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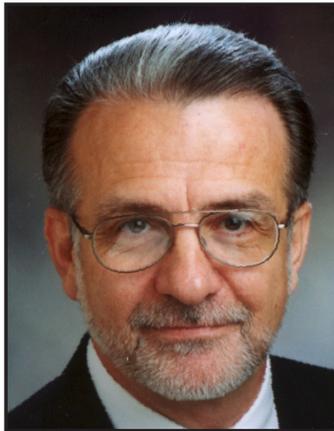
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President's Letter



I ask you to do two things this month:

The first is to thank Anthony Hauer for his excellent service to our association. Mr. Hauer is a sterling example of calm, patient leadership, and we all gratefully acknowledge his term as President of MWRA for 2010-2012. Thanks, Anthony.

The second is to contribute to MWRA's focus on two strategic challenges – identifying sustainable, unifying contributions for Mississippi water resources and growing our membership. Tell me what MWRA needs

to be doing to make your membership even more valuable and relevant. Should we be educating the public and informing elected officials about water's essential roles in our lives? Can we teach ourselves to be better stewards of our abundant water resources? How can we reach out to our fellow Mississippians to involve them in using our waters for both economic development and future quality of life? What issues are relevant to our ports and waterways, our agricultural, industrial, and municipal water uses, and recreation in its many forms? How can MWRA best fulfill its mission to "promote 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." Your answers to these questions will drive our actions for the next year.

You can help by giving me (mcanally@ngi.msstate.edu) your thoughts on these questions, by recruiting one new member with great ideas, and by volunteering to put your enthusiasm to work for our Mississippi Water Resources Association.

Visit our new web page: <http://www.mswater.org/> and join us on LinkedIn using the link below: [http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Mississippi-Water-Resources-Association-4661342?](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Mississippi-Water-Resources-Association-4661342?trk=hb_invite)

Best regards,
Bill McAnally
Mississippi State University

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.

Calendar of Events 2013

- February 6** MWRA Board Meeting, 4:00 PM, Hilton, County Line Road, Jackson
MWRA / Mississippi Intermodal Council Dinner, 6:00 PM, Hilton
- February 7** Breakfast with Our Legislators, 7:30 AM, Old Capitol Inn, Jackson
- March 19-21** IRPT Annual Meeting, Monteleone Hotel, New Orleans.
For information: www.irpt.net

MWRA 2012 CONFERENCE REPORT

We had an exciting series of speakers at the conference at IP in Biloxi the first week of November, and extend special thanks to Sen. Roger Wicker for serving as the Keynote speaker. We had a good turnout of members (and new members), wonderful sponsorships and a double special thank you to the Port of Pascagoula for hosting the conference! Mark McAndrews and Betty Ann White certainly outdid themselves with hospitality and support for the meeting.

The election of new officers for MWRA 2012-2014 included: Anthony Hauer (Port of Natchez-Adams County) as Chairman of the Board; Bill McAnally (MS State University) as President; Jeff Ballweber (Pickering, Inc.) as Secretary/Treasurer. Regrettably, we say “good-bye” and “thank you” to Dean Pennington as he steps down as Chairman of the Board. Fortunately, he is still serving on the MWRA Board of Directors! We also welcomed new Board member Jimmy Nelson of Allen & Hoshall to replace retiring John Almond. (Not sure anyone can actually “replace” John!)

The MWRA Diplomat Awards were very well received. Commissioner Dorlos “Bo” Robinson came with his wife Nancy. His presentation was made by Jeff Ballweber. Alan Moore made the presentation to Wayne Parrish, who came with his wife Pat. Marlin Collier’s presentation was made by Ray Balentine, and Marlin’s wife Sandy was there as well. There is no real way to thank the awardees for their service to MWRA. The Diplomat Award is just the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

We were all able to gather at the new Margaritaville Thursday evening for barbeque – and it was so good! We were treated to good music and stilt walkers. It was simply a great evening! The door prize of a \$100 bill was won by none other than our own Don Waldon.

We have conference proposals from both the MSU Riley Center at Meridian and the Vicksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau – will keep you posted as plans for 2013 get firmed up.

ALEXANDER UNVEILS PLAN TO BOOST INLAND WATERWAYS FUNDING

By Nathan Hurst, Congressional Quarterly Staff

Barge operators would pay more in diesel taxes to accelerate projects modernizing the nation’s inland waterways under a plan unveiled Wednesday by Sen. Lamar Alexander.

The Tennessee Republican said that when Congress reconvenes, he and a bipartisan group of senators will introduce legislation he is calling the American Waterworks Act. Alexander made the announcement at the Chickamauga Lock on the Tennessee River, an over-budget and much-delayed project that has been held up as an example of the need to revamp the Army Corps of Engineers and the Inland Waterways Trust Fund that collects money for such infrastructure.

Alexander has been working with South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham and other senators on a plan to advance legislation overhauling harbor and inland waterways financing. Graham is particularly focused on expanding ports, including Charleston, to accommodate bigger cargo ships after the enlargement of the Panama Canal is completed in 2014.

Industry lobbyists are hoping a ports and inland waterways package can be part of a comprehensive deficit-reduction and tax agreement.

Alexander said in a release that the plan would:

- * Boost the 20-cents-per-gallon diesel tax that users of inland waters pay to nearly double the funds available in the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. The industry has proposed an increase of between 6 cents and 9 cents over the current level, which has not been raised since 1996.
- * Establish a new accounting method for spending from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund that would allow a surplus of more than \$7 billion to be spent. Tapping the surplus in the harbor fund will require budget offsets to avoid increasing the overall federal deficit.
- * Authorize a five-year construction plan to help modernize harbors ahead of the Panama Canal expansion, along with providing for port dredging at 50-foot depths.

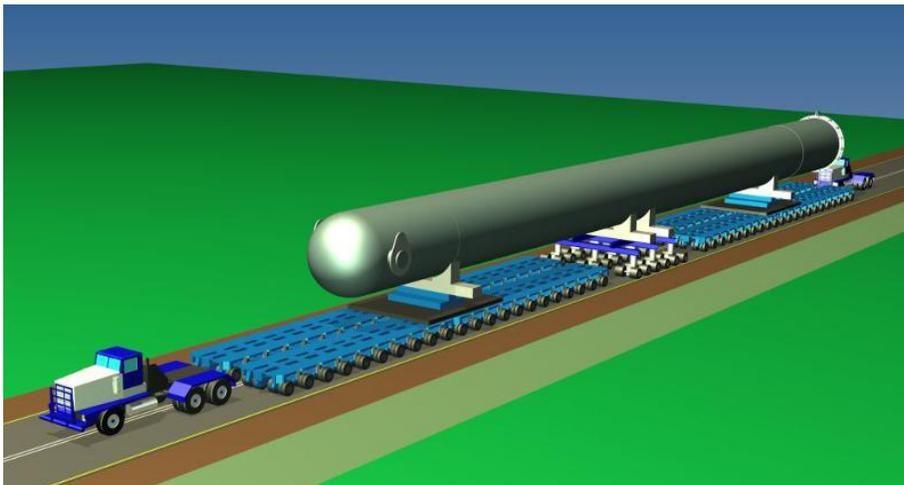
Alexander said his measure also would free up funds in the Inland Waterways Trust Fund by ending a requirement that funds go toward paying for the Olmsted Lock on the Ohio River. He said that project siphons away almost 90 percent of the fund's annual revenue.

Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., has pledged to introduce and mark up the bill before the end of the lame duck session.

NEWS FROM THE TENNESSEE-TOMBIGBEE WATERWAY

On October 28, 2 hydrogen sulfide absorbers, weighing nearly 1.5 million tons each, were unloaded from barges in Aliceville Lake onto multi-tandem road haulers for a 76-mile trip to Mississippi Power's IGCC power plant being built in Kemper County near Meridian. The absorbers were manufactured in Korea, shipped to the Port of Mobile, and there loaded on barges for the trip up the BWT and TTW.

This is just another example of the economic importance of these waterways and their intermodal connections to the region and the nation!



Impact of Low Water along the Mississippi River

Low water along the Mississippi River and her numerous tributaries continues to threaten shallow-draft vessel traffic. The Corps of Engineers' missions include working to maintain safe, reliable, efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable waterborne transportation systems for movement of commerce, national security needs and recreation. The Corps' Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) and Mississippi River Commission (MRC) have been tasked with these missions under extreme circumstances, from the high water and threat of floods in

2011, to the low water and extreme drought of 2012. The difference in water levels during these two events was almost 60 feet (with a measured difference of 59 feet at Memphis).

On August 24, 2012, the MRC released the following statement: “River stages threaten historic low-water marks just one year after the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project passed the largest flood in the recorded history of the river. On the river gages at Memphis, Vicksburg, and Natchez, river fluctuations exceeded 55 feet between the 2011 highs and the 2012 lows to date. Such wide variations in stages over successive years have never before been witnessed.”

The MVD plans to reduce the amount of water allowed to pass through reservoirs upstream of St. Louis, MO, at the end of November. The MVD has been using controlled reservoir releases to offset the low water caused by this year’s extended drought. The proposed reduction of flows on the Missouri is projected to further reduce water levels on the Mississippi River especially from St. Louis, MO, south to Cairo, IL, the section of the Mississippi River below the confluence of the Missouri and Ohio. Unlike the soft mud bottom characteristic of the Lower Mississippi River (Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico), the impacted area has a hard bedrock bottom, or pinnacles of rock, that threaten navigation because of the predicted lower water levels. The Corps continues to consider all options, including requests to begin the emergency removal of the rock pinnacles, especially near Thebes, IL (Upper Mississippi River Mile 43.7) and Grand Tower, IL (Upper Mississippi River Mile 81.9). Barring the removal of at least some of the rock formations, unexpected water level increases, or other unlikely natural phenomena, the shallow-draft traffic in this area will be severely impacted and possibly cut off.

The Corps operates the Missouri River Mainstream Reservoir Master Water Control Manual in order to balance its missions – including navigation, flood control, and fresh water supplies – to much of the Midwest. The Missouri River and its System reservoirs are a source of water for municipal water supply; irrigation; cooling water; and commercial, industrial, and domestic uses. Approximately 1,600 water intakes of widely varying sizes are located within the System and the lower Missouri River. Access to water is a key concern because low water levels increase the cost of getting water from both the reservoirs and the Missouri River. The Missouri River plan calls for the Corps to stop the flow of water from these reservoirs on November 22, 2012.

The following linked article updates the current situation and explains that the governor of Missouri is also actively working to keep commerce flowing in order to prevent an “economic disaster.” The Big River Coalition works closely with representatives from the American Waterways Operators (AWO) and the Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI), and the Coalition also offered assistance and briefed the Louisiana Congressional Delegation while in Washington, DC, recently.

<http://www.kcrg.com/news/local/Officials-Urge-Federal-Action-on-Mississippi-Missouri-Rivers--178952771.html>

NEEL-SCHAFFER RANKS NATIONALLY AS A TOP TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING FIRM

Neel-Schaffer, a consulting engineering firm located throughout the Southeast, made the Top 50 Road & Highway Design Firms List released by Roads and Bridges Magazine. Each year Roads & Bridges sends a survey out to its government (DOT) readers, who in turn select the firms they prefer to work with out on the jobsite. The results are based on professional preference, not gross earnings. “Our 2012 ranking is 22nd,” announced Hibbett Neel, President, Neel-Schaffer, Inc. “For our clients to show such preference for our firm is very humbling.” Neel-Schaffer is located throughout Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

DEVELOPING NUMERIC NUTRIENT CRITERIA: THE MISSISSIPPI APPROACH

Richard Harrell, Office of Pollution Control, MS Department of Environmental Quality

All living organisms need nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus to survive and grow. While these nutrients are present naturally in our air and water, too much nitrogen and phosphorus may enter the environment – usually from a wide range of human activities. Since the rise of industrialization, synthetic fertilizers, modern agriculture and suburbia, nutrient pollution has become all too common. Too much nitrogen and phosphorus in the water causes algae to grow faster than ecosystems can handle. Significant increases in algae can harm water quality, damage habitats, and decrease the water's oxygen levels. Very large growths of algae (algal blooms) can severely reduce or eliminate oxygen in the water, leading to illness or death of fish and other aquatic life. Some algal blooms are harmful to humans because they produce elevated toxins and bacterial growth that can sicken people who contact the polluted water, consume tainted fish or shellfish, or drink contaminated water. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus can travel thousands of miles to coastal areas where the effects of the pollution are felt in the form of massive hypoxic zones with scarce oxygen and little life, such as those in the Gulf of Mexico. More than 100,000 miles of rivers and streams, close to 2.5 million acres of lakes, reservoirs and ponds, and more than 800 square miles of bays and estuaries in the United States have poor water quality because of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.

The development of numeric or quantitative nutrient criteria is a dilemma that is looming for many states. A pending lawsuit filed earlier this year by nearly a dozen environmental groups seeks to force EPA to establish numeric nutrient criteria for U.S. waters. Since most states have their own water programs and are delegated large portions of the Clean Water Act by EPA, nutrient standards have been largely left to the states. The suit seeks to require EPA to set nutrient criteria or, in the alternative, to set criteria for nearly the entirety of the Midwest, along with total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for the Mississippi River, its tributaries, and portions of the Gulf of Mexico. The complaint, in *Gulf Restoration Network v. Jackson*, stems from EPA's denial of a rulemaking petition seeking similar relief nearly four years ago.

The plaintiffs allege that EPA's denial fails to provide a reasoned basis for EPA's decision not to use its authority under Section 303 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Even before this lawsuit, MDEQ worked to develop numeric nutrient criteria for Mississippi's various water body types. MDEQ's goal is to develop scientifically defensible criteria that are appropriate and protective of Mississippi's waters. MDEQ is committed to developing criteria that are protective of our water bodies and that make sense for Mississippi.

Mississippi's Nutrient Criteria Development Plan

This plan outlines the process and timeline the state intends to follow to develop numeric nutrient criteria. This plan was mutually agreed upon by the state and EPA in October of 2010. According to the plan, nutrient criteria are being developed based on water body type and are divided into the categories of (1) wadeable streams, (2) non-wadeable streams, (3) MS Delta waters, (4) lakes/reservoirs, and (5) coastal waters.

As outlined in the development plan, the criteria will be developed in the following order and timeframes: (1) for lakes and reservoirs, wadeable streams, non-wadeable streams, and coastal waters and estuaries – numeric nutrient criteria are scheduled to be out to public notice by June 30, 2013 and (2) for Delta waters – numeric nutrient criteria are scheduled to be out to public notice by November 30, 2014. Mississippi's Nutrient Criteria Development Plan is available on the MDEQ website.

The Technical Approach

MDEQ realized establishment of quantitative nutrient criteria would take many experts and fields of study to get right. To reach that goal, MDEQ established the Mississippi Nutrient Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in 2010.

The mission of the TAG is to provide technical expertise and regional knowledge to MDEQ for the development of scientifically defensible numeric nutrient criteria. The TAG is led by MDEQ and consists of over 30 members representing multiple state and federal agencies, as well as researchers from across the state. The Mississippi TAG meets regularly and will continue to meet throughout the criteria development process to support MDEQ in meeting the schedule of Mississippi's Nutrient Criteria Development Plan.

A variety of technical methods can be applied to develop numeric nutrient criteria. The recommended methods for developing nutrient criteria include: (1) Distributional Analysis (Reference Approach), (2) Stressor-Response (Effects-Based), (3) Scientific Literature, and (4) Models. MDEQ is applying the multiple lines of evidence approach for developing numeric nutrient criteria. MDEQ, along with technical support from the TAG, will develop nutrient criteria endpoints by applying multiple lines of analysis. Applying the multiple lines of evidence approach is an alternative to a single analysis. Using multiple lines is especially useful when dealing with complex systems and will result in criteria values with greater scientific validity.

Stakeholder Outreach

Keeping our stakeholders informed is always an MDEQ priority. MDEQ recognizes decisions cannot be made in a vacuum, and the decisions we do reach have profound effects on the citizens of our state. While MDEQ staff have provided updates at various meetings and conferences, in July 2012, MDEQ hosted the first Nutrient Criteria Stakeholder Update Session. This session was the first in a series of regular sessions that MDEQ plans to conduct throughout the nutrient criteria development process. The update sessions will keep our stakeholders informed of the criteria development progress and activities, as well as provide a venue for MDEQ to receive feedback and answer questions from our stakeholders related to the activities and updates presented. Technical questions can then be relayed back to the TAG for consideration in the analytical process. The goal is to encourage the exchange of information, maximize communication, and minimize conflict.

MWRA Welcomes New Members

MWRA is pleased to welcome **Larry McAdoo** of Company Wrench, with headquarters in Carroll, Ohio, and **Richard Sheridan**, Anvil Attachments, Slaughter, LA. They were exhibitors at the conference, and we were glad to meet them and include them in our various activities!

Inside the Beltway

Much of Washington, like the rest of the nation, is consumed with talk of the impending fiscal cliff, and whether a deal will be reached in the coming weeks to avert the potential fall off the cliff. The prognosis for a solution changes on a daily basis, and finger-pointing abounds. Final adjournment of the 112th Congress is slated for December 14th, but it appears that date will be pushed back a week until the 21st. In addition to the fiscal cliff discussions, Congress is faced with a Hurricane Sandy disaster relief bill, and several other "must pass" provisions. What will be included in the soup is speculative at this point; we will keep you apprised as information becomes available.

WRDA UPDATE

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has held two hearings on WRDA in recent weeks. As previously advised, NWC President Amy Larson testified at a hearing held on November 15th on the discussion draft put forward by Chairman Barbara Boxer. That hearing provided a broad overview of the issues and policy reforms and initiatives that will likely be included in a bill going forward.

In response to specific questions, Mrs. Larson commented that the provision in the draft relating to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund does not guarantee full expenditure of the revenues collected to maintain the nation's ports and harbors, but she expressed a willingness to work with the committee to refine this language. In addition, referring to investments in the nation's infrastructure, she noted that the Mississippi River and Tributaries project provides a 34:1 return on investment ratio, and further promised to provide the committee with additional information on such positive returns on investment. Additional questions for the record addressing other topics are expected to be provided in the near future.

At a recent hearing, the Committee heard from colleagues from both the House and the Senate who were directly impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Information collected will be used to develop provisions relating to Corps of Engineers projects in a forthcoming bill.

Chairman Boxer stated at the hearing that she and incoming Ranking Member David Vitter (LA), who will replace term-limited Jim Inhofe, will work to move a WRDA out of committee early in the 113th Congress.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NAVIGATION UPDATE

As reported earlier, NWC joined WCI and AWO in a letter to the President, requesting emergency action to ensure that water levels do not fall below the level needed to support commercial navigation between St. Louis, MO and Cairo, IL, in order to prevent an economic crisis in the heartland of the United States, jeopardizing the shipment of \$7 billion in critical commodities, with damaging consequences for shippers, consumers, and the regional and national economies.

U.S. Senators Tom Harkin (IA) and Roy Blunt (MO) joined a bipartisan group of 15 of their Senate colleagues in a letter to President Obama calling for "action by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prevent an economic calamity in the center of our nation." Specifically, the lawmakers are urging the president to issue an emergency directive to streamline the contracting process for rock removal on the Mississippi River, as well as explicitly authorize the Army Corps to release water on the Missouri River. Not unexpectedly, a group of upper basin Senators, led by John Thune (R-SD), sent a letter urging the President to deny the requests.

Discussions continue to ensure sufficient flows on the Mississippi between St. Louis and Cairo. Updates will be provided as information becomes available.

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

As expected, House leadership has announced that Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA) will be the Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the 113th Congress. Outgoing Chairman John Mica faced term limits. Some rotation of the subcommittee chairs is expected, as several now are faced with term limits. Further announcements are expected in the coming days.