



WATERWAYS
COUNCIL, INC.

Marmet Locks & Dams



Waterways Council, Inc. is the national public policy organization advocating a modern and well-maintained national system of ports and inland waterways.



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Location

Kanawha River Mile 67.7, in Marmet, West Virginia (Kanawha County); approximately 9 miles above Charleston, West Virginia.

Existing Structures

One 800' x 110' main chamber, operational in 2008, and twin 56' x 360' lock chambers which will be used as backup.

Annual Tonnage and Projected Traffic Growth

In 2008, 15.5 million tons of commerce worth over \$781 million transited the Marmet Locks and Dam; 94% of this tonnage was coal. Other important commodities included aggregates and petroleum products. Projected Traffic Growth is 27 million tons by 2030. (source: *Ohio River Main Stem Systems Study – Interim Feasibility Report*)

Summary of Problems

Marmet Locks and Dam, built in 1934, are currently the busiest locks in the Ohio River System in terms of commercial lockage cuts. Small twin 360'x 56' chambers can process only one modern jumbo (195'- 200' x 35') barge at a time. Future traffic growth, age and deterioration of the present facilities are just some of the problems. Congestion has increased since the opening of the new Winfield Lock in 1997.

Corps of Engineers Actions

The new lock chamber became operational in 2008 with all construction completed in 2009. The last Appropriation for the project was \$9 million in FY 09.

Marmet Locks and Dam

Project Description

Marmet Locks and Dam is located in Kanawha County near Belle, West Virginia, on the Kanawha River approximately 68 miles above its confluence with the Ohio River. The project includes the construction of an additional 110 foot x 800 foot lock on the right descending bank landward of the existing locks. The plan includes the continued use of both existing 56 foot by 360 foot lock chambers as auxiliary locks. The existing dam and the hydroelectric power plant will also remain in operation. The new lock was operational in January 2008. Activities related to the lock construction were scheduled to be completed in FY 2009. A rehabilitation of the dam was also required.

Transportation Importance to the System

Marmet Locks and Dam is a key component of the transportation infrastructure linking the Kanawha Valley, an important chemical and coal producing area, to its raw materials supply and product markets. During 2008 15.5 million tons of traffic locked through Marmet. Coal, the major commodity shipped on the Kanawha River, accounted for 93 percent of the total Marmet tonnage. Marmet's small-sized 56' x 360' chambers and advanced age presented performance concerns that are addressed with a new, larger lock chamber. Processing times through Marmet will decrease from 4.5 hours per tow to 45 minutes, while the tonnage processed in a lockage will increase from 7,500 tons in a 5-barge tow to 16,500 tons in an 11 barge tow, making the Kanawha Basin's highly valued low sulfur, high Btu coals more affordable for electric utilities and steel producers.

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