



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG.

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EL PASO LEVEES FARE WELL IN FEDERAL INSPECTION

EL PASO, Texas – The inspection results for 11 El Paso levee systems built by the Corps of Engineers was delivered to El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) and city officials in early January. The report includes suggested actions to help limit negative effects from flooding.

More than 12 miles of levees along channels inside the city limits were inspected. These levees should not be confused with river levees which are the responsibility of the International Boundary and Water Commission and were not a part of the inspection.

“Public safety is the number one goal of the Corps’ Levee Safety Program,” said Albuquerque District Commander Lt. Col. Jason Williams. “We want to make sure the levee systems built by the Corps are reliable and do not present unacceptable risks to the public, economy or environment.”

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) provided funding to accelerate levee periodic inspections under the Corps’ Levee Safety Program. The Albuquerque District received \$250,000 in ARRA funds and used the money on 13 Texas levee inspections.

The inspection findings determine levee systems’ continued eligibility for the Corps’ Rehabilitation and Inspection Program, the Corps’ authority to provide federal assistance for flood fighting and the repairing of levees damaged by floods or storms. Systems rated “acceptable” or “minimally acceptable” meet the Corps levee safety criteria and are eligible for federal aid in repairing flood or storm damage under public law 84-99 concerning rehabilitation assistance.

According to the District’s Levee Safety Program Manager Will Trujillo, the El Paso levee inspections were no small chore and were made much easier with the help of EPWU maintenance officials. All of the levees inspected in El Paso passed the inspection, although the Corps is suggesting measures to enhance the effectiveness of the levee systems that were inspected.

“It is very professionally satisfying to work with a sponsor who is diligent about addressing issues during and after levee inspections,” Trujillo said. “The Corps and EPWU officials share the goal of ensuring the public’s safety is the top priority.”

Inspections and assessments provide continuous feedback about levee systems and their reliability and are a critical part of the Corps’ Levee Safety Program. Inspections focus on the operation and maintenance of the levee and verify that the project sponsor operates and maintains the levee to achieve the maximum benefits the levee was designed to provide.

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“The inspections highlight places on the levees where the strength of the levee is being undermined because of various issues to include vegetation, animal burrows, erosion, fences or any structures that are found on or too close to the levee,” Williams said.

The executive summary of the report can be found here: www.epwu.org/stormwater/stormwater.html

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