the River, which would reduce the flow at New Orleans and the need to operate the Bonnet Carré Spillway.
- The Corps has the legal authority to operate both the Bonnet Carré Spillway and the Morganza Floodway.

**Requests to the Mississippi River Commission**

- The study of the operating manuals and procedures for the Bonnet Carré Spillway, the Morganza Floodway and other outlets, for simultaneous utilization during high water.
- To conduct additional modeling concerning how the operation of the Bonnet Carré Spillway and the Morganza Floodway would affect tidelands both east and west of the Mississippi River.
- As a separate matter, an environmental impact study.