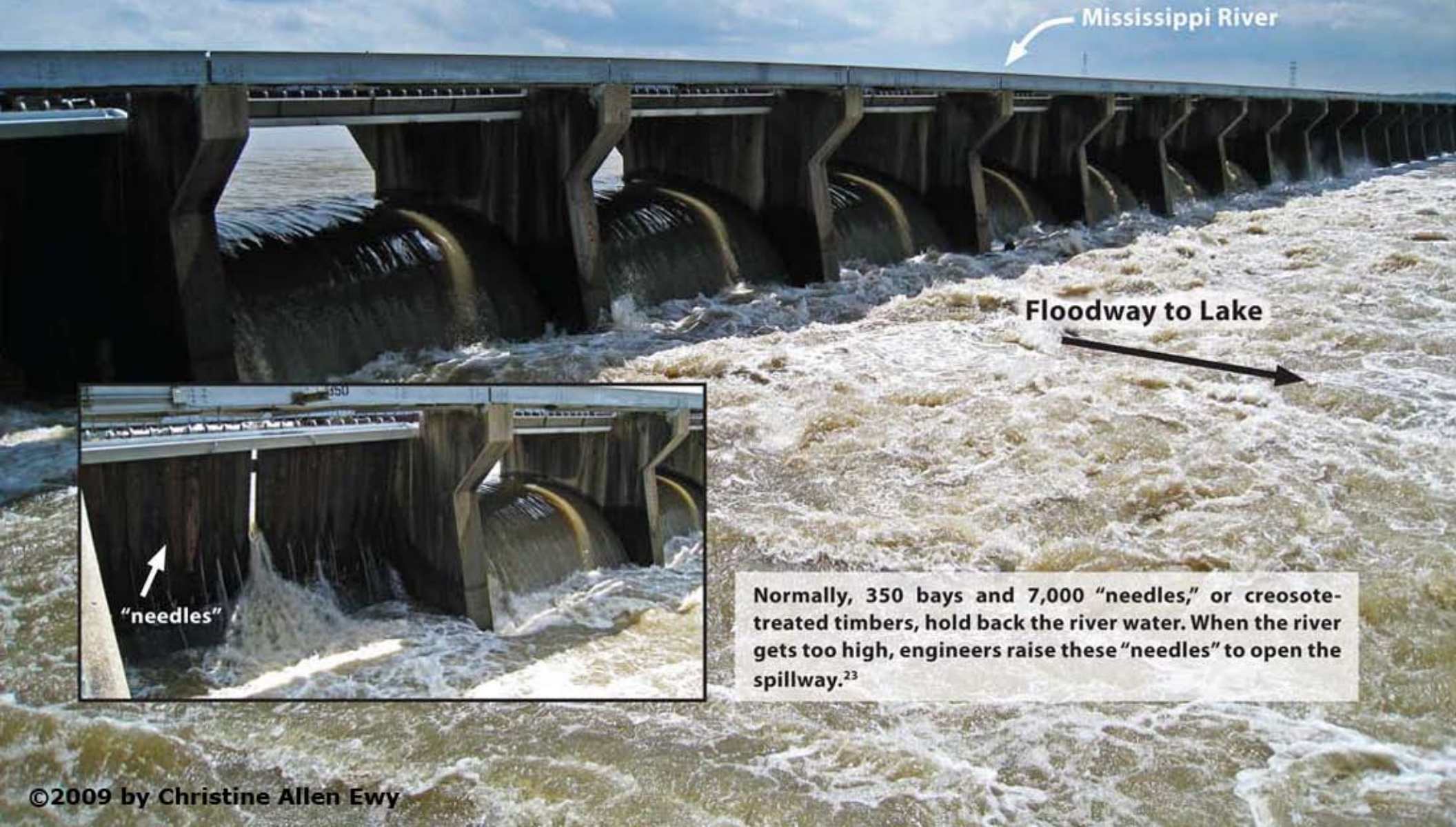


River challenges—Spillways help keep the Mississippi River from overflowing its banks in the New Orleans area. One instance was in April 2008. Heavy rains and flooding had occurred in the river's watershed in some Midwestern states north of Louisiana. When the river level got close to the flood stage of 17 feet in the New Orleans area, the Army Corps of Engineers opened this spillway, sending river water into Lake Pontchartrain for the first time in 11 years.



Floodway to Lake

Normally, 350 bays and 7,000 "needles," or creosote-treated timbers, hold back the river water. When the river gets too high, engineers raise these "needles" to open the spillway.²³