



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Pittsburgh District

News Release

Public Affairs Office
1000 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release No. 05-019

January 19, 2005

Contact: Karen L. Auer, 412-395-7106

Karen.L.Auer@usace.army.mil

Recovery Operations Expected to Start at Montgomery Lock

PITTSBURGH – For the third time this new year, navigation lock operations on Pittsburgh’s three rivers have been impacted by high water flooding and debris. High river flows continue to hinder recovery and salvage operations.

The US Coast Guard Marine Safety Office, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the towing industry hope to start salvage operations tomorrow at Montgomery Locks and Dam where the towboat Motor Vessel Elizabeth M. and three of its six barges remains sunk below the dam. The recovery team anticipates river conditions will stabilize enough Thursday or Friday to initiate search operations safely. The first priority at Montgomery Locks and Dam is recovery the body of the missing crewmember. Divers will enter the interior of the sunken M/V Elizabeth M. to verify the presence or absence of the missing crewmember, recover the body if possible and search the interior to determine the condition of the towboat in preparation for recovery and removal operations. Campbell Transportation Co. has positively located and marked two of its three remaining barges. Survey work to locate the last barge continues. The salvaging operations of the barge closest to the Montgomery Lock are expected to take at least three days depending on river conditions.

The Coast Guard removed restrictions on night time transit as well as oil and chemical cargo in its designated Safety Zone from Mile 31.5 to 35. The use of an assist vessel to maneuver tows around obstruction below the lock is still required.

Three of four barges that broke loose from their mooring on Neville Island this past Saturday await recovery by their owner – one on the dam at Emsworth Locks and Dam, one about ½ mile above Dashields Locks and Dam and the third on the dam at Dashields. One barge from an earlier breakaway remains sunk above the dam at Pike Island Locks and Dam. None of these barges are currently impacting navigation or lock and dam operations.

The Monongahela and Allegheny navigation lock operations have returned to normal with the exception of Locks 5 and 8 on the Allegheny River.

Further down the Ohio River, near Reedsville, Ohio, the pool between Willow Island (Mile 162) and Belleville (Mile 204) Locks is closed to navigation due to breakaway barges that sank on the dam blocking five of the gates at Belleville. The Newburgh (Mile 776) Locks at Newburgh, Indiana are opening today after closure January 12 due to high water and debris, but the John T. Meyers (Mile 846) Locks downstream from Uniontown, Kentucky, remain closed.

The Army Corps of Engineers’ locks on the Ohio River normally remain open 24-hours-a-day year around. More than 243 million tons of commodities were transported by barge on the Ohio River in 2004 with a value of \$280 million. Commodities are primarily coal, petroleum and chemical products, aggregates, grains, iron and steel.

For more information on US Coast Guard activities contact LTJG Justin Covert at 412-644-5809, Ext. 2102. For more information on the Belleville and Willow Island Locks contact Huntington District Public Affairs Office at 304-399-5353. For more information on the Newburgh and Meyers Locks contact Louisville District Public Affairs Office at 502-315-6769.