

## INSIDE

Names in the News .....2

Keep Track of BP Oil Spill  
Restoration Projects with New  
Web Database.....2

Pascagoula River in George County  
Named National Blueway .....3

Port of Gulfport Purchases Ingalls  
Gulfport Facility, Signs Lease.....3

Bipartisan bill introduced to protect  
U.S. navigable waters .....4

New Community Resources  
Website Launched.....4

Ten Ways To Get Your  
Water News .....5

A New Resource for Local Officials  
and Community Members.....5

Tombigbee River Valley Water  
Management District.....6

Fracking 2.0: A recovery lesson  
for barge operators? .....7

MDOT Freight Webpage.....7

## Calendar of Events 2015

- Aug. 25-27      **Tenn-Tom Waterway Annual Conference,**  
Marriott’s Grand Hotel, Point Clear, AL.  
Contact: [AZaiontz@tenntom.org](mailto:AZaiontz@tenntom.org)
- Sept. 16-18      **National Waterways Conference,** Little Rock, AR.  
Contact: [Carol@waterways.org](mailto:Carol@waterways.org)
- Nov. 18-20      **MWRA Annual Conference,** Golden Nugget, Biloxi.  
Mark your calendars. More information will follow.

## PRESIDENT’S LETTER



This month, the port directors will be meeting at MDOT to review the various applications for multi-modal funding. By law, the three ports on the Coast, five other ports, MDA, MDOT and the MWRA Executive Director make the decisions, which won’t be easy since there is \$3.8 million in funding available, but over \$9 million in requests this year.

Mississippi is fortunate to have this funding made available for the ports by MDOT. The other three modes included in the \$10 million set-aside for funding are airports, public transit and public rail. This is the first year the application process has been completed online, and it has been accomplished with very few hiccups.

In addition to thanking MDOT, I would like to point out that Louisiana and Florida both recognize the importance of ports as economic engines. Louisiana has been funneling an average of \$20 million a year for landside infrastructure improvements through the LA Port Priority Program. Alabama dedicates a 5% annual rebate of corporate taxes for up to 20 years, which also applies to port-related construction. For example, ThyssenKrupp’s construction topped out at \$3.7 billion! Florida has numerous port funding options which include a percentage of automobile registrations, a Florida Ports Financing Commission Loan Program, and annual funding of about \$15 million.

Robert Maxwell  
Rosedale-Bolivar County Port

### MWRA Mission Statement:

*MWRA promotes the advancement of Mississippi rivers, ports and harbors, coastal and inland waterways, flood control, recreation, water development and management, water supply and all other beneficial uses of water resources.*

## NAMES IN THE NEWS



**J. Craig Stepan**

MWRA welcomes **J. Craig Stepan** to the MWRA Board of Directors. Craig is the new Director of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Council, joining them this past February. He brings extensive intermodal experience to the post. He was the owner of Superior Shipping, an Alabama-based marine, rail and consulting company, after leaving a job as General Manager of Seaport Shipping, where he operated bulk and wood terminals in Mobile and Jackson, Alabama. Seaport Shipping also has terminals in Savannah, GA and Newport, VA, and is half-owner/operator of Southern International Services Company, a Mobile-based floating crane and stevedoring operation. Stepan retired from U.S. Steel after 35½ years of service.

Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant announced **Glenn McCullough Jr.** as the new director of Mississippi Development Authority, the state's economic development agency, during the annual meeting of the state chamber of commerce, the Mississippi Economic Council, Thursday, April 30, 2015, in Jackson. McCullough is a former head of the Tennessee Valley Authority and former mayor of Tupelo and will succeed Brent Christensen, who is leaving MDA for a job in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Container on Barge with TRONOX arrived Friday, May 22nd at the Port of Clay County, Tom Soya Grain Company. Congratulations are extended to Port Director **Perry Lucas**.



**Hibbett Neel**

**Neel-Schaffer, Inc.**, moved up to 187th on the nation's list of the Top 500 Design Firms for 2015, according to *Engineering News-Record*, which compiles the prestigious list and released the information recently. Neel-Schaffer is the only Mississippi-based company among the Top 200 on *ENR's* list. Its ranking jumped from 199th in 2014, and this marks the 21st consecutive year Neel-Schaffer has been included in *ENR's* Top 500.

"Increasing our revenues through key acquisitions and dedicated service to our existing and new clients is a testament to the hard work of our employees across the company," said Hibbett Neel, Neel-Schaffer's President and CEO. "It is our mission to serve our clients as an extension of their staff, and each year we develop new services that will further assist them in meeting their needs and goals." The Top 500 Design Firms list, published annually, is based on design-specific revenue earned over the past year.

**Jeff Ballweber**, a Director at Pickering, Inc., has been elected chair of the MWRA Water Council. Jeff has served MWRA in numerous capacities, including Secretary/Treasurer and President. It is good to have Jeff back working with MWRA.

Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals, Inc. has elected **Anthony Hauer** as its First Vice President. Anthony is Director of the Natchez-Adams County Port, and the 2016 IRPT Meeting will be held in Natchez. Hauer will replace Hugh McConnell, Director of the Shreveport-Bossier Port, when he steps down from the IRPT presidency.

## KEEP TRACK OF BP OIL SPILL RESTORATION PROJECTS WITH NEW WEB DATABASE

The public will be able to track the status of environmental restoration, recreation improvements and science research projects in Louisiana and other states that are paid for with fines and other money provided by BP and its drilling partners in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon disaster and oil spill, thanks to a new online database created by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, the Trust for Public Land and Ducks Unlimited.

[http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2015/04/gulf states organization creat 1.html#incart river](http://www.nola.com/environment/index.ssf/2015/04/gulf%20states%20organization%20creat%201.html#incart%20river)

*The Times Picayune*, April 24, 2015

## PASCAGOULA RIVER IN GEORGE COUNTY NAMED NATIONAL BLUEWAY

Twenty-two miles of the Pascagoula River in George County have been designated as a national Blueway.

The Pascagoula River is considered the nation's largest unimpeded river system. Its length covers the Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Area, a 37,000-acre tract of predominantly bottomland hardwood forest located within George and Jackson counties. "The Pascagoula River was identified as being one of the nation's most important rivers," Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain Executive Director Judy Steckler said. "It was given funding for the Blueway." The goal of the Pascagoula River Blueway is to promote public use and enjoyment of the Pascagoula River and its natural resources.

Swimming, camping, fishing, hiking, boating, birding opportunities and picnic sites are available at the Pascagoula River Blueway. Mile markers along the river help boaters know their location. Over 327 species of birds live or migrate each year to feed, nest and roost. Deer, foxes, river otters, beavers, skunks, bobcats, alligators, snakes and even black bears can be found within the river habitats. Information kiosks are present at four of the WMA's daily visitor use permit stations. The kiosks provide a map, brochures, and general information about that area of the Pascagoula River. The Blueway has 11 points of interest for visitors to explore, which include lakes, birding areas, historic sites, and a sandbar. Besides the benefits offered to users, the Blueway provides important habitat and travel corridors for fish and wildlife.

The George County Blueway is the second on the Pascagoula River. Jackson County has another 10-mile water trail, and Steckler says they "eventually hope to have grants to connect the one in George County to the one in Jackson County."

Adapted from the *Sun Herald*, May 2, 2015

## PORT OF GULFPORT PURCHASES INGALLS GULFPORT FACILITY, SIGNS LEASE

The Board of Commissioners for the Mississippi State Port Authority (MSPA) has approved the purchase of the Huntington Ingalls Gulfport Composite Facility located off of Seaway Road. This acquisition is the realization of a long-range vision for an inland port as an extension of the Port of Gulfport. The 116-acre location will increase capacity for the Port by offering additional laydown area, rail access, and barge connections for current and future tenants. The Port purchased the facility, which included an inventory of manufacturing equipment items. The new inland port has already proven to be a draw for new tenants as the Port is also executing a lease agreement with Topship LLC, an Edison Chouest Offshore affiliate, an offshore energy service and supply company. Details on that project will be made available at a later date.

"Today is another significant step in progress as we continue to position the Port of Gulfport to successfully recruit companies to Mississippi to create high-quality jobs in the Gulf Coast Region. The addition of this facility to the Port of Gulfport's infrastructure provides significant opportunities for diversifying the current tenant and cargo mix. This acquisition was a key driver in securing our new partnership with Topship, and we look forward to an announcement on that project in the near future," said Jonathan Daniels, MSPA executive director and CEO.

"We are excited to establish our new business affiliate, Topship LLC, in the state of Mississippi. Development of the Port's inland port facility, and our long-term lease of the property, provides a unique opportunity to seamlessly link to the development at the restored Port of Gulfport. As we have already learned in the operation of our Gulf Ship facility, the Gulfport region will provide us access to a quality workforce. We appreciate the cooperation and support of the Port of Gulfport, state and local officials who are providing a business-friendly environment to grow our company," said Gary Chouest, CEO of Edison Chouest Offshore.

The Port of Gulfport is currently undergoing a \$570 million restoration and expansion project, which will create an additional 50 acres of developable property at the Port. Substantial progress has been made on the restoration project in the past year as major site preparation and infrastructure contracts have been signed and are under way. In addition, three gantry cranes have been ordered for delivery in 2016 to further enhance the efficiency for cargo tenants.

## BIPARTISAN BILL INTRODUCED TO PROTECT U.S. NAVIGABLE WATERS

WASHINGTON – A bipartisan group of U.S. senators has introduced legislation intended to prevent a pair of federal agencies from significantly expanding the focus of the Clean Water Act.

The senators say their legislation, the Federal Water Quality Protection Act (S. 1140), will protect farmers, ranchers and private landowners by directing the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to issue a revised “Waters of the United States” rule that does not include isolated ponds, ditches, agriculture water, storm water, groundwater, floodwater, municipal water supply systems, wastewater management systems, and streams without enough flow to carry pollutants to navigable waters.

“Our legislation gives the EPA the direction it needs to write a reasonable rule that will truly protect our ‘navigable’ waterways,” said Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) “By striking the right balance, we’ll keep our waterways safe and pristine and allow them to be used as natural resources.

“Our next step is to work together to ensure this bill moves quickly through Congress. It’s time for Washington to finally focus on preserving our rivers and lakes and delivering certainty to American citizens.”

Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) stressed the importance of the bill at the grass roots. “No one wants cleaner water or better land conditions than the families who live on American farms. That is why it is incredibly important that the EPA rewrite the Waters of the United States rule with input from the people who live and work on the land and alongside these waters every day.”

Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) agreed. “I’m proud to lead agriculture’s charge in pushing back against EPA’s egregious federal overreach. The last thing rural America needs to worry about is more burdensome and costly federal oversight down on the farm.”

Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), chairman of the committee on the Environment and Public Works, emphasized the collaboration at the heart of the bill. “I am proud of the bipartisan work that went into the Federal Water Quality Protection Act,” he said. “I look forward to moving this legislation through the Environment and Public Works Committee and to the Senate floor.”

“North Dakota is in the middle of an historic wet cycle, impacting farmers across our state with flooding and pooling water,” said Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.). “We have to make sure that EPA takes these unique conditions into account and proposes a rule to regulate water that actually considers what is happening on farmers’ land.”

*Workboat, April 30, 2015*

## NEW COMMUNITY RESOURCES WEBSITE LAUNCHED

EPA has launched a new Community Resources website to help local officials and community members find information for improving the environment, public health and quality of life. The site leverages information from three existing community-oriented resources:

- The Local Government Environmental Assistance Network, managed in partnership with the International City / County Management Association, provides information on environmental compliance and stewardship.
- The National Resource Network, established by HUD as part of the Obama Administration’s Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative, offers practical solutions to help communities pursue economic development and growth.
- The EPA Community Health site can help users learn about and improve local environmental health conditions.

Access to the Community Resources site is available via EPA’s homepage or via this link: <http://www.epa.gov/communities>. To read the news release: <http://go.usa.gov/3kPvJ>.

*Water Headlines Newsletter; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, May 13, 2015*

## TEN WAYS TO GET YOUR WATER NEWS

Are you keeping up with the latest water news? Staying current can be tough. The tidal wave of information coming from electronic and print media ought to help, but it's like drinking from a fire hose. Here are a few tips from our members to help keep up.

- Membership in MWRA ([mswater.org](http://mswater.org)) means you get email news blasts on significant news items of the day. You also get this newsletter about people and events close to home.
- MWRA regularly eblasts news from the National Waterways Conference.
- *Water Efficiency* is a magazine for water management professionals focusing on water supply for municipal and agricultural uses. (Free subscription at [www.waterefficiency.net](http://www.waterefficiency.net))
- *Terra et Aqua* is a magazine for port and waterway professionals. (Free subscription at [www.terra-et-aqua.com](http://www.terra-et-aqua.com))
- *ASCE SmartBrief* is a daily electronic newsletter with snippet descriptions of civil engineering news items. It tends to be heavy on the construction side, but tries to include water resources items. (One of many free subscriptions at <http://www.smartbrief.com/>)
- *Water Headlines* is EPA's weekly electronic publication that announces publications, policies, and activities of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water. (Free subscription at <http://water.epa.gov/aboutow/ownews/waterheadlines/index.cfm>)
- *The Faucet* is the quarterly print magazine for water and wastewater utilities published by the Mississippi Rural Water Association. (Subscriptions at \$25/year are available at <http://www.msrrwa.org/magazine>)
- *Inland Port* is a print magazine published bi-monthly and did a great profile interview with our Executive Director, Deirdre McGowan. (Free U.S. subscriptions at [www.inlandportmagazine.com](http://www.inlandportmagazine.com))
- Corps of Engineers News Releases can be found at <http://www.usace.army.mil/Media/NewsReleases.aspx>
- The *New York Times* has a web page devoted to water issues. Short versions of regular articles are posted. (Free access at <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/w/water/index.html>)

LinkedIn is a professional networking site that functions like Facebook without the cute pet pictures. You can search for and link to other professionals and to professional groups for announcements and discussion pages. MWRA has a group page that you can join, and there are dozens of others for professional organizations and just like-minded groups. (Free membership at <https://www.linkedin.com/>)

## A NEW RESOURCE FOR LOCAL OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

A new website, [Resources for Local Officials and Community Members](#), offers a one-stop directory for local government officials and community members seeking to address today's environmental challenges at the local level.

Primary resource links on the front page are:

- [Local Government Environmental Assistance Network \(LGEAN\)](#) helps local governments with compliance and other environmental management issues.
- [National Resource Network \(NRN\)](#) provides information and technical assistance to support economic growth and revitalization in communities.
- [Environmental Health Resources for Community Members](#) site provides tools and information to help local leaders protect public health by understanding and addressing environmental conditions. It lists funding opportunities.
- A rotating list of topical issues, such as climate adaption training opportunities.

Tabs across the top provide information on:

- Learn the Issues – water, air, chemicals, emergencies, waste and other topics.
- Science and Technology – descriptions of research on environmental issues.
- Laws and Regulations – links to laws, regulations and rules by business sectors and topics.

The site is sponsored by EPA, an agency trying to balance its mandated role with sometimes ferocious criticism and the competing views of politicians, courts, environmental advocates, and business and industry. This new site is a welcome addition to EPA's outreach activities.

# TOMBIGBEE RIVER VALLEY WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MWRA requested an overview of the water management groups. The Tombigbee River Valley Water Management District response is a review of the last 5 years of activity that our counties requested or approved.

All of our work is pre-approved by the appropriate state or/and federal authority.

## Production

Our Production Crews worked in 12 counties in the past 5 years.

- \* Placed 13,000 tons of stone.
- \* Drained 25,000 acres of timber, cropland and urban areas (not wetlands).
- \* Removed debris from 400,000 feet of creeks and/or ditches.
- \* Rebuilt or repaired 50 bridges.

This work was completed with only 8 lost-time incidents in 5 years.

We are responsible for the maintenance of 50 miles of COE channels. We bush hog about 1500 man hours each year. We are on call to maintain 25 watershed lakes. We are constantly on call for special needs.

We maintain our equipment with minimal assistance from dealer organizations. We construct our special tooling as needed.

## On the subject of financial issues:

- \* We have increased our financial reserves by 73% in 5 years as we prepare for issues that will appear as some type of liability or unfunded major emergency.
- \* We have returned \$2,000,000 to our counties through our PLN Funds and we hope to rebuild this needed program by carefully watching various other programs.
- \* We participate in programs that provide financial assistance on beaver and hog control.
- \* We have committed to the funding of \$1,877,000 in "Economic Grants."
- \* We own 4921 acres consisting of 67 deeds including Kemper Lake and John Bell Williams Wildlife Management area.

## On the subject of planning and internal controls:

- \* We have a Salvage Timber sale that will exceed \$370,000 (reference John Bell Williams and the April 28, 2014 tornado).
- \* Per the Legislative Budget Office, we have written a Five-Year Strategic Plan that meets the guidelines and will work. (This plan required approximately 100 hours of preparation.) A yearly update is required.
- \* We have completed the Internal Control Project each year for the last five years. This is a "59 section" project.
- \* We have completed the required Facility Energy Conservation plan.
- \* We facilitate the contact between the Corps of Engineers and our counties on the environmental impact issues in our counties.
- \* We inspect and prepare estimates on approximately 100 jobs each year.
- \* We prepare portions of the information required by the federal and state agencies that help our counties.
- \* We provide engineering, material, and scheduling information for our counties.
- \* We work carefully on special funding projects for our counties, cities and other groups.

And that, my friends, is what we do.

## FRACKING 2.0: A RECOVERY LESSON FOR BARGE OPERATORS?

You've no doubt heard about hydraulic fracking and the new business that crude oil from this process has brought to the inland barge industry. But what about fracking 2.0?

Some say this could be the next big trend in the oil patch. And if so, it could mean a new source of business for liquid barging, which has softened up of late as crude oil prices and production have dropped.

Fracking 2.0 is what the oil companies are increasingly doing these days in order to produce more oil more cheaply with new technologies. It involves the re-fracking of existing wells using techniques that didn't exist the first time the wells were drilled. Blasting water, sand and chemicals down older shale wells that have already been fracked will crack the rock, which lets oil and gas flow up to the surface.

Re-fracking results have been spotty, but with the current oil crash, more and more energy companies are looking into it. There are about 50,000 wells in the U.S. that could be suitable for fracking 2.0, according to Bloomberg.

Re-fracking an older well costs about \$2 million, while it can cost about \$8 million to drill a new one. Now you get the idea of why it's so attractive.

Barge operators like **Kirby**, the nation's largest tank barge operator, are already feeling the pinch as demand for barges to move crude to refineries has weakened. They have seen profits dip and are rethinking their business outlook.

Re-fracking could help oil production recover and that could restore demand for crude-on-barge, many say.

"You've got a new phenomenon coming out which is re-fracking of wells which is very cost-effective," David Grzebinski, president and CEO said in Kirby's April 30 earnings call with analysts. "You are starting to hear more about that. I don't know that the volumes are significant yet, but it is another cost migrating effort that the industry is undertaking."

*Workboat, May 15, 2015*

## MDOT FREIGHT WEBPAGE

The Mississippi Department of Transportation recently launched a freight webpage featuring the Mississippi State Freight Plan and information on the state's freight network, the state Freight Advisory Committee, events and links to various resources.

Efficient movement of freight and goods along Mississippi's freight network is critical to the state's economy and the well-being of citizens for national and international competitiveness, according to a MDOT news release.

The webpage can be found at [mdot.ms.gov/portal/freight.aspx](http://mdot.ms.gov/portal/freight.aspx).

*The Clarion-Ledger, May 17, 2015*