



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Walla Walla District

News Release

News Release 07-28

Contact: Public Affairs Office

Date: Mar. 30, 2007

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Little Goose Dam NavLock reopening further delayed

STARBUCK, Wash. – Little Goose Dam’s navigation lock, located at Snake River mile 70.3, will continue to remain closed for several days beyond March 30, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials at the Walla Walla District announced today.

District operations officials said that if current weather conditions hold, the District would likely be able to open the lock for night-time commercial lockage using the floating bulkhead by 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 4.

While filling the navigation lock to bring it back into service March 21, the upstream navigation lock hinge arm bolts broke, causing the hinge points to detach from the concrete structure. The gate moved to a resting position on the upstream navigation lock sill. The Corps is conducting an investigation into the cause of the incident.

The District had anticipated having the navigation lock reopened for interim lockage of commercial vessels using a floating bulkhead by Friday, but several days of windy weather, combined with the need for additional cranes and more in-depth research, contributed to the continuing outage.

The wind prevented inspectors from accessing the work site using a crane-suspended man-basket, and ultimately, delayed progress on reopening the lock to commercial traffic.

The site had to remain undisturbed until inspectors investigating the incident could get inside the navigation lock to gather information essential to their analysis of the cause of the gate malfunction, said Scott Ross, Walla Walla District’s acting operations division chief.

“It doesn’t take much wind to create conditions that are unsafe for using a crane,” said Ross, “We had to wait until the weather improved and people could safely access the site.”

After inspectors assessed the site, Corps workers and contractors from Knight Construction, of Deer Park, Wash., began preparing to move the damaged gate to allow floating bulkhead operations. Dozens of Corps employees and contractors – engineers, riggers, maintenance personnel, mechanics, electricians and numerous other skilled craftsmen – are working 12-hour day and night shifts to open the lock to commercial vessels as soon as possible, said Ross.

Once work is done to stabilize the gate and place it in a down position, the floating bulkhead will be used to provide interim lockage ability until permanent repairs can be made. Corps navigation officials continue to provide regular progress updates to inland shippers, cruise lines and ports concerning the extended lock outage at Little Goose Dam.

Floating bulkhead lockage will be available for commercial vessels only during night-time hours. This schedule for lockage will continue until all repairs to the gate are completed. Hours of lockage are to be determined – inland shippers, cruise lines and ports will be notified of that schedule as soon as possible. All recreational craft lockage is cancelled until the lock returns to full service.

There will be at least two other lock closures (no bulkhead lockage) in April during the repair process, with times and dates to be determined. Little Goose lock is expected to return to full service on or about May 1. Updates will be provided as repair work progresses.

Public Notices and other navigation lock information are available on the Walla Walla District Web site at www.nww.usace.army.mil/html/offices/op/t/navdata/default.html. The Corps is conducting an investigation into the cause of the gate damage.

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