

Capitol Currents



Mark K. Knoy, president of American Electric Power's River Operations, is WCI's new chairman. Page 6.

Senate Panel Approves WRDA '05 Legislation

THE WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2005 (WRDA '05) could reach the Senate floor (barring any last-minute "holds") as early as next week. The legislation (S. 728) was introduced by Sen. Christopher S. (Kit) Bond (Missouri) and 16 co-sponsors earlier this month and approved last week by a unanimous voice vote in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Sen. James M. Jeffords (Vermont), the panel's ranking member, introduced three Corps "reform provisions" -- putting the Army Inspector General in charge of peer review, establishing a Water Resources Planning Council and setting strict mitigation standards. At the committee mark-up, only one of the amendments was offered, and it was defeated

on a 12-6 roll call vote. Sen. Jeffords complained that the committee had accepted all three amendments last year, but that bill (S. 2773) never reached the Senate floor.

OPPOSITION. The day before the Senate mark-up, Sen. Russell D. Feingold (Wisconsin) and Sen. John McCain (Arizona) introduced legislation (S. 753) including many of the same provisions as Sen. Jeffords offered in his amendments. And on the morning of the mark-up, in an editorial entitled "The Untouchable Corps," *The New York Times* lauded the Feingold-McCain proposal and attacked the pending WRDA bill as weakening "civilian control over the Corps." ♦



Award Winners. Congr. Jerry Costello (Illinois) and Congr. John J. (Jimmy) Duncan, Jr. (Tennessee), in center, hold WCI Leadership Service Awards. They are flanked by Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, left, Chief of Engineers, and Mark K. Knoy, WCI chairman. See story, Page 7.



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House Busy Writing Its WRDA Measure

The House of Representatives is still working on its WRDA bill, and the general expectation is that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee could mark up the legislation and take it to the House floor in about a month. Policy provisions in the bill will likely be similar those in H.R. 2557 which sailed through the House in September 2003 on a 412-8 vote. Generally enacted every two years, the last WRDA was approved in 2000.

At this time, House staffers are still wading through a list of some 900 requests submitted by Members. The requests include studies and modifications as well as authorizations for navigation, flood control, environmental restoration and other projects in their districts. All of the requests cannot be included in the legislation, of course, mainly because they fail to meet established criteria. ♦

Bill Authorizes New Locks on Upper Miss, Illinois

Among other projects, WRDA '05 would authorize navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration on the Upper

Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway. Non-structural and small-scale structural navigation measures would be undertaken initially, and new 1,200-ft. locks constructed at Locks 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25 on the Mississippi and at LaGrange and Peoria on the Illinois. The

initial cost would be \$1.795 billion for the navigation component (with half coming from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund) and \$1.58 billion for ecosystem restoration.

At his confirmation hearing earlier this month, Charles F. (Chuck) Conner, nominated and since confirmed as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, pledged that he would be an advocate for modernization of the Upper Missouri and Illinois Rivers. "We flat out have to be able to get our bulk agricultural commodities out of that portion of the Midwest and down to New Orleans or to a port of export, or we are absolutely dead in the water," he assured Sen. James M. Talent (Missouri), who brought up the issue. Mr. Conner is a former president of the Corn Refiners Assn. ♦



MARC 2000 Names Five 'Most Endangered Locks'

American Rivers has announced its annual ranking of what it considers the 10 "most endangered rivers," and not a single stream on the list is commercially navigable. MARC 2000 used the occasion to post its slate of the five top "endangered locks" on the Upper Mississippi River System.

The St. Louis-based organization said the locks requiring the most urgent attention were, in order, L&D 24 at Clarksville, Mo., L&D 12 at Dubuque, Ia., L&D 3 at Welch, Minn., L&D 19 at Keokuk, Ia., and L&D 27 at Granite City, Ill.

MARC 2000 said it based its list on the Inland Waterways Users Board's annual report, which was released last month. ♦



BARGE PICTURE. The 18th annual *Barge Fleet Profile* published by Informa Economics (formerly Sparks Companies, Inc.) of Memphis reports that 269 barges were built last year, many more than expected, and 421 barges were retired. As a result, the U.S. barge fleet continued to shrink, down by more than 2,000 from its record high six years ago. ♦

MISSOURI RIVER ISSUES DOMINATE SENATE HEARING

At the Senate Appropriations Committee's hearing on the Corps of Engineers' FY 2006 budget, the only controversy involved the agency's management of the Missouri River, aggravated because of severe drought. "I'm enormously frustrated," said Sen. Bryon Dorgan (North Dakota), charging that one-third of the river's water went "to protect" a downstream barge industry generating only \$7 million to \$8 million a year in net economic benefit.

But Sen. Bond responded that 65% of the Mississippi River's flow at St. Louis comes from the Missouri, keeping the Mississippi navigable year-round and resulting in economic gains to Midwest farmers totaling \$200 million. Assuring senators that he was "deeply sympathetic," Mr. Woodley said the Corps' support of Missouri River navigation was "statutorily created and Congressionally mandated."

UPDATE. At the House Appropriations hearing last month, Congr. Zack Wamp (Tennessee) announced that ground-breaking for a new Chickamauga Lock was scheduled this weekend, but it has been postponed because of a nearby Presidential visit. Funds for a construction start were included in the last two appropriations acts, but the President failed to request any funding for the lock in his recent budget submission because the project was still under OMB review. At last report, OMB had still not cleared the project. ♦



Mr. Bond

Users Board Recommends \$100 Million More for Operations & Maintenance

The Inland Waterways Users Board, in its report, urged Congress to "adequately fund" the inland waterways maintenance backlog to avoid a catastrophic failure. "If it intends to keep middle America's economic engine running," the report said Congress "must increase O&M for inland navigation by at least \$100 million and then ensure that future budgets, at a minimum, are increased at the rate of inflation."

The board also asked Congress to "protect low-use, tributary rivers with appropriate O&M funding."

In prioritizing projects, the Users Board ranked projects in three levels -- capstone, high priority and priority. In the capstone category, the report recommended completion of L&D 19 and L&D 27 on the Mississippi and McAlpine and Olmsted L&Ds on the Ohio. High-priority projects included Inner Harbor lock at New Orleans; Monongahela L&Ds 2, 3 and 4; Marmet on the Kanawha; Kentucky Lock on the Tennessee; and L&D 11 on the Mississippi. ♦

FOR THE RECORD. For the third month in a row, the U.S. merchandise trade balance worsened in February. Exports increased slightly to \$71.2 billion while imports edged upward to \$135.9 billion, creating a deficit of \$64.7 billion, up by 3.5% from January. ♦

Will House 'Guidance' Deny Corps Flexibility?



The Corps of Engineers is caught in a major flap over Congressional policies on "reprogramming" and "continuing contracts." The House Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, seeking tighter controls on out-year funding requirements, wants the Corps to exercise more discipline in spending appropriated funds. Meanwhile, the counterpart Senate subcommittee is pushing the Corps to continue to follow established policies on reprogramming funds from one project to another as needed and awarding continuing contracts on multi-year projects.

Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Chief of Engineers, and Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, Civil Works Director, have each held lengthy meetings with Congr. David L. Hobson (Ohio), chairman of the House subcommittee. He is encouraging the Corps to sharply restrict reprogramming so as to limit the size of repayments which must come from future appropriations. As for continuing contracts, the Chief has directed that they be submitted to headquarters for approval. ♦



Gen. Riley

Corps Officials Maintain Reprogramming is Vital

Questions about “reprogramming” came up at two Senate hearings earlier this month. If funds are reprogrammed from a project, John P. Woodley, Jr., Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), told Sen. John W. Warner (Virginia), “it must necessarily have been a reprogramming that took place because of some inability of the project to utilize the funds at the time.” Added Gen. Riley: “When we have reprogrammed funds away from a project that didn’t need it at the time, you have our commitment to put that funding back... when it is needed.” This

exchange took place before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

At a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing, Sen. Bond, who was presiding, asked the Corps’ witnesses, “Do you need more flexibility in reprogramming?” Mr. Woodley replied that “reprogramming flexibility is a very important part of our ability to manage day to day.” Gen. Strock agreed that the ability to “move resources around” was vital but said the guidance in last year’s omnibus bill was “sufficient” and “clear.” ♦

Omnibus Bill Provides Reprogramming Advice

In their report accompanying the FY 2005 omnibus appropriations bill, House and Senate conferees included “reprogramming guidance.” It permits reprogramming “a cumulative total of up to 15 percent of the appropriated funding level” between construction projects or programs, with approval of

both House and Senate Appropriations Committees required for reprogrammings in excess of \$7 million for individual projects or programs. Quarterly reports to both committees are mandated for reprogrammings in excess of \$4 million each.

Another stipulation: “All funds used to source reprogrammings... should be surplus to current year needs for that effort.” For operations and maintenance, the bill allows reprogramming up to 50 percent of the appropriated funding level, with committee approval -- required for reprogrammings in excess of \$10 million each. For general investigations, the threshold is 25 percent of appropriated funds with all reprogrammings in excess of \$500,000 each requiring the committees’ approvals. ♦

Congress, Corps Debate Continuing Contracts

In their report accompanying the last omnibus appropriations bill, conferees praised continuing contracts: “Allowing these large construction elements to be managed over several years without requiring contracts to be fully funded before construction begins affords the Corps the ability to more efficiently manage multiple construction contracts.” Still, the conferees expressed some misgivings. Continuing contracts, they said, “left the Corps open to charges that it has put contractors in charge of managing its funds.”

Earlier this year, the President’s budget said “all new contracts will include clauses to minimize termination penalties, cap cancellation fees, and ensure that the Corps is able to limit the amount of work performed under each contract each year to stay within the overall funding provided for the project during the fiscal year.” Accordingly, new continuing contracts will include options that can be exercised when funds become available in future years. ♦





Mr. Hobson

‘Minimize’ Reprogramming, House Panel Directs Corps

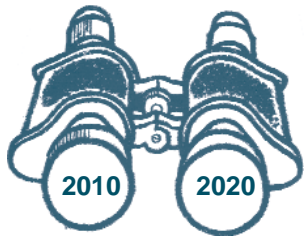
Asserting that the Corps has taken 32,000 “reprogramming actions” during the last two fiscal years, Congr. Hobson wants the agency to set a goal of one reprogramming per year per project, with all such actions reported to his subcommittee. In addition, he is trying to work out stricter guidelines to more closely monitor the money movements.

Two reprogramming requests recently forwarded to the House subcommittee have already been approved - \$425,000 for dredging a small-boat harbor in Hawaii and \$430,000 to continue studying a 12-ft. channel

on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System. Funds for the river project came from various studies in Alaska, Arkansas, Missouri and West Virginia, the Corps said.

In a cover letter to Mr. Woodley, Congr. Hobson and his ranking member, Congr. Peter J. Visclosky (Indiana), wrote, “The Corps is directed to minimize reprogramming actions, which have the effect of exacerbating the balances of repayments, and to reprogram funds that are excess to total project costs.” ♦

WATERWAYS ‘VISION’ NOT YET IN SIGHT



When the House Appropriations panel held its hearing last month on the Corps’ FY 2006 budget, Chmn. Hobson expressed frustration that the Corps’ five-year “waterways vision,” which he had requested a year earlier, was not ready. “The civil works program must be a coherent program of inter-related projects,” he said. “We can’t continue to hit or miss things as we’ve been doing over a period of years.”

Mr. Hobson wants a long-term vision for the waterways -- five years or even 20 years out. “What do we want the waterways to look like when we get done?” The Corps, he said, “needs to step up to the plate, take some initia-

tive, and articulate a bold and clear long-range development plan... [which] should serve as a guide for future Corps and Congressional budget decisions.” Mr. Woodley said the plan was then under study in his office. It has since been referred to OMB for additional review.

BENEFITS. Chmn. Hobson is also leaning on the Corps to do a better job of reporting the benefits of inland navigation programs. Rather than relying solely on transportation cost savings as a measure of a waterway’s public value, he has asked the Corps to evaluate other factors, such as modal safety, energy efficiency, and environmental advantages. ♦

Foundation Officers. Joseph H. Pyne of Houston, center, president and CEO of Kirby Corp., presided at a National Waterways Foundation meeting last month. He is the organization’s president. Others are R. Barry Palmer, left, secretary, and Peter H. Stephaich of Pittsburgh, right, treasurer, who is chairman and CEO of Campbell Transportation Co.



Waterways Council Elects Mr. Knoy as its Chairman

At its board meeting last month, the Waterways Council, Inc., named a new chairman -- Mark K. Knoy of Chesterfield, Mo., president and CEO of MEMCO Barge Line. He succeeded Berdon Lawrence of Houston, chairman of Kirby Corp., who was WCI's first chairman. Mr. Lawrence remains a board member.

Mr. Knoy, who was previously WCI's first vice chairman, is a vice president of American Electric Power and president of AEP's River Operations, which includes Elmwood Marine Services and Indiana & Michigan's River Transportation Division as well as MEMCO Barge Line. It operates 2,300 barges and 56 towboats, making it the third largest dry-bulk barge firm, plus a shipyard and six barge repair and cleaning facilities. ♦



WCI Leadership. Berdon Lawrence, left, our outgoing chairman, holds a clock which Mark Knoy, right, incoming chairman, presented to him at the recent board meeting.

Mr. Woodley's Nomination on 'Hold' in U.S. Senate

In quick succession last week, the Senate Committees on Armed Services and on the Environment and Public Works voted out the nomination of John P. Woodley, Jr., as the next Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works). But almost immediately, the two Alabama senators slapped a "hold" on his nomination.

Sens. Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions are upset over the Corps of Engineers' management of flows in two river basins shared by Georgia and Alabama, contending that too much water is being held back for metropolitan Atlanta's rapidly expanding municipal and recreational water needs. The lawmakers argue that actions taken by the Corps and Georgia "immediately and irreparably harm" Alabama's ability to access water from the Chattahoochee and Coosa-Tallapoosa River basins.

At an informational hearing earlier

this month before the Environment and Public Works Committee, the Alabama-Georgia water dispute didn't come up, but lawmakers representing upper Missouri River states complained bitterly about drought conditions there. Sen. Max Baucus (Montana) criticized the Corps for its "puzzling and utterly frustrating fixation" on supporting "a minor [downstream] navigation industry... at the expense of every other use of the river..." ♦



Gen. Riley's Nomination Finally Reaches the Senate

At the same Environment and Public Works hearing, senators approved the nomination of Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, the Civil Works Director, as president of the Mississippi River Commission. This is a position usually held by the Division Engineer of the Mississippi Valley Division, a post Gen. Riley left in June 2004. His Mississippi River Commission nomination, in fact, has been in the works for the last three years.

The Mississippi Valley Division's current Division Engineer, Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, is listed on the commission's website as its president-designee. Meanwhile, Gen. Riley's nomination for the position is pending on the Senate floor. ♦

CONGR. DUNCAN, COSTELLO ACCEPT WCI'S LEADERSHIP SERVICE AWARDS

At the Reception. At top, from left, Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Chief of Engineers; WCI Pres. R. Barry Palmer; Christopher J. Brescia, formerly of MARC 2000; and Thomas F. (Fred) Caver, Deputy Director of Civil Works. In the middle, Maj. Gen. Robert H. Griffin, Deputy Chief of Engineers, with Congr. John J. (Jimmy) Duncan, Jr. At bottom, Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, Director of Civil Works, and Mrs. Riley with John T. Anderson of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff.



WCI's Leadership Awards Dinner in Washington last month honored Congr. John J. (Jimmy) Duncan, Jr., (Tennessee) and Congr. Jerry F. Costello (Illinois). Mr. Duncan was chairman and Mr. Costello was ranking member of the House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee in the last Congress, and they were instrumental in developing WRDA legislation which their committee and the House subsequently approved

Former House Appropriations Committee Chmn. Bob Livingston (Louisiana) introduced the lawmakers for their short acceptance speeches. "Thank you for all the good things you do for this country," Congr. Duncan said. "You don't toot your horns enough." Almost 200 attended the dinner, including government officials, Congressional staffers and industry leaders. ♦



MR. BRESCIA HONORED. Christopher J. Brescia of St. Louis, who was president of MARC 2000 for 12 years until he resigned last December, was recognized for his service to the waterways community. At the WCI dinner, he was presented with a clock inscribed: "With appreciation and best wishes to a true friend of America's waterways." He is now director of government affairs for Smurfit-Stone Container Corp., one of the world's largest producers of paperboard and paper-based packaging. ♦

WCI AWARDS DINNER DRAWS INDUSTRY, AGENCY, HILL LEADERS

Renewing Friendships. At top, Gary P. LaGrange, left, of the Port of New Orleans with Congr. Jerry Costello. In the middle row, at left, WCI Chmn. Mark K. Knoy; John P. Woodley, Jr., Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), and Kirk Nagle, president of the American Assn. of Port Authorities. At right, Daniel P. Mecklenborg of Ingram Barge Co. with Andrew Riestler, WCI's vice president. Bottom, from left, former Congr. Bob Livingston, Congr. Costello, Mr. Palmer and Congr. Duncan.



WCI ANNUAL MEETING. The Waterways Council, Inc., will hold its 2005 annual meeting on Oct. 4-5 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago. Plans for the program will include a day-long seminar on recent developments affecting the water transportation industry and the outlook for barge-transported commodities. Meetings of the WCI membership and board of directors are scheduled on Oct. 5. ♦

Put Performance Measures in Dollars, Workshop Urged

For two days last month, about 150 Corps and waterways leaders from around the Nation gathered at a hotel in Springfield, Va., and discussed how to measure the benefits of navigation projects. It was the third Navigation Performance Workshop in the last year. All agreed that performance measures should go beyond simple statements of tons, ton-miles and transportation cost savings.

Paul N. Revis of Conway, Ark., executive director of the Ouachita River Valley Assn., urged the group to “reduce the metrics to dollar values” and to consider the dollar impact of waterways projects on industrial development, jobs, taxes, water recreation, agricultural conservation, cleaner air and water, fishing and hunting, etc. “It’s the value of what we do,” Michael B. White, the Corps chief of operations, told the group. “We’ve got to put that on the table for those who make decisions.” ♦

Workshop Scenes. At top, Richard T. (Rich) Worthington of the Corps of Engineers’ headquarters with Raymond Butler of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assn. Photo at right, from left, David L. Sanford of the American Assn. of Port Authorities, Frank L. Hamons of the Port of Baltimore and Robert M. Engler of the Engineering Research and Development Center (formerly WES). In the bottom row, at left, Mark R. Pointon of the Corps headquarters with Angela Premo of the South Atlantic Division. At right, Michael B. White, the Corps’ operations chief, with Barry W. Holliday, navigation business line manager, and James H.I. Weakley of the Lake Carriers’ Assn.



Out-Year Funding Cuts Could Cripple Navigation



“We have got to get more rigorous about the way we allocate our dollars to our programs,” Mr. White said at the Navigation Performance Workshop, adding that the Corps faces the reality that “no more money is coming into the program.” As proof, he cited budget numbers which he said the Corps had been given “to plan around, and what we see [shown in billions below] is a 3% reduction without inflation” in the years ahead:

FY '07	FY '08	FY '09	FY '10
\$4.237	\$4.234	\$4.235	\$4.170

“I know we are making sausage right out in the open,” Mr. White said. But when you take a look at worthy projects which are not funded, “it rips my heart out,” he said. “We have got to grow our ability” to invest wisely. And one way, of course, is to come up with metrics which more accurately weigh the public value of waterways investments. ♦

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Lingering Drought Impacts Missouri Basin

Drought conditions in the Upper Missouri River basin continue to worsen. To keep drinking water flowing to the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the Corps of Engineers is embarking on a \$6 million emergency plan to move the water intake about four miles. As water levels at Lake Oahe continue to fall, ancient artifacts of Plains people who lived there thousands of years ago are being exposed, and looting has become a problem.

In North Dakota, the Corps of Engineers delayed plans to start defoliating overgrown sandbars to create more nesting space for endangered least terns and threatened piping plovers. But plans are proceeding to release about 5,000 young, hatchery-raised pallid sturgeon into the Missouri River. With rain and snow-melt far below normal, reservoir levels are expected to continue to inch lower, raising the possibility that navigation on the lower river may be halted, possibly as early as this summer. ♦

Gulf Intracoastal Users Hold ‘Partnering’ Session

Almost 100 Corps of Engineers officials and representatives of barge shippers, carriers, and ports gathered in New Orleans last week to assess the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway’s maintenance needs. During a two-day “partnering workshop,” they reviewed the status of channels, locks, floodgates, mooring buoys and other facilities along the busy 1,135-mile-long waterway.

Operations managers from the Mobile, New Orleans and Galveston Districts made presentations on a wide range of maintenance problems. And attendees began the tedious process of prioritizing system-wide needs.

The workshop was coordinated by Raymond Butler, executive director of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assn.

BUOYS. The Galveston District maintains about a dozen “mooring basins” where barges can tie up while waiting out foul weather,

reconfiguring tows, or queuing for river-crossing assistance. The large buoys, which are often damaged or destroyed, cost about \$28,250 each, and replacements are contingent on funding.

To help ease the shortage, the Corps is testing a new, third-generation buoy (the “flying anvil”) which is tougher and costs only half as much. ♦



IN THE MAINSTREAM...



Mr. Barnes



Gen. Griffin

Michael B. (Mike) White, the Army Corps of Engineers' chief of operations, and Gerald W. (Jerry) Barnes of Cincinnati, director of programs for the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, plan to switch jobs this summer... Thomas W. (Tom) Waters, director of programs in the North Atlantic Division (now on duty in Iraq) and formerly chief of engineering-construction in the Nashville District, is in line to succeed William R. (Bill) Dawson, who is retiring at the end of June as chief of planning and policy in the Corps' headquarters...

Gary A. Loew of Dallas, programs director in the Southwestern Division, is to become chief of the program integration division on June 3, succeeding Robert F. (Rob) Vining, who is retiring... Maj. Gen. Robert H. Griffin, Deputy Chief of Engineers, plans to retire on Oct. 1. He was District Engineer at Mobile, Division Engineer of the Northwestern Division and also the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, and Director of Civil Works. His successor will be Brig. Gen. (P) Thomas P. Bostick, commander of the Persian Gulf Division since June 2004...

Brig. Gen. William T. Grisoli of Portland, Ore., Division Engineer of the Northwestern Division, will take over the North Atlantic Division this summer, succeeding Brig. Gen. Merdith W.B. (Bo) Temple, who will become director of military programs... Brig. Gen. Bruce A. Berwick is now Division Engineer of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, succeeding Brig. Gen. Stephen R. Hawkins, who retired last month... After 17 years as a program examiner in the water and power branch at OMB, Norman H. (Norm) Starler has joined the Corps' Institute for Water Resources as a staff economist...

James L. Adams, formerly assistant vice president of American Commercial Barge Lines and later vice president of CSX Transportation, is Kentucky's new Deputy

Secretary of Transportation... The South Louisiana Port Commission named Joel T. Chaisson, its legal counsel, as the port's new executive director, and last week he replaced Joseph Accardo, Jr., who became executive director of the Ports Assn. of Louisiana... The American Assn. of Port Authorities elected Bernard G. Groseclose, Jr., as its chairman-elect; he is president and CEO of the South Carolina State Ports Authority...

Mark D. Sickles, formerly executive director of the Dredging Contractors of America and now a Virginia state legislator, is back in the dredging industry as manager of business development for Weeks Marine, Inc... Jack N. Gerard, president of the National Mining Assn. since 2000, is to become CEO of the American Chemistry Council on July 1... Chelsea H. Maxwell, a former staffer on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, is the new legislative director of the National Wildlife Federation...

Steven A. Williams resigned as director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to become president of the Wildlife Management Institute, succeeding Dr. Rollin D. Sparrowe, who retired. Replacing Mr. Williams at the Fish and Wildlife Service was his deputy, Matthew J. Hogan, a former lobbyist for Safari Club International... The Propeller Club of the United States will honor Congr. William J. Jefferson (Louisiana) at its "Salute to Congress" dinner on May 10...

In memoriam. Robert L. Banks, 87, of Washington, chief executive of R.L. Banks & Associates, who was considered the dean of rail transportation consultants... Robert H. Huffman, Jr., 70, of St. Louis, CEO of Huffman Towing Co., Phoenix Towing Co., and Inland Waterways, Inc., until all were sold to MEMCO Barge Line, for whom he worked until earlier this year. To their families and friends, we extend our condolences. ♦

TOP PORTS. Based on total tonnage handled in 2003, America's top six ports were South Louisiana (also first in domestic cargo), Houston (first in foreign trade), New York/New Jersey, Beaumont, New Orleans and Huntington-Tristate (the largest U.S. shallow-draft port).

Other large inland ports, ranked by 2003 "trip ton-miles," were St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Memphis, and Cincinnati. The next five: St. Paul; Louisville; Mt. Vernon, Ind.; Tulsa; and Guntersville, Ala. If ranked by tons alone, the second five would be Louisville, St. Paul, Nashville, Mt. Vernon and Vicksburg. ♦

Barge Container Service Expands to Pittsburgh

Regularly scheduled container-on-barge service between Pittsburgh and New Orleans is to begin on May 2. In a partnership with Ingram Barge Co., CSG Co. of Leetsdale, Pa., just outside Pittsburgh, will offer twice monthly container shipments to the Crescent City. Congr. David L. Hobson (Ohio), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, plans to be in Pittsburgh for the inaugural sailing.

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission, which has conducted an aggressive five-year campaign to bring container-on-barge service to Pittsburgh, called the arrangement “the most trans-formative event” in the commission’s history, making southwestern Pennsylvania more attractive for distribution companies and riverfront land in the area more valuable for local industries. ♦

SEA LIONS BECOME ‘RIVER LIONS’

In the last few years, California sea lions have rebounded from near distinction to more than 200,000 prowling the West Coast. Now, the playful, torpedo-shaped mammals, known for their lion-like roar, have started exploring coastal rivers.

About 100 have managed to swim 140 miles up the Columbia River to Bonneville Dam and at least one has climbed the fish ladder, feasting on salmon in the passageway. To scare off the hungry sea lions, the Corps of Engineers plans to broadcast underwater high-pitched sounds, explode screaming fireworks and perhaps turn on high-pressure water hoses. But what if the water hoses make the sea lions stick around to play? ♦



ON THE HORIZON...

April 28-29, Warrior-Tombigbee Waterway Assn., Mobile... May 4-5, Marine Transportation System’s National Advisory Council, Sacramento, Calif... May 8-11, American Society of Civil Engineers’ Solutions to Coastal Disasters Conference, Charleston, S.C.... June 8-10, European Inland Waterway Navigation Conference, Szeged, Hungary... June 19-22, Western Dredging Assn. and Texas A&M Dredging Seminar, New Orleans... June 25-26, Great Rivers Towboat Festival, Grasfton, Ill... July 8-9, TRB’s Commodity Flow Survey Conference, Boston... Aug. 8-10, Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assn., Victoria, Tex... ♦



“GREEN” POWER. In the 1930s, the Tennessee Valley Authority electrified the rural South with cheap hydropower from its dams in the Tennessee Valley. Later, the agency began generating electricity from power plants burning coal, mostly brought in by barges, and also from nuclear facilities. Now, TVA is turning to wind power.

In 2000, it began operating three wind turbines on Buffalo Mountain near Oak Ridge, Tenn. TVA recently contracted to buy the power from 15 giant new windmills at the same site. Measuring 262 ft. from base to hub, with 135-ft. blades, the turbines produce enough power for about 3,800 homes. ♦



Congr. Bevill



Sen. Heflin

IN APPRECIATION

Alabama Remembers Congr. Bevill, Sen. Heflin

Within a period of little more than 24 hours last month, Alabama lost two waterways champions -- former Congr. Tom Bevill, who for 18 years chaired the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and former Sen. Howell T. Heflin, who annually rounded up Senate votes for waterways projects. Both have locks and dams named after them.

Before emerging on the national scene, Mr. Bevill served in the Alabama Legislature, and Mr. Heflin was Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, winning voter approval for sweeping reform of the state's judicial system. Even after he became a U.S. Senator, friends still called him "Judge Heflin." He was a nephew of the flamboyant J. Thomas (Cotton Tom) Heflin, who served 24 years in the House and Senate and is remembered as sponsor of the 1914 Senate resolution creating Mother's Day.

Soon after he was elected to the Senate, for the first of three terms, Sen. Heflin took the lead in button-holing his colleagues to save the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, beating back attempts by Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (New York) to stop funding its construction. In June 1980, the waterway survived by a margin of only 11 votes. Years later, the Gainesville L&D was named after Sen. Heflin and the Aliceville L&D, 41 miles upstream, after Congr. Bevill.

Known for his quick wit and folksy humor, Sen. Heflin left the Senate in 1997 -- on the same day as Mr. Bevill -- to return to his hometown of Tuscumbia on the Tennessee River in north Alabama, where townspeople were planning a celebration to honor him on May 7.

Mr. Bevill served 15 consecutive terms, from 1967 until 1997 in the House of Representatives. By virtue of his long-time service as chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee, Mr. Bevill was known as "Mr. Waterways" or sometimes as "Alabama's third senator." Former Alabama Gov. Don Siegelman called him "a builder" whose objective was to improve the "lives of people he represented through education, transportation and jobs."

After leaving the Congress, Mr. Bevill moved back to Jasper in the coal-mining region northwest of Birmingham and began practicing law with his son Don. He never fully recovered from triple by-pass heart surgery last summer. On March 28, a day after his 84th birthday on Easter Sunday, Mr. Bevill died at his home. The next day, less than three months shy of his own 84th birthday, Sen. Heflin suffered a fatal heart attack in Tuscumbia.

As lawmakers, both were known for their "neighborly" bipartisan approach to political issues. In an editorial, The Birmingham News said the state had lost "two giants [who] served this state with integrity and passion... It is hard to over-estimate the impact the two men had on Alabama's political landscape, or for that matter, on the state's actual landscape..."

On a personal note, both men were my long-time friends. While we were both students at the University of Alabama, Mr. Heflin was one of my first "students of the week" in a Sunday column I wrote for a Birmingham newspaper. And years later, when I worked in the Alabama Governor's office, Mr. Bevill was one of our floor leaders in the State Legislature. Our friendship continued after all of us had moved to Washington. I knew both of them as true public servants who loved their state and relished the opportunity to serve its people. They will be missed.

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