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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announce Safety Program initiatives for Kopperl Levee

FORT WORTH, Texas – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District officials met recently with local cities and water utilities to discuss the Corps' plan to improve safety with the Kopperl Levee. The levee protects the city of Kopperl, Texas and has been evaluated separately from the Whitney Dam because the consequences of failure are separate from the Whitney Dam main embankment. The levee is not in imminent danger of failing, is currently performing its intended function and there are no plans to change the operations of the levee.

A risk informed screening process, which considers current levee behavior, how well the levee meets current design criteria, as well as the potential consequences of levee failure were recently conducted. The screenings classified the levee as having Moderate to High Risk characteristics. The Moderate to High Risk classification is a result of potential overtopping, piping and seepage issues. Consequences include potential lives lost, economic, environmental, and other impacts. "Kopperl Levee is operating as designed but is approximately 60 years old. Therefore, we will continue to assess and ensure its safe operation," said Col. Richard J. Muraski, Jr., Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District.

The Fort Worth District operates and maintains 25 flood risk management dams in Texas providing approximately 35 percent of the quality water supply for the state. As part of the responsibility in managing these dams, the Corps has a comprehensive dam safety program that has public safety as its primary objective. Corps dams are routinely inspected and continually evaluated for safety in accordance with the Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety issued in 1979.

In 2005, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began performing Screening Portfolio Risk Analyses allowing USACE maintained and operated dams nationwide to be prioritized. Kopperl Levee was screened in 2008 that considered both performance and consequence of failure (risk-informed screening).

"We will continue to keep our congressional leaders, stakeholders and public informed of our actions to keep the levee structurally sound for all Texans. Safety above all, is our number one priority," Muraski said.

Kopperl Levee was placed into operation in 1952 and serves the citizens of Texas providing flood risk management, quality water supply, environmental stewardship and recreational opportunities. The Corps of Engineers tests, evaluations and subsequent required work are ongoing to ensure that the 60-year-old project will continue to safely provide these important services.

For more information contact the Public Affairs Office, 817-886-1306.