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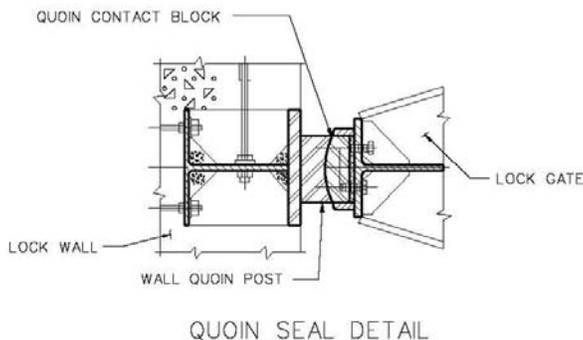
Emergency Lock Closure at Hannibal Locks and Dam, Ohio River

New Martinsville, West Virginia – At about 3:20 p.m. on Tuesday, November 1st, the primary lock chamber at Hannibal Locks and Dam was placed out of service due to a failure of a load bearing quoin seal on one of the lock gates. The auxiliary lock chamber was already out of service due to on-going scheduled maintenance. Therefore, at the present time both lock chambers at Hannibal Locks and Dam, located at Mile 126.4 on the Ohio River, are closed and no navigation traffic can pass through the locks.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Pittsburgh District Repair Fleet has accelerated their repair efforts on the auxiliary lock and anticipate that it will reopen to navigation by 11:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 6th. It is estimated that the primary lock chamber will remain closed for a minimum of two weeks while emergency structural repairs to the lock gates are completed.

At the time of the failure of the load bearing quoin seal on the upstream lock gate in the primary lock chamber, the Pittsburgh District Repair Fleet was replacing the land wall emptying tainter valve and renovating its operating machinery as part of their on-going scheduled maintenance of the auxiliary lock chamber. The valve repair work, necessary because of general wear and deterioration, was originally scheduled to close the auxiliary chamber for a 20-day period from October 22nd through November 10th during which time all traffic would pass through the primary chamber.

In cooperation with the navigation industry, procedures have been developed to facilitate orderly and efficient locking of queued tows upon the reopening of the auxiliary lock chamber. As of 11:00 a.m. today, there are 26 tows awaiting passage through Hannibal locks – 18 up-bound and 8 down-bound. The Hannibal locks average about 5,000 commercial lockages annually. Open 24-hours-a-day year around, more than 52 million tons of cargo are transported through the Hannibal locks annually.



A quoin seal provides a water-tight seal between the lock gate and lock wall. But more importantly, it transfers the hydrostatic load, or pressure of the water behind the gate, from the lock gate into the lock wall.