

INSIDE

Calendar 4

Members In The News 2

Mississippi's Groundwater
Quality 2

Plan On Adding Rail To
Your Port? 2

Big Changes At The Port
Of Gulfport 3

Aquatic Plant Management
Support A Priority 3

WRDA 2009 3

President's Letter



There's a lot going on in Washington that will affect all of us! After a hard-fought battle, Rep. Henry Waxman (CA) is to take over as Chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee. Waxman has generally been more supportive of environmental issues than the previous Chair, John Dingle (MI), which may cause concern for water resource initiatives. Additionally, please see the article on WRDA elsewhere in this

issue. Please note the Budget Summit will be held March 9-11 in DC, which provides for a united opportunity for MWRA members to let their needs be known to our delegation in Washington. Thanks to Amy Larson of the National Waterways Conference for forwarding this information to us.

Unless you've done it, you might not see the task of putting together a conference as a daunting one! *The Water Conference* is a completely new approach to presenting information on water-related issues in our state. The groups committed to support and/or participate in this initiative include MWRA, Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute (MWRRI), USDA, USGS, NOAA, MDEQ and the Public Service Commission. We are fortunate that so many care about water and are willing to work together to ensure a continuing supply of this essential ingredient to both our survival and quality of life. Please plan to be there August 5-7. Intriguing and interesting speakers are already being lined up. If you have a suggestion of someone you feel can contribute as a speaker – don't be shy, let us know.

A special welcome is extended to Mayor Jim Ballard of Aberdeen, who has recently joined the MWRA Board of Directors.

Dean Pennington
YMD Water Management District
MWRA President

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.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to the following members added to National Waterways Conference leadership positions: **Mike Tagert** of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority, **Jimmy Lyons** of the Alabama State Port Authority and **Don Waldon** of Dawson & Associates.

Jeff Ballweber has accepted a position with Pickering, Inc., as the Director of Special Projects. Pickering is a multi-discipline engineering company with focus areas in transportation and water resources.

The Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Council has elected the following MWRA members to the governing board: **Eugene Bishop**, Yellow Creek Port Authority; **Ron Coles**, Hanson Professional Services; **Sharon Kvak**, Garick Corporation; **Tom Murphree**, Kinder Morgan; **Deirdre McGowan**, MWRA and **Greg Deakle**, Itawamba County Development Council. The Treasurer is **John Hardy**, Lowndes County Port.

The Tennessee-Tombigbee Water Management District has announced the retirement of Director **Jimmie Mills**. A search for a replacement is under way.

Congratulations to **David Work!** The Director of the Rosedale-Bolivar County Port (and Mayor of Cleveland, MS) was recently honored as the MSWTC Member of Distinction by the MS World Trade Center at its International Business Awards gala held at the Jackson Country Club.

MISSISSIPPI'S GROUNDWATER QUALITY

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has determined that Mississippi's groundwater continues to meet and exceed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. Results of extensive sampling done by MDEQ's Office of Land and Water Resources show that the overall quality of Mississippi's groundwater supply has been relatively unaffected by pesticides and other agricultural activities. Through September 1, 2008, MDEQ staff have sampled 1,449 wells, and 1,404 (97 percent) of them had no detectable concentrations of agricultural chemicals. Furthermore, of the 45 wells with detections, only three were found to contain concentrations exceeding safe Maximum Contaminant Levels established for drinking water by EPA.

"We are pleased by the results of this sampling, and it confirms what we already know, that Mississippi has some of the best water in the country. Mississippi's groundwater is used for a multitude of activities including agriculture, industrial use, and drinking water, and it is an invaluable resource. We have a great story to tell in Mississippi, and we want our citizens to know their water is safe to drink, and that we will continue our efforts to ensure it remains that way," said MDEQ Executive Director Trudy Fisher.

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality was assigned the responsibilities of establishing groundwater standards and monitoring groundwater for agricultural chemicals and other pollutants by the Mississippi Legislature in 1987. MDEQ established the Agricultural Chemical Groundwater Monitoring Program and initiated the collection of groundwater samples beginning in 1989. Funding for this program is provided through pesticide registration fees.

From the MDEQ Newsletter, October 2008

PLAN ON ADDING RAIL TO YOUR PORT?

U.S. Rail Partners, Ltd., is a rail service provider with significant experience among its eleven business partners in all aspects of railroad operation, including rail operations and oversight, rail service marketing, rail car management, transload facility development, and customer development, interaction and service. Currently, USRP operates a combined 145 miles of railroad, partnering with state departments of transportation, economic development authorities, port authorities and individual communities and businesses. Contact: U.S. Rail Partners, Ltd., 847-824-1264 x1009.

BIG CHANGES AT THE PORT OF GULFPORT

A new expansion plan rolled out for the MS State Port at Gulfport details a strategy to turn the port into the largest container port in the United States. The concept would put an entirely new port directly south of the present-day location. The plan is so massive the current port property likely will become a beachside promenade with shops and restaurants. Included is a new route running through an underground corridor linking the port to I-10, wide enough to accommodate eight lanes of traffic and a rail line.

International container shipments are expected to more than double in the next 20 years and U.S. ports are scrambling to keep pace. Many major ports in the U.S. have been boxed in by neighboring communities, and environmental opposition has curtailed further growth. Experts say the future expansion of the Panama Canal would allow next-generation megaships to squeeze into the Gulf, which will drastically increase business at Gulf Coast ports. The Port of Gulfport is projected to handle over 103 million containers per year – compared to 8.3 million at Los Angeles and 5.2 million at New York/New Jersey.

The elevation of the new port will be raised from its current position 10 feet above sea level to 25 feet. The Mississippi Development Authority reports the plan will create about 6,000 direct jobs with a potential spin-off of jobs in the hundreds of thousands. The expansion will likely take several decades and cost more than \$1 billion, of which \$570 million is on hand to start with.

From the *Sun Herald*, September 12 & November 23, 2008

AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT A PRIORITY

The Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute (MWRRI) at Mississippi State has an ongoing project with MSU's GeoResources Institute to monitor and map the distribution of aquatic vegetation throughout the Ross Barnett Reservoir. At 33,000 acres, the Reservoir is Mississippi's largest surface water impoundment and serves as the drinking water supply for Jackson. The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District (PRVWSD), managed by **Benny French, P.E.**, serves 50 surrounding subdivisions with water and sewer services and provides numerous recreational amenities.

In recent years, invasive species have become an increasing problem, clogging navigation channels, reducing recreational opportunities and limiting access for users. MWRRI is assisting in assessing the distribution of aquatic vegetation, monitoring the spread of invasive species and evaluating ongoing treatment efforts throughout the reservoir. Scientists may explore the use of remote sensing to examine areas that are currently inaccessible by boat and validate estimates of certain species. Management efforts by PRVWSD are continuing to control nuisance species and promote the growth of more desirable native species.

From *MS Water Resources Research Institute 2008 Annual Report*

WRDA 2009

Support for a water resources infrastructure bill has been expressed in both the House and the Senate. Senator Barbara Boxer (CA), Chairwoman of the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee, has indicated that a new water resources bill funding transportation and infrastructure projects across the nation will be a priority for her committee, stating that failure to fund infrastructure projects is not an option. On the House side, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Oberstar supports getting water resources bills back on a 2-year schedule. In addition, House Republicans declined to adopt a moratorium on earmarks as had been previously indicated.

From *NWC Newsletter*, November 2008

Calendar of Events

2009

- February 4 **MWRA Board of Directors Meeting & MS Intermodal Council Dinner**
 – MWRA Board 4PM, MIC Dinner 6PM, Old Capitol Inn
- February 5 **Mississippi Intermodal Council Breakfast with Legislators,**
 Old Capitol Inn, Jackson, 7:30 AM. insightltd@msn.com
- March 9-11 **NWC Budget Summit**, Phoenix Park Hotel, Washington, DC.
 Information: www.waterways.org
- April 29-May 1 **Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals Annual Conference,**
 Drake Hotel, Chicago. Information: admin@irpt.net
- August 5-7 **Joint MWRA-MWRRI Annual Conference** (with USGS, MSDEQ,
 USDA and PSC), Harrah's Grand, Tunica.
 Information: jschmidt@cfr.msstate.edu.
- September 6-8 **SmartRivers:** Vienna, Austria. Details to follow (Note: This is a change of
 date).



Mississippi Water Resources Association
Post Office Box 4200
Jackson, MS 39296-4200

First Class

51 Years of Dedicated Service!