

Capitol Currents

May 18, 2007



Sen. Barbara Boxer (California), chairman of the Senate's authorizing committee, guided WRDA to Senate passage.



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WRDA SAILS THROUGH SENATE ON 91-4 VOTE

BY A RESOUNDING 91-TO-4 VOTE, the Senate has passed the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (WRDA '07). Passage of the \$13.9 billion measure did not come easily. It was on the Senate floor for five days, beginning last Thursday, with much of the time spent off the floor with lawmakers and committee staffs working through numerous amendments and proposed authorizations, negotiating bipartisan agreements.

Senate passage of WRDA '07 follows similar action in the House a month ago, also by a lopsided margin, and sets the stage for a House-Senate conference. This was where WRDA '06 bogged down, but supporters are optimistic that differences in the two pending bills can be resolved in the next few weeks.

"We had some tough moments here," Sen. Barbara Boxer (California), chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, admitted after the legislation sailed to an easy victory just before 6 p.m. on Wednesday. She praised the "amazing work" of the ranking minority member, Sen. James M. Inhofe (Oklahoma). On infrastructure issues, Sen. Boxer said, "there is really no daylight between us."

Together with Sen. Max Baucus (Montana), chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee, and the ranking minority member, Sen. Johnny Isakson (Georgia), the "big four" formed a pact, pledging not to accept any amendments or changes unless all four of them concurred.

OF MAJOR INTEREST, the legislation authorizes seven new locks on the Upper

Mississippi/Illinois Waterway, two projects on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway – a new lock at Bayou Sorrel and re-routing the Matagorda Bay channel, and scores of other long-delayed water projects.

Barely five hours before final passage, objections to six pending amendments still blocked Senate action. But the managers and staffs resolved the disputes. In the end, Louisiana was a big winner. The legislation endorses deauthorization of the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet ("Mr.-Go") and seeks to expedite construction of the Industrial Lock.

Four controversial amendments were defeated in roll-call votes. Included were provisions authorizing a commission to set priorities for Corps projects (which lost 22-69) and requiring the Corps to take climate change into account in planning projects (which got 51 votes but required 60 for passage). Moves to put housing for hurricane victims before a Morgan City visitors center lost 11-79 and to delay a San Diego area beach restoration until Sacramento levees were fixed also died 12-77. ♦

Second WRDA May Follow Soon

To get biennial authorization bills back on track, Congressional leaders have promised to initiate a follow-up WRDA as soon as the current legislation is finally enacted. This year's bills left out numerous pending projects. ♦

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SEN. FEINGOLD URGES PROJECT PRIORITIZATION



Sen. Feingold

Sen. Russell Feingold (Wisconsin) pushed an amendment to create a temporary bipartisan commission to make recommendations “on a process for prioritizing Corps projects” and also analyze projects authorized in the last 10 years or that are under construction and then “put similar types of projects into tiers that reflect their importance.” The commission, appointed by the Congress and the President, would “establish broad national priorities to apply to those projects,” Sen. Feingold said.

Chmn. Boxer opposed the Feingold prioritization amendment. “I believe Congress, not political appointees..., should retain this respon-

sibility,” she said. “It slows us down with political appointees, and I have a basic problem with that. It is adding layers of delay. We have already delayed this bill seven long years.”

Joining Sen. Feingold in sponsoring the prioritization amendment were five other lawmakers: Sens. Thomas R. Carper (Delaware), Tom Coburn (Oklahoma), Jim DeMint (South Carolina) and Judd Gregg and John E. Sununu (both New Hampshire). Sens. Coburn, Gregg, DeMint and Sununu cast the only votes against WRDA on final passage. ♦

‘Urgent Needs’ Met, Sen. Vitter Reports



Sen. Vitter

Both of Louisiana’s senators took to the Senate floor to praise the final Senate version of WRDA. “Through this bill, we have been able to meet a number of urgent needs of Louisiana,” Sen. David Vitter said. “For Louisiana, it is the largest number of projects we have ever had,” Sen. Mary Landrieu said.

Within six months after its enactment, the bill requires a final report on deauthorizing “Mr.-Go,” including a plan to “physically modify” the channel and restore its natural features. The bill sets a deadline of July 1, 2008, for submission of the final EIS on Industrial Lock, where work has been halted by a court injunction. Morganza-to-the-Gulf hurricane protection would also be authorized and planning for Category 5 hurricane protection would be expedited. ♦

Senators Turn Down ‘Warming’ Initiative

Sen. John Kerry (Massachusetts) offered an amendment directing the Corps to take warmer temperatures into account in planning future navigation, flood protection and coastal restoration projects. It was the first time the climate-change issue had reached the Senate floor, but the amendment fell nine votes short of the 60 votes needed for passage.

In a background paper, the Corps of Engineers said it was already studying implications of changes in “such critical areas” as precipitation patterns, sea-level rise resulting in the destruction of natural storm-surge buffers, and in hurricane frequencies, magnitudes and consequences. ♦

BUT ON THE GREAT LAKES. WRDA’s managers in the Senate failed to reach agreement on how to address Great Lakes dredging needs. Sen. Carl Levin (Michigan) blamed “an arbitrary one-million-ton cutoff for prioritizing projects” for causing many smaller ports to silt up. But the managers’ amendment merely calls on the Corps to expedite dredging of Great Lakes navigation channels to authorized depths. ♦



White House Opposes Pending WRDA Bills

In “statements of Administration policy,” the White House’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has criticized the Senate and House versions of WRDA ‘07 and served notice that “the Administration strongly opposes” both bills. “To maintain fiscal discipline,” OMB urged the Senate to restrict “the number of authorizations, including wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects,” which it said were “entirely outside” the Corps’ mission.

OMB also took issue with provisions limiting the non-Federal share of “certain safety-related project costs,” providing “credit” to non-Federal interests “for work

performed prior to signing of a project cooperation agreement,” and establishing “a costly commitment to the periodic nourishment of sand beaches.”

OMB also opposed Senate language calling for a judicial deference to be given to peer-review panel positions.

The statement said the Administration supported “expanded use” of external peer review panels but recommended that the Senate extend tenure of panels if “substantial” project changes are proposed, allow the Secretary of the Army to convene review panels, and establish a higher dollar threshold for triggering a mandatory review. ♦

House OKs WRDA By 369-Vote Margin

In mid-April, the House passed its version of WRDA ‘07 by a lopsided 394-25 vote. The legislation is similar to the measure approved two years ago, which died in House-Senate conference last fall. The new version (H.R. 1495) authorizes water resources projects which the Congressional Budget Office scored at \$13.2 billion.

Among some 56 projects having favorable Chief of Engineers’ reports included in the House bill were Upper Mississippi/Illinois Waterway improvements and restoration of its ecosystem and the Louisiana Coastal Area Ecosystem Restoration.

They were in WRDA ‘06, which formed the basis for this year’s project authorizations in both the House and Senate.

“We are dealing with a huge, pent-up backlog,” said Congr. James L. Oberstar, chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, noting that the last WRDA was passed in 2000. Congr. John Mica (Florida), the committee’s ranking minority member, agreed. “This authorization legislation,” he said, “combines the equivalent of all these years of backlog of projects.” ♦

BILL WOULD REVISE PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The House-passed WRDA ‘07 includes an amendment by Congr. Earl Blumenauer (Oregon) to update the Corps’ planning procedures. The current “principles and guidelines” were issued in 1983 by the U.S. Water Resources Council, now disbanded, for all Federal water agencies. “It needs to be revised,” Congr. Blumenauer said, “to reflect contemporary management paradigms, analytical methods, legislative directives, [and] social, economic and political realities.”

His amendment stipulates that the revised planning guidelines “provide for consideration of environmental restoration costs and benefits..., incorporate new techniques in risk and uncertainty analysis, eliminate biases and disincentives for nonstructural flood damage reduction projects..., incorporate new analytical techniques, [and] encourage... the restoration of aquatic ecosystems...”

Taking issue with the amendment, Congr. Richard H. Baker (Louisiana), ranking minority member on the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, expressed concern that the guidelines revision could “hand financial liability to local sponsors.” ♦





Amendment Opposes Dredging Restrictions

Among the five amendments agreed to during the House floor debate was one offered by Congr. Bart Stupak (Michigan) to ensure that harbor maintenance is funded on the basis of FY 2004 standards. The amendment is intended to revise current policy which excludes funding for harbors handling less than 1 million tons of commerce a year.

Great Lakes ports are particularly hard hit by the minimum-tonnage criteria.

“If we are going to truly care about waterborne commerce and transportation in this nation, we must remember that two-thirds of all commerce on our nation’s waterways start and begin at the small ports that the Army Corps no longer wishes to dredge and maintain,” Congr. Stupak told his colleagues. Congr. Peter Hoekstra (Michigan) and Congr. William Delahunt (Massachusetts) also spoke in favor of the amendment. ♦

New Upper Miss Locks Lauded in House, Senate

During the House debate, lawmakers referred to WRDA as “an investment in America.” In managing the bill on the House floor, Congr. Oberstar cited the need for larger locks on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway. He said 1,200-ft. locks could cut 60 hours off the round-trip from Iowa elevators to New Orleans, keeping U.S. grain exports competitive.

In the Senate debate, Sen. Christopher S. Bond (Missouri) strongly supported the Upper Miss/Illinois modernization. “This bill is a plan that gets the Corps back in the business of building for the future rather than haggling about predicting it,” he said.

To tout WRDA’s passage, Sen. Bond scheduled a press conference today at Melvin Price L&D and a visit to L&D 22, one of the 600-ft. locks that WRDA ‘07 would replace. ♦

USERS BOARD DECRIES ‘INEFFICIENT’ FUNDING



In a letter signed by all 11 of its members, the Inland Waterways Users Board said it was, “at the very least, premature” for the Administration to seek new waterway user fees. The board members said the inland water transportation industry would oppose any new revenue-raising legislation until the Corps’ “inefficient spending and contracting practices” are corrected.

The letter, which was addressed to John Paul Woodley, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), expressed disappointment that the Administration had not engaged the Users Board and waterways industry leadership “in a broad consideration of all the options available for dealing with the declining balance in the Inland Waterways Trust Fund.” ♦

BARGE FLEET. The U.S. inland barge fleet grew by 27 barges last year, the first increase in eight years, according to the annual *Barge Fleet Profile* published by Informa Economics, Inc., of Memphis. Now in its 20th year, the report said 713 barges were retired during 2006 while 740 were added to the fleet. Overall, the number of open and tank barges increased while the number of covered barges declined. ♦



Users Board Favors Multi-Year Contracts

The Inland Waterways Users Board wants the Administration and Congress to begin to examine what “structural changes” are needed in navigation project funding policies and procedures. The board supports “regularization” of project funding and the institution of multi-year construction

contracts before any increase in waterway user taxes or fees is considered.

Under the current system, with funding frequently dependent on short-term Congressional resolutions, “the Corps too often is required to execute the inland waterway construction program in a very inefficient and occasionally wasteful manner,” the report said. It quoted Larry J. Bibelhauser, project manager for the Olmsted L&D, as estimating that stop-and-go funding “will cost Olmsted five years [in added construction time] and in excess of \$229.5 million over the life of the project.”

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS. Project managers should be “fully accountable,” the board urged, “for scheduling, cost control, and expenditures of appropriated fund.” The board also called on officials to investigate reasons for an unexplained 11.5% drop in user tax revenues in 2006. Also, the board said payments for waterway system damages should be credited to the Corps’ civil works account rather than the Treasury’s general fund. ♦

Users Board Ranks Navigation Projects

In its recent annual report, the Users Board listed its priority construction and major rehabilitation projects. In all, there were 28 projects in four categories – “capstone,” “high priority,” “priority PED projects and studies,” and “complete expeditiously.”

In the **capstone** category: L&Ds 19 and 27 on the Mississippi, both major rehabs; McAlpine and Olmsted L&Ds on the Ohio; both construction, and L&D 3 on the Mississippi, another major rehab.

High priority projects: L&Ds 2, 3 and 4 on the Monongahela, Marmet L&D on the Kanawha, and Kentucky L&D on the Tennessee, all construction; L&D 11 on the Mississippi, Markland and Emsworth L&Ds on the Ohio, and Lockport Pool on the Illinois, all rehabs; and Chickamauga L&D on the Tennessee and John T. Myers L&D on the Ohio, both construction.

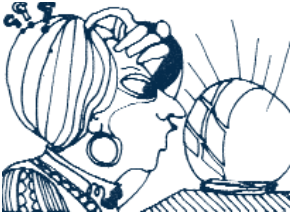
Navigation improvements on the Upper Mississippi/Illinois Waterway were the top-priority among **PED projects**, followed by Greenup L&D on the Ohio, Bayou Sorrel and Calcasieu Locks on the Gulf Intracoastal, GIWW-Texas, and three **studies**: Lower Monumental and John Day L&Ds on the Columbia and Upper Ohio Navigation. ♦



RAIL SUBSIDY. A canal company in the English Midlands is subsidizing the local railroad in an effort to boost its boat rental business. Oxfordshire Narrowboats, located on the historic Oxford Canal constructed in the late 1700s, is underwriting the First Great Western Railway’s summer weekend passenger service.

It hopes Saturday and Sunday trains will encourage more city dwellers to spend a leisurely weekend on the canal. The canal company also operates a bicycle rental, supply shop and bistro. The local Ramblers Assn. is supporting the initiative. ♦

Barge Cargo 'Flat,' Consultants Report



A “provocative” paper commissioned by the Corps of Engineers’ Institute for Water Resources (IWR) paints a grim picture for the future of inland waterways transportation. The Tioga Group, a five-member consulting firm, said shallow-draft barge freight volume had been “essentially flat” since 1995 and that major commodity movements were not expected “to either grow or decline dramatically” in the years ahead.

“The greatest concern appears to be funding maintenance and modernization of infrastructure rather than accommodating growth,” Tioga reported. “Inland waterway projects to increase or maintain capacity for commerce will be difficult to authorize and slow to implement.”

The consultants also predicted that growth of short-sea shipping would be “modest and restricted to a few favorable niches” and that new maritime technology such as electronic navigation aids would have minimal impacts on commerce. ♦

Trends Report ‘Provokes’ Stakeholder Discussion

The Tioga Group’s report was discussed last month at a “provocation session” for navigation industry stakeholders. The exercise was part of an on-going “Future Directions” Initiative covering each of the Corps’ principal missions. “Tackling 21st Century water transportation problems effectively requires an anticipatory mindset, the ability to understand current and emerging trends, [and] appreciation of the risks posed by uncertainties...,” said Robert A. Pietrowsky, IWR’s director.

Daniel S. Smith of Moraga, Calif., a principal in the Tioga Group, made a PowerPoint presentation on his firm’s “trends and outlook.” A discussion followed, led by James M. Haussener, executive director of the California Marine Affairs and Navigation Conference; Christina (Tina) Casgar of DOT’s intermodal office; and Ian A. Mathis, IWR senior economist. Norman H. Starler, another IWR economist and former OMB staffer, made the closing remarks. He heads the agency’s Future Directions Initiative. ♦

SENATE CONFIRMS GEN. VAN ANTWERP AS CHIEF



Senate committee witness. Gen. Van Antwerp testifies.

Only hours after Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock relinquished command yesterday as the 51st Chief of Engineers at an elaborate Fort Myers ceremony, the Senate finally confirmed Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, Jr., as the 52nd Chief. He assumed his new office this morning. The last “hold” on his nomination, by an Alabama senator over low-water management in the Coosa-Tallapoosa basin, was dropped earlier this week.

After a hearing before the Environment and Public Works Committee on April 18 failed to resolve the concerns of Louisiana’s two senators, Gen. Van Antwerp agreed to visit the state later that week. Afterward, he said his visit had enabled him to gain “a better understanding” of the importance of the Corps’ mission in southern Louisiana. ♦

CONSOL ENERGY, INC., CHRISTENS THE *MV R. BARRY PALMER*

Towboat gets a new name.
 In a ceremony last month in Pittsburgh, CONSOL Energy, Inc., named one of its towboats for the Waterways Council's president and CEO, R. Barry Palmer. At left, he is shown with WCI Chmn. Mark K. Noy, president and CEO of AEP MEMCO, LLC. In the bottom photo, from left, are W. Deane Orr, general manager of CONSOL's river division; James C. Grech, the firm's senior vice president-marketing; Mr. Palmer; J. Brett Harvey, CONSOL's president and CEO; and David W. Kreutzer, who managed the river division before he retired in 1999.



TRUST FUND BALANCES. In the first six months of this fiscal year, the Inland Waterways Trust Fund reported revenues of \$45.4 million (\$40.7 million from fuel taxes and the rest in interest) and transfers to the Corps of Engineers to pay one-half of inland navigation construction and major rehabilitation expenditures of \$65.7 million, leaving a balance in the Trust Fund of \$247.5 million.

During the same period, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund's revenues totaled \$687.7 million (with \$478.5 million from the tax on imports) and outlays of \$741 million to the Corps of Engineers and \$19.2 million to other agencies, resulting in a Trust Fund balance of \$3.6 billion. ♦

IN THE MAINSTREAM...



Dr. Galloway

The American Waterways Operators has a new chairman: Royce D. Wilken of Decatur, Ill., president of American River Transportation Co., a subsidiary of Archer-Daniels-Midland Co.... The American Assn. of Port Authorities' next chairman will be Kenneth B. (Ken) O'Hallaren, executive director of the Port of Longview, Wash., who will take office at the fall convention....

Wayne Parrish, a transportation planner for the Mississippi DOT for the last 14 years, is now director of his agency's ports and waterways division, a post he held briefly in 2001. He succeeds James E. Moak, Jr., who retired... Robert G. (Rob) Fuller, chief of operations for the Corps' Louisville District, is retiring...

Dr. Gerald E. Galloway, Jr., professor of engineering at the University of Maryland, has joined the Corps' Institute for Water Resources (IWR) as its 2007 Maass-White Visiting Scholar. He served 38 years in the Corps of Engineers, retiring as a brigadier general...

Engineering News-Record presented its 2007 Award of Excellence to Dr. Lewis E. Link, Jr., senior research engineer at the University of Maryland, who headed the Interagency Performance Evaluation Task Force which probed the Hurricane Katrina disaster. In 1996-2002, he was the Corps'

research and development director and chief scientific advisor...

William N. (Buck) Lay of Paducah, founder and president of B&H Towing, Inc., has turned over the company's presidency to his son, Keith Lay, formerly general manager...

Edward M. Emmett, a former president of the National Industrial Traffic League (1994-2003), is now a Texas judge, appointed to fill a vacancy on the Harris County Commissioners Court in Houston...

The President has nominated Robert L. (Lyle) Laverty, formerly director of Colorado State Parks, as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. Julie A. MacDonald, who had served in the post for the last 18 months, resigned earlier this month...

IN MEMORIAM. Thelma F. Parker, 90, of Tuscaloosa, a former high school teacher whose late husband, Tim Parker, Sr., founded Parker Towing Co. in the 1930s, mother of Tim Parker, Jr., now the company's president., and mother-in-law of Charles A. Haun, Jr., the company's executive vice president... Orin E. Atkins, 82, who was president, CEO and later chairman of Ashland Oil, Inc., now Ashland Inc., from 1965 to 1982. To their families and friends, we express our condolences. ♦



Dr. Link

PIANC Secretary honored.
At PIANC's recent meeting in India, John P. Woodley, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), right, awarded a bronze medal to Bruce Lambert, Secretary of the U.S. Section for the last two years. He is leaving the Institute for Water Resources, which serves as PIANC's secretariat, to take another position.



Corps Reassigns District Engineers



Col. Jorns



Lt. Col. Lee



Lt. Col. Lindstrom

In June and July, newly named commanders will be taking over about two dozen of the Corps of Engineers' Districts. Among them:

CHARLESTON: Lt. Col. Joseph Jordan vice (in place of) Lt. Col. Edward R. Fleming. **KANSAS CITY:** Col. Roger A. Wilson, Jr., vice Col. Michael A. Rossi. **LITTLE ROCK:** Col. Donald Jackson vice Col. Wally Z. Walters.

LOS ANGELES: Col. Thomas H. Magness vice Col. Alex C. Dornstauder.

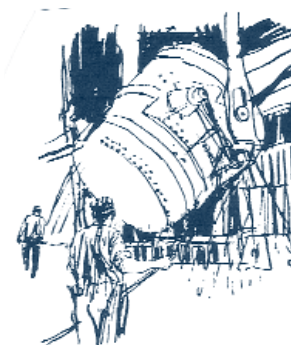
MEMPHIS: Col. Thomas P. Smith vice Col. Charles O. Smithers. **MOBILE:** Col. Byron G. Jorns vice Col. Peter F. Taylor, Jr. (retiring). **NASHVILLE:** Lt. Col. Bernard

Lindstrom vice Lt. Col. Steven J. Roemhildt. **NEW ORLEANS:** Lt. Col.(P) Alvin B. Lee vice Col. Richard P. Wagenaar (retiring).

PITTSBURGH: Col. Michael P. Crall vice Col. Stephen L. Hill (to Gulf Region South, Iraq). **ST. PAUL:** Col. Jonathon L. Christensen Vice Col. Michael F. Pfenning (to Gulf Region North, Iraq).

SACRAMENTO: Lt. Col. Laurence Farrell vice Lt. Col. Craig W. Kiley.

SAVANNAH: Col. Edward J. Kertis vice Col. Mark S. Held (retiring). **TULSA:** Col. Anthony C. Funkhouser vice Col. Miroslav P. Kurka. **VICKSBURG:** Col. Michael C. Wehr vice Col. Anthony C. Vesay (retiring). ♦



River Site in Alabama Selected for New Steel Mill

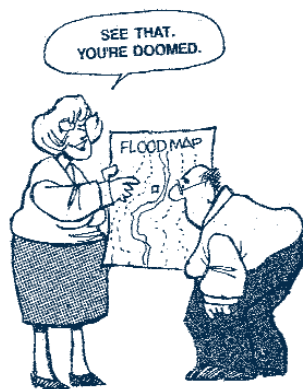
Germany's leading steel producer, ThyssenKrupp AG of Dusseldorf, has picked a site on the Tombigbee River about 25 miles north of Mobile for its new \$4.19 billion North American steel mill. Some 20 states wanted the plant, one of the largest private industrial projects in U.S. history, but the competition came down to two waterways sites – one near Mount Vernon, Ala., and another on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

The steelmaker announced its decision last week just hours after the Alabama Legislature approved a package of tax breaks matching Louisiana's incentives. Officials said the steel mill would employ 2,700 workers when it becomes operational in 2010 and produce 4.5 million metric tons of carbon steel and another million tons of stainless steel annually. The plant will process slabs from its new steel works near Rio de Janeiro, scheduled to start production in 2009. ♦

Plan Would Reroute Mississippi Channel

Louisiana officials are working on a \$50 billion plan to divert water from the lower Mississippi River at more than a dozen locations, mostly below New Orleans, to stop the loss of some 24 square miles of wetlands annually. “This will be one of the great engineering challenges of the 21st Century, said Denise J. Reed, a scientist at the University of New Orleans.

The diversions would carry sediment-laden Mississippi River water into eroding low-lying areas. The plan also calls for mechanically pumping sediment to rebuild coastal marshes and barrier islands. Another, more controversial element of the current planning involves the relocation of the Mississippi River’s main shipping channel, sending it at right angles from the river near its mouth through new locks and channels to the Gulf of Mexico. ♦



FEMA Criticized for Flood Warning

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is attaching warnings to its flood insurance-rate maps that any levee can fail and urging property owners in river valleys to buy flood insurance. FEMA’s action has come under intense criticism in the Lower Mississippi Valley, where there have been no mainline levee failures since 1928 when Congress directed the Corps of Engineers to build 3,500 miles of levees, diversion channels and floodways.

M.V. Williams, chairman of the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Assn.’s executive committee, said the FEMA warning “will frighten lenders and companies looking for industrial sites and impact crop loans as well as causing millions of dollars to be spent for unnecessary flood insurance premiums.” But a FEMA spokesman said “there’s always going to be an event that exceeds the originally constructed strength of a levee.” ♦

ON THE HORIZON...

May 27-June 1, World Dredging Congress, Lake Buena Vista, Fla.... June 23-24, Great Rivers Towboat Festival, Grafton, Ill....

July 7-9, TRB Summer Conference, Chicago... July 30-31, Inland Waterways Users Board, Louisville... Aug. 8-10, Mississippi Water Resources Assn., Jackson...



Aug. 17-24, Mississippi River Commission’s low-water inspection trip aboard the *Mv Mississippi*. Public meetings, all at 9:00 a.m., at St. Louis on Aug. 17, Cape Girardeau on Aug. 20, Memphis on Aug. 21, Greenville on Aug. 22, and Morgan City on Aug. 24...

Aug. 22-24, Gulf Intracoastal Canal Assn., New Orleans... Aug. 28-30, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Opportunities Conference, Point Clear, Ala.... Sept. 16-19, SmartRivers international conference, Louisville... Sept. 30-Oct. 4, American Assn. of Port Authorities, Norfolk...

Oct. 1-3, Waterways Council’s Annual Meeting and Waterways Symposium, Four Seasons Hotel, Houston... Oct. 2-5, Propeller Club international convention, Athens, Greece... Nov. 7-8, National Waterways Conference, Mobile... Nov. 28-30, International WorkBoat Show, New Orleans... Dec. 6-8, Mississippi Valley Flood Control Assn., New Orleans... ♦

MORE CORN. USDA expects farmers to plant 90.5 million acres of corn this year, 15% more than last year – a sharp increase in corn acreage spurred by ethanol-induced demand. ♦

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY RECEPTION DRAWS AREA LAWMAKERS



Springtime on Capitol Hill. Here are scenes from the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Assn.'s annual reception honoring Members of Congress. Photo 1: Congr. Leonard L. Boswell (Iowa), the association's president, with Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Chief of Engineers. Photo 2: Congr. Marion Berry (Arkansas), left, and James R. (Randy) Richardson of the Port of Memphis, who is IRPT's president. Photo 3: Congr. Roger Wicker (Mississippi), center, with Sarah Higdon of his staff and Thomas Griffith, administrator of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Authority. Photo 4: Jennifer A. Greer, chief of the Corps' future directions branch, and Roger K. Cockrell of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee staff. Photo 5: Congr. Mike Ross (Arkansas) with Sam E. Angel of Lake Village, Ark., a member of the Mississippi River Commission.



PIANC HOLDS ITS FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN INDIA



Meeting on the Arabian Sea. A gaily caparisoned elephant (Photo 1) greeted delegates arriving in Cochin, India, last month for PIANC's annual meeting. They included (Photo 2) Maj. Gen. Don T. Riley, the Corps' Director of Civil Works. Photo 3: Mrs. Bruce (Suzie) Lambert, whose husband is secretary of PIANC's U.S. Section. Photo 4: Thomas H. Wakeman of the Port of New York and New Jersey, Eastern regional vice president of the U.S. Section. Photo 5: Shiv Batra of Bellevue, Wash., president of INCA Engineers, Inc., who is a PIANC international vice president.

PIANC was formerly known as the International Navigation Assn.

River inspection trip.

Aboard an Ingram Barge Co. towboat, Congr. Jason Altmire (Pennsylvania) toured a section of the upper Ohio River last month with the Port of Pittsburgh Commission and waterway industry representatives. In this photo, with a FirstEnergy power plant in the background, are James G. Mellody, FirstEnergy's fuel procurement director; Congr. Altmire; and Peter H. Stephaich, chairman of Campbell Transportation Co.



Court Ruling Renews Dam Removal Debate

The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has ignited new debate over the possible removal of dams on the Snake-Columbia River System. In upholding a lower court ruling, the appeals court agreed that the National Marine Fisheries Service must rewrite its “biological opinion” which found that the dams did not jeopardize threatened salmon species.

“At its core,” Judge Sidney R. Thomas wrote in his opinion for the court, the biological opinion “amounted to little more than an analytical slight of hand manipulating the variables to achieve a ‘no jeopardy’ finding.” The court said the newly mandated biological opinion, the agency’s fourth, must take into account not only the survival of salmon species but also their recovery.

ON THE MENU? The fight to save wild salmon in the Pacific Northwest has opened a new front – in the kitchen. About 200 chefs, many from elite restaurants, signed a letter endorsing legislation authorizing an updated GAO study on removing “outdated, harmful dams” on the Columbia-Snake and Klamath Rivers. “Wild salmon is one of the few wild foods we still see on the dinner table,” the chefs’ letter said. “But only a long-term

commitment to protecting and restoring salmon habitat will ensure that Pacific wild salmon remains a natural resource.” ♦

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Vol. 3, No. 6

No ‘Spring Rise’ on Missouri River

Heavy rains earlier this month sent the Missouri River over its banks in Nebraska and Missouri, evoking memories of the devastating 1993 flood. Hundreds were forced from their homes, and water inundated thousands of acres of newly planted corn and other crops.

The Corps said the rainfall added up to 1.9 feet of water to the Fort Peck, Oahe and Fort Randall Reservoirs. The reservoir rise wasn’t enough, however, to allow a “spring rise” which had been scheduled for May. An earlier March rise was also cancelled. But the river was so high that the Coast Guard stopped navigation for a while on the Omaha-Kansas City stretch. ♦