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## **Corps sends hydraulic engineer to Jackson Hole Levee Project; starts repairs on flood-damaged Morgan Levee**

**JACKSON, Wyo.** – Another U.S. Army Corps of Engineers emergency management flood-fight specialist from the Walla Walla District arrived in Jackson today to join the Corps team already at work supporting local flood-response operations in Teton County. Gene Spangrude, a hydraulic engineer from the District Headquarters in Walla Walla, Wash., will help the Corps team monitor flood damage in the Jackson Hole Levee Project area and provide technical support to Teton County emergency management officials. Emergency repairs began Tuesday on another levee section within the Jackson Hole Levee Project, a system of many levee sections that provides flood-risk management benefits to communities along the upper Snake River near Jackson, Wyoming.

The Corps contracted with Westwood-Curtis Construction Inc. of Jackson, Wyo., to replace rock and fill material washed away by high river flows along a 700-foot-long area of the Morgan Levee, located on the east side of the Snake River just downstream of the Wilson Bridge. Corps Team Lead Ken Koeberling coordinated with Walla Walla District biologists and Wyoming Game and Fish officials to ensure the repair work would not disturb nesting Bald Eagles located on a nearby island.

“Even though we’re in the middle of emergency flood-response operations, we’re considering potential environmental impacts while we’re planning our work,” said Koeberling.

The Corps team has completed repairs on six other levee sections in the Jackson Hole Levee Project area to date – Walton Quarry Access Road, John Dodge, Evans, 95 Ranch Number 1, Taylor Number 1 and Taylor Number 3.

Trained flood-fight specialists from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District, arrived May 18 to support Teton County’s flood preparation efforts. Together, with community “levee watchers” they continue to monitor the river’s effect on protective levees owned by the Corps, the county, cities and private land owners. They work closely with state and county emergency management officials, reporting their observations, providing technical expertise and facilitating requests for technical and direct assistance.

Residents of flood-prone areas are encouraged to keep informed of changing river and weather conditions on the National Weather Service website at <http://water.weather.gov/ahps/forecasts.php> – which includes flows data, weather forecasts and flood alerts – and by tuning in to local radio and television news stations.

Emergency management officials in Teton County encourage residents to be prepared to respond to localized flooding. Individuals are encouraged to contact local emergency management agencies to ensure they understand how to receive updates and information specific to their location. Teton County’s website offers an alert system that will send emergency notices by text or email to residents’ electronic communication devices – sign up for free at [http://www.tetonwyo.org/AgencyHome.asp?dept\\_id=em](http://www.tetonwyo.org/AgencyHome.asp?dept_id=em).

Early forecasts indicate that this will be one of the top five years on record. Snake River Basin water volumes are forecasted to be similar to 1997.

Corps water management officials continue coordinating with other federal and non-federal dam managers to make adjustments in river system operations that will best accommodate the increased run-off inflows. Reservoirs are being drafted ahead of anticipated heavy spring runoff. The Corps works closely with other agencies and local government entities to notify the public as early as possible when changes to flows are necessary.

The Corps is authorized to work with states, counties and other public entities to provide necessary resources and information. The Corps does not have authority to provide disaster assistance directly to individuals. The organization will continue to carefully watch the evolving situation and respond, when requested, with whatever assistance is authorized, appropriate and available.

The first responsibility for protecting homes and property from flood damage rests with the individual. Local governments and agencies, such as flood control districts, may share in this responsibility, and together form a community's first line of defense in preventing flood damages.

Occasionally, however, local resources are not able to control or contain a flood emergency situation. The Corps' flood disaster assistance program is intended to supplement and assist local governments, institutions and special-purpose districts when more help is needed.

The Walla Walla District is prepared to assist states and municipalities with flood-management support, if requested, said Jeff Stidham, Walla Walla District emergency management specialist. That assistance could include technical expertise, supplies and materials, equipment or contracts for emergency flood-fighting work.

"We're watching rivers and streams throughout the Walla Walla District and staying in touch with local emergency officials so, if requested to, we can plan, prepare or act," said Stidham. "Our top priority is the public's safety, so we're encouraging folks in low-lying parts of flood-prone areas stayed tuned to information and advisories provided by the National Weather Service or their local emergency-service agencies and be ready to take action according to local flood response plans."

State and local agencies needing disaster assistance from the Corps should contact the Walla Walla District Emergency Management Office at (509) 527-7146, or (509) 380-4538.

For more information about Emergency Management Assistance, check out the District's Web site at [www.nww.usace.army.mil/html/offices/op/em/flodasst.htm](http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/html/offices/op/em/flodasst.htm) or call (509) 527-7145.