

BACKGROUND

The August 2016 closure of the IHNC Lock in New Orleans and the establishment of the temporary Chandeleur Sound Alternate Route which may be used by mariners during the lock closure are still planned for execution with some changes outlined below. The following is a Situation Report (SITREP) on progress of planning for the closure and Alternate Route.

GICA will continue to issue updates as needed via GICA NAV ALERTs and publish to its website: www.gicaonline.com

CURRENT SITUATION and FUTURE PLANS – as of 29 July 2016

1. **USACE Plans for Lock Closure** – USACE New Orleans District will close the lock to navigation at 0630 on 1 August to start gate replacement and machinery work. **USACE managers anticipate the repairs will take 120 days.**
 1. **LOCKING QUEUE** - To ensure the queue is cleared prior to closing to navigation, tows should be on lock queue no later than 1000 on 31 July (20 hours before the planned closure time). IHNC Lockmaster will not accept locking requests after 1000 on 31 July.
2. **USACE Dredging Plans for Bayou Baptiste Collette** – Dredging of the Bar Channel/Pilot Channel to -12 MLG X 250 (Roughly -15 ft navigable) was completed on July 26th. USACE surveys of the bar channel were completed on July 28th and will be posted to the USACE site today, July 29th.

Link: <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Channel-Surveys/> (Scroll down and select Southeast Waterways, then select Outlets at Venice)

The dredge moved to the inland reach around mile 6 and resumed dredging. USACE is on target to provide at a minimum, a -10 MLG (roughly -13 ft navigable) channel throughout Baptiste Collette by July 31st. Dredging will continue through approximately end of August to provide a -14 X 250 channel on the bar/-14 X 150 inland channel when dredging is completed. Mariners should expect to see depths of -17 ft or better on their instrumentation.

3. **The Chandeleur Sound Alternate Route**
 1. USCG has established physical ATONs marking the Alternate Route. The route will also be marked with a number of virtual aids to navigation which will appear on AIS. LNM with final positions: <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/pdf/Inms/Inm0826g2016.pdf>
 2. Turn / Waypoints for the route, as established by USCG, and starting from waypoint 5 at Ship Island pass and proceeding south:

Turn/wpt 5 - Ship Island Pass	30.189019	-88.989201
Turn/wpt 4	29.888958	-89.006917
Turn/wpt 3	29.659160	-89.097220
Turn/wpt 2	29.562642	-89.225089
Turn/wpt 1	29.537959	-89.240456

3. **ATONs are currently charted and available on the NOAA RNC. The RNCs are available through NOAA website, and Print on Demand charts can be acquired with the marked route. Downloaded chart updates to Rosepoint systems will have the ATONs marked. Coast Guard is energizing about 25 virtual (AIS) aids on 29 July and 15 more early next week. This will be announced in the next LNM. Additionally, changes suggested by industry to buoy positions have been approved and will be made in the next 2 weeks.**
4. NOAA and USACE have surveyed the route in preparation for the initial plan for a 2015 closure. NOAA will update its surveys and make additional appropriate chart changes. As survey crews work, any features or seabed observed to be less than 12 ft MLLW, will be reported as a danger to navigation, immediately applied to the chart and reported to USCG.

4. **Operating on the Alternate Route**

1. **Best Operating Practices** – The attached Practices were developed by GICA, GNOBFA and Industry reps that have previous experience operating in the Chandeleur Sound. They have been updated and modified to include input from various operators. Companies considering utilizing the Alternate Route should ensure their Captains are familiar with, and use, these Practices when operating on the Route.

Seamens Church Institute has developed a voyage planning tool. It is posted on the GICA website and is compatible with Rosepoint.

2. **WEATHER - NOAA / NWS has set up several forecasting tools to provide weather predictions to mariners planning to transit the Alternate Route. A specific view of the area of the Alternate Route transit area can be viewed on your computer by clicking on the link below:**

Link: <http://go.usa.gov/chU8G> . Anyone using the Route can scroll into the area of the transit; from the opening map, click on a spot of the transit, and then see a forecast table appear. You can then click on the various tabs at the top of the table for weather and marine forecasting. The forecast will include specific wind and wave predictions for the Route to help mariners make go/no go decisions.

NOAA/NWS is also providing additional forecasting tools at these links:

Entire Marine Forecasts for Southeast Louisiana and Coastal Mississippi

<http://weather.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/fmtbltn.pl?file=raw/fz/fzus54.klix.cwf.lix.txt>

Breton Sound

<http://forecast.weather.gov/shmrn.php?mz=gzm538&syn=gzm500>

Chandeleur Sound

<http://forecast.weather.gov/shmrn.php?mz=gzm536&syn=gzm500>

Mississippi Sound

<http://forecast.weather.gov/shmrn.php?mz=gzm532&syn=gzm500>

All marine warnings are alerted and broadcast on Weather Radio
Gulfport 162.400 mhz; New Orleans 162.550 mhz; Buras 162.475 mhz

Point and Click

<http://forecast.weather.gov/gridpoint.php?site=lix>

Select your area of interest (Breton Sound, Chandeleur Sound or MS Sound).

3. **Traffic Protocols** – USCG and Industry reps are concerned that there will be congestion and traffic impacts in the LMR at Baptiste Collette and in Baptiste Collette itself. USCG, GICA, GNOBFA and Industry reps have coordinated with the affected Pilots Associations.
4. **Assists** – As of 29 July, the following companies have offered assistance to mariners making the transit of the Alternate Route. Services include fleeting and assist tugs:
 - i. **Florida Marine Transporters** – Jerry Wiltz, 985-264-6679; jerryw@flmarine.com
 - ii. **Magnolia Fleet** - Trevor Lott, c 251-622-0664; w 985-785-1053 trevor@magnoliafleet.com
 - iii. **Turn Services** – 504.949.1014; www.turnservice.com
 - iv. **Harbor Towing & Fleeting** – Todd Clower, 504-444-4869; todd@harbortowingllc.com
Jimmy Baer, 504-915-2796
 - v. **Madere & Sons Towing** - Charlie Burt, 504-343-8878; Charlie@maderetowing.com
 - vi. **Cvitanovic Towing** – George Cvitanovic, 504-452-1153; george@cvitanovictowing.com
5. **Vessels Operating on the Route** – To increase safety while operating on the Alternate Route, it has been suggested that a list of towboats which may be operating on the route be compiled and made available to tow operators. This will be useful in identifying other vessels on the route by AIS and facilitate better comms and safe operation. GICA will compile and distribute this list. Please send a list of your company's vessels which will use the route this summer. Include: Vessel name, Official Number and Radio Call Sign. Send to jstark@gicaonline.com
6. **Facebook Page** – **CHANDELEUR SOUND ALTERNATE ROUTE DISCUSSION** - This Group has been established for mariners and GIWW users to discuss navigation issues on the route, provide feedback to government agency partners and alert others to best practices and lessons learned. **It is a closed group that you will have to ask to join.**

Link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1726090747657975/>
7. **Test Runs** – Several tow companies have now run the route and all report good water and a well- marked route.
5. **Hurricane Planning** – All involved in this issue recognize that the lock closure and timeframe for using the Alternate Route occur during the peak of the 2016 hurricane season. Unfortunately, this situation cannot be avoided; however hurricane impacts can be mitigated. Early Port Coordination Team Involvement – USCG plans to

adjust timing of PCT calls and triggers to ensure plenty of time is allowed to clear the New Orleans Inner Harbor RNA of vessels prior to closing surge barriers.

This will be the last SITREP generated by GICA for the *planning* effort leading up to the IHNC closure and establishment of the Alternate Route. Additional info pertinent to GIWW navigation and the Alternate route will be distributed to GICA members via typical GICA NAV ALERT emails.