

CAPITOL CURRENTS

March 19, 2021

**NEW
LOOK!**

Capitol Currents has
gotten a facelift with
a new design!

INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK...AGAIN?

By Tracy Zea, President/CEO, Waterways Council, Inc.

It is no secret that the 117th Congress has continued to prioritize COVID-19 relief to develop the nearly \$2 trillion package that just passed both the House and Senate. With final passage of the COVID package, members of Congress and the Administration will shift their attention toward an economic recovery package that will largely feature a comprehensive infrastructure component, including a focus on America's transportation sector.

While many of us have been jaded over the last several years by the promise of a potential infrastructure package moving forward (myself included), this time feels different. Admittedly, there are still a lot of details to be ironed out. For instance, will the Administration put forth a detailed plan or will Congress take the lead? What is the overall price tag of a bill, and how will it be funded? Will this package be bipartisan or will budget reconciliation be used again to advance a largely partisan bill? And what exactly will "infrastructure" be defined as in this bill?

Earlier this month, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) released its 2021 infrastructure report card, and the inland waterways received a D+.



President Biden and Vice President Harris met at the White House March 4 with Congressional leaders to discuss the elements of a potential infrastructure package. Photo courtesy of Reuters.

This does not come as a surprise. While there has been improved investment in the waterways, and recent policy changes that will help improve the overall lock and dam infrastructure, the fact remains that most locks on the system are well past their 50-year design life and are in need of modernization to more efficiently manage the size of today's tows laden with America's building block commodities.

Over the last year-and-a-half, the Inland Waterways Users Board (IWUB) has been working with the Corps of Engineers to update the Capital

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INFRASTRUCTURE WEEK...AGAIN?

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Investment Strategy (CIS) and make recommendations to Congress on the order projects should be considered to begin construction. WCI believes the CIS should serve as a playbook for the Administration and Congress while they develop an infrastructure package because the IWUB provides a boots-on-the-ground perspective that many Washington bureaucrats could not possibly have. There is currently a portfolio of navigation projects valued at \$7.1 billion that can be constructed if funding is provided, and it is imperative that the Administration and Congress continue to rely on the IWUB as a resource for prioritizing lock modernization (see article on page 5 for status of the IWUB).

The inland waterways transportation infrastructure portfolio, specifically locks, makes a very good case for their inclusion in a comprehensive infrastructure package. According to the National Waterways Foundation (NWF), barges provide the most fuel-efficient surface mode of transportation. Our industry’s one-ton of cargo moving 647 ton-miles per-gallon of fuel tops the other key surface modes (145 ton-miles for truck, and 477 ton-miles for locomotives). Lock modernization will not only limit the number of double cuts and reduce idle time for towboats but will also continue to bolster the efficiency and environmental benefits of inland waterways transportation.

In addition to the efficiency benefits, lock modernization is also a national economic generator and job creator. According to the NWF, if lock and dam modernization were to be completed in 10 years rather than the current estimate of more than 20 years, we would not only sustain the nearly 541,000 full-time jobs and \$21 billion in annual incomes, but also add 35,000 jobs and create \$14 billion in additional incomes over 10 years.

While an infrastructure package has been pending for the past several years, it has been to no real avail. The good news is that we are not completely starting from scratch. Last year, the House Majority (Democrats) introduced and passed an infrastructure package that included full federal funding of \$3 billion for inland waterways construction, in addition to a change in the cost-share for IWTF projects. While last year’s effort does not guarantee that lock modernization will be included in a potential infrastructure package, the fact that inland waterways were included may be a harbinger for locks to be included in the next effort. As we continue to work with elected leaders, our hope is that infrastructure can be a bipartisan issue, with legislation addressing the current needs of the system, and not just another weekly talking point. ❖

Corps of Engineers Navigation Program Needs **\$4.33B** for FY22

American ports and inland waterways are critical for job creation, propelling the economy and ensuring U.S. competitiveness.

	FY 2022 REQS.	FY 2021 OMNIBUS
COASTAL NAVIGATION	\$3.03 B	\$2.479 B
Investigations	\$25 M	\$14 M
Construction	\$905 M	\$794 M
Operations & Maintenance	\$2.05 B	\$1.621 B
Donor & Energy Ports	\$50 M	\$50 M
INLAND NAVIGATION	\$1.255 B	\$1.227 B
Investigations	\$25 M	\$25 M
Construction	\$330 M	\$323 M
Operations & Maintenance	\$900 M	\$879 M
MS River & Tributaries	\$45 M	\$41 M
TOTAL NAVIGATION	\$4.33 B	\$3.747 B

NAV One: In addition to WCI developing its own priorities for 2021, we are coordinating with other marine organizations to develop a single FY22 Corps Navigation Program Funding Request. WRDA 2020 made several funding changes that were considered in this request including a Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) provision that provides an incentive for appropriators to fund the full prior fiscal year HMT revenues (estimated to be \$1.906 billion and \$600 million of unspent HMT tax collections), a total of \$2.506 billion. Additionally, inland navigation construction projects are now funded at 65% General Revenues/35% Inland Waterways Trust Fund, a provision WCI advocated extensively for.

OF ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROMISE:

THE NAVIGATION AND ECOSYSTEM SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM (NESP)

By Edward E. Belk, Jr., PE, Programs Director for the Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Nestled in the quiet and verdant valleys of the Upper Midwest flows a sinuous liquid interstate, a vital national resource critical to the economic and environmental security of our Nation. The Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) perfectly overlays the most productive food-producing agricultural region on the planet, providing for the efficient waterborne transport of life-sustaining global commodities to and from the area.

More than 60% of Midwestern corn and soybeans are exported to world markets each year. WCI and its diverse membership serve a critical role in leveraging the system to efficiently link our vast and highly productive Midwest breadbasket with the rest of the world. As the U.S. commercial navigation industry plies that water interstate day-in and day-out, it constitutes a key component of the nation's multimodal bulk commodity transportation system. And it does so in a highly efficient manner with lower greenhouse gas emissions.

However, a combination of aging waterways infrastructure, demand for U.S. grain, competitive global markets and the critical need for ecological resilience collectively underscore the importance of reliable performance and wise investment in the UMR-IWW system. To that end, Congress authorized construction of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 as a dual-purpose program for the integrated and sustainable management of the UMR-IWW. Congress also continues to make



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Mississippi Valley Division

bold investments in our nation's inland waterways infrastructure that, when coupled with industry contributions through the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, have enabled the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to both sustain high performance levels of our existing lock and dam portfolio while also making prudent investments in critical new lock and dam infrastructure. For NESP, in particular, the Corps has developed construction-ready components as the project awaits a construction new-start decision.

Implementing NESP will improve UMR-IWW system capacity and reduce costly delays through the construction of seven new 1,200-foot lock chambers across the system. The new lock chambers will increase system reliability and resilience by eliminating the risk of a major component failure halting all navigation through existing single-chamber locks. It will dramatically increase efficiency by decreasing lockage times as new larger locks accommodate larger tows. Dual locks also help ensure traffic continues to flow even during major repairs on one chamber. In addition to new 1200-foot locks, navigation improvements such as new mooring cells at multiple locations will allow tows to wait closer to the lock

and off the riverbank, improving safety and reducing shoreline erosion.

The UMR-IWW is also a critical national environmental resource as more than 11 million Americans visit each year to boat, camp, hunt, hike, and engage in other recreational activities. The system is home to 25 percent of North America's fish species while also serving as a globally important flyway for 40 percent of North America's migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. The UMR-IWW ecosystem is comprised of 2.7 million acres of bottomland forest, islands, backwaters, side channels and wetlands, all of which support more than 300 bird species, 57 mammal species, 45 amphibian and reptile species, 150 fish species and nearly 50 mussel species. NESP will restore and enhance the ecosystem by targeting critical areas such as floodplain restoration, island building, backwater restoration, fish passage, water level management, and island and shoreline protection.

The Corps is not alone in recognizing the value of NESP. In a recent report (2019), the U.S. Department of Agriculture described NESP as essential for the competitiveness of this Midwest agricultural corridor, with both U.S. agriculture and the broader American economy dependent on inland waterways. Fifty-two Members of Congress recently co-signed correspondence urging a construction new start for NESP, suggesting strong bipartisan Congressional support. And in a series of five national virtual interagency listening sessions last year,

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OF ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROMISE

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over 200 of our waterways partners underscored the critical importance of waterways modernization and investment, with NESP specifically highlighted as a key national priority.

Finally, coupling NESP with ongoing operations by the Corps to deepen the Lower Mississippi River ship channel to 50-feet, Midwest bulk grain movements will soon become even more competitive in global markets.

From helping the American farmer compete in global markets, to giving Americans resilient infrastructure that provides safer and more reliable shipping methods, to protecting and restoring the environment while creating new jobs, NESP is vital to the Nation. The Corps is excited about the promise of NESP and remains committed to working closely with our commercial navigation partners, the Administration and Congress to move it forward. ❖

KEY CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS, RANKING MEMBERS NAMED

With a 50-50 power-sharing agreement in place in the Senate, committee assignments, chairs and ranking members have been selected.

Those of particular importance to WCI's work include the following in the Senate, as well as those from the House of Representatives:

Senate Appropriations Committee

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Chairman

Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), Ranking Member

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Chair

Senate Finance Committee

Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH)

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), Chairman

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Ranking Member

Senate Energy & Water Development Subcommittee

Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA), Ranking Member

House Appropriations Committee

Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA), Member

House Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Chair

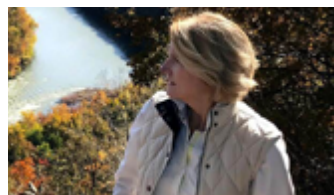
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR)

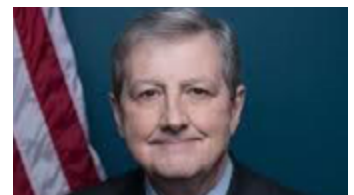
House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (D-CA), Chair

Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC), Ranking Member ❖



Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Ranking Member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, understands rivers' importance.



Louisiana Senator John Kennedy serves as Ranking Member on the Senate Energy & Water Development Subcommittee.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur, the House's top Energy Department and water projects appropriator, will push to use an upcoming infrastructure package to erase the Army Corps of Engineers' massive, \$91 billion project backlog. Kaptur said she was preparing to send the Biden administration a letter outlining her funding proposal, which she wants included in the upcoming recovery legislation. If the government can "get rid of the backlog, we could create so many jobs for projects where the studies are already done and then start clean," she said, with the next round of annual appropriations bills for future projects. (Energy & Environment News, March 1)

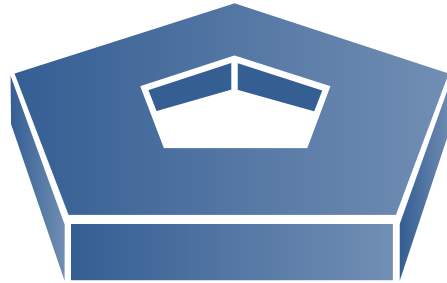
INLAND WATERWAYS USERS BOARD PAUSED

By John Doyle, Special Counsel, Jones Walker

When a new Administration moves in and takes the reins of the behemoth that is the federal government, the pictures on the office walls and the patterns of the drapes in those offices throughout the many agencies aren't the only things that change. It is not unusual, and in fact is routine, for policy-level and political personnel of the outgoing Administration to be required to submit their resignations so that those positions can be filled by the incoming Administration. And that practice typically occurs even when the outgoing and incoming Administrations are of the same political party.

What occurred in the Pentagon on January 30 of this year, however, is hardly typical. On that date, new Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin directed that all Department of Defense (DoD) advisory committees be subjected to a "zero-based review" and that all DoD advisory committee operations be suspended until that review is completed. He also directed that, no later than February 16, then-serving committee members were to be thanked for their service and informed that their service was concluded. Forty-two advisory committees were identified as being covered by the directives, unfortunately including the Inland Waterways Users Board (IWUB) because its sponsor is the Secretary of the Army.

It is believed that this kind of wholesale suspension of all DoD advisory committees and removal of all serving committee members is unprecedented. Although the covered committees lacked policy-making authority and



U.S. DEPT OF DEFENSE

were advisory only, and therefore had not been caught up in blanket resignation requirements at the beginning of previous Administrations, the Defense Secretary explained his action as intended to "focus our advisory committee efforts to align with our most pressing strategic priorities and the National Defense Strategy."

The 42 covered advisory committees have been divided into four tiers, each with a different deadline for the respective committee's sponsor to conduct the required zero-based review which is to constitute "an in-depth business case... supported by fact-based evidence for continued utilization of the advisory committee." The deadline for the first tier was February 26, followed by March 12 for the second tier, March 26 for the third tier, and April 30 for the fourth tier. Twenty-seven of the 42 committees are in the April 30 tier, including the IWUB.

On February 5, then-serving IWUB members were officially notified that "your appointment to the Inland Waterways Users Board is concluded..... with deep appreciation.....for your selfless service..."

Waterways industry members have met with senior leaders in the Office of

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin directed that all Department of Defense (DoD) advisory committees be subjected to a "zero-based review" and that all DoD advisory committee operations be suspended until that review is completed.

the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and Corps of Engineers and have been assured that completing the required review and reconstituting the Users Board is a matter of high priority for both. Industry representatives and Congressional interests from throughout the country also are expected to voice their support as well for the soonest-possible reconstitution of what historically has always been an entirely nonpartisan Users Board created by Congress 35 years ago to provide expert advice on how best to invest the diesel taxes being contributed by commercial users of the inland waterway system in the construction and major rehabilitation of the system's most important waterways projects. ❖

BRAZOS RIVER FLOODGATES, COLORADO RIVER LOCKS TO GET FACELIFT



Current view of the East side of the Brazos River Floodgates.



River Floodgates viewed from West to East.

By Jim Stark, President, Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association

Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) users were pleased with the news that the Corps of Engineers' proposed project to improve Brazos River Floodgates and Colorado River Locks was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA) 2020. On the heels of that authorization, and after FY21 Omnibus appropriations, Corps budget managers allocated \$16.4 million in their FY21 work plan to perform an economic update of the plan and initiate the preconstruction, engineering, and design (PED) phase.

These welcome developments follow years of industry advocacy by the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association, WCI, American Waterways Operators, and Texas Waterways Operator Association, all pushing for modernized infrastructure at these two river crossings on the Texas GIWW. Constructed in the late 1940s, these 75-foot-wide gated structures are aimed at controlling flows and silt into the GIWW at each river crossing. Over the decades, modern tow traffic has been slowed by narrow structural dimensions and outdated design. Often accidentally damaged or otherwise inoperable, they have become chokepoints on the busy route between Houston and south Texas ports. The locks are among the busiest on the GIWW with an annual average throughput of 21 million tons of petroleum products, chemicals, and aggregates.

The Corps' Galveston District and its study partner, Texas Department of Transportation, conducted the Section 216 study which sought to reduce navigation difficulties, delays and accidents by identifying improvements in a Tentatively Selected Plan that moves and widens floodgates and channels, eases hard to navigate turns, and constructs new control houses and support facilities. ❖

AT BRAZOS RIVER FLOODGATES THE PLAN CALLS FOR:

- **Removal of the existing 75-foot gates on both sides of the Brazos River.**
- **Construction of a new 125-foot sector gate structure approximately 300 feet south of the existing alignment, set back approximately 1,000 feet from the Brazos River on the East side.**
- **Construction of a minimum 125-foot open channel on the West side of the Brazos River.**

GIWW operators look forward to these long-awaited improvements that will result in efficiency gains and a safer operating environment.

WCI WELCOMES DUSTIN DAVIDSON AS DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



Dustin (far left) serves as staff to Senator John Kennedy in a meeting with police jurors from Bossier Parish, LA, and officials from the Cyber Innovation Center.

On February 16, Dustin Davidson joined the WCI staff as Director, Government Relations and he is based in the Washington, DC office.

Joining us from Capitol Hill, Dustin most recently was Professional Staff Member for the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, addressing energy, environment, and resiliency issues.

He was also Legislative Assistant to Congressman Garret Graves (R-LA), and focused on energy, environment, agriculture and trade issues. He also helped to pass an energy revenue-sharing bill out of the House Committee on Natural Resources, in addition to other bills that recognized recreational fishing in federal law and improved conservation and ecosystem practices in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Ocean. He was also part of the passage of the Water Resources Development Acts of 2018 and 2020.

Dustin also served as Legislative Correspondent for former U.S. Senator David Vitter (R-LA) in 2016, and as a Staff Assistant on the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship in 2015.

He graduated from Tulane University in 2015, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a Minor in U.S. Public Policy.

Capitol Currents got a chance to chat with Dustin to learn more about him.

Q: Tell us about your growing up and your family?

A: I was born and raised in New Orleans, by my parents Don, a retired Captain with the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office, and Suzanne Davidson, Director of Human Resources at St. Augustine High School. I have an older brother, also named Don, that lives in Oakland, CA. I spent most of my childhood playing baseball, fishing, and traveling across the Gulf South with my friends and family.



Congressman Garret Graves fields questions from reporters after a House Natural Resources Committee hearing on offshore energy revenue-sharing with support from Dustin.



Dustin enjoys a drink with Dean of the House, Rep. Don Young (AL-AK), one of his fondest Capitol Hill memories.

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WCI WELCOMES DUSTIN DAVIDSON AS DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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Q: How did you get into working on Capitol Hill?

A: I had planned to go to law school after graduating from Tulane, but a professor convinced me to get an internship on Capitol Hill. After interning in Senator David Vitter’s office, I fell in love with Washington, DC and the Hill. From there, my love for Capitol Hill grew once I began working on issues that were important to me and my state, including energy and environmental policy, fishing-related issues, transportation, trade, and agriculture.

Q: What was your best memory or success while there?

A: I would have to say that the biggest success was when Congressman Garret Graves was named Ranking Member of the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. As a staff, we worked very hard to develop a conference-wide climate strategy and successfully convinced leadership that Congressman Graves was the best member to lead the party on climate issues. My best memory was having a drink with the Dean of the House.

Q: So what do you like to do for fun?

A: I like to fish, hike, mountain bike, golf, play pick-up basketball with friends, and go to Caps, Nats, Saints, Pelicans and Tulane games.

Q: What is your immediate goal at WCI and what are your goals ahead in the role?

A: I would like to bring a new perspective to WCI’s Government Relations strategy to continue to deliver wins for inland waterways users and for the system overall. ❖



Dustin and former colleagues participate in the Restore or Retreat, Inc. March congressional fly-in. The educational event is aimed at providing a solid foundation of understanding of Louisiana’s coast, the fundamentals of the environment/culture reliance, the power and dependence on the Mississippi River, and how the Mississippi River Delta supplies economic and environmental benefits to leading oil and gas hub, Port Fourchon, which services the country’s energy industry.



A rainbow trout lands on Dustin’s reel in the Blackfoot River in Montana.



Dustin holds an amberjack caught 12 miles off Louisiana’s coast. As an avid angler, Dustin worked with stakeholders and relevant agencies to promote the environmental benefits of oil and gas infrastructure in the Gulf of Mexico and the need to increase artificial reef fish habitat in Louisiana waters.

INLAND WATERWAYS RECEIVES A D+ ON ASCE 2021 REPORT CARD

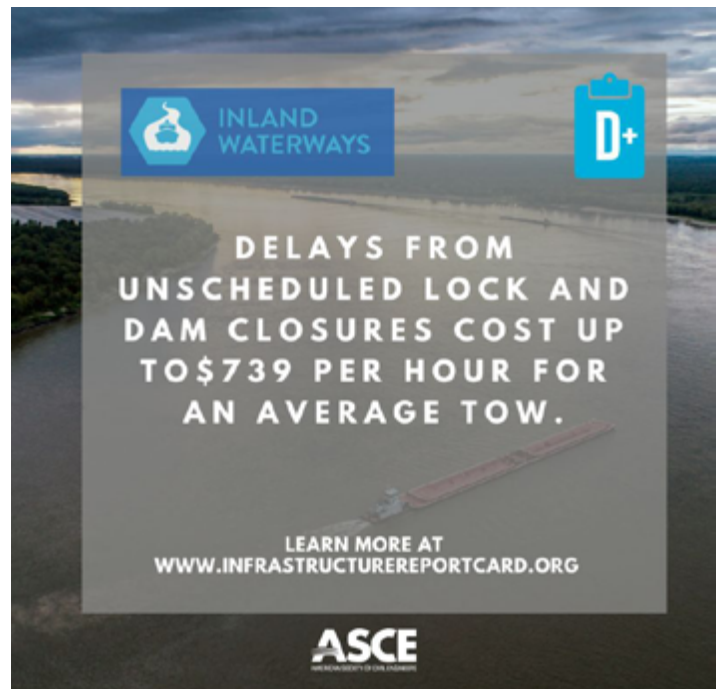


Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg concluded the ASCE infrastructure summit by saying “We can’t let infrastructure week continue to be a Washington punchline...It is time to be bold...Trillions are at stake if we don’t act...these investments will pay for themselves.”

On March 3, the American Society of Civil Engineers released its 2021 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure, grading the inland waterways a D+, a slightly improved grade than the last report card in 2017 where it received a D. The inland waterways earned its lowest grade with a D- on ASCE’s 2013 report card.

The report noted that investing in lock and dam infrastructure helps move agricultural exports and relieves strain on other transportation modes. “Recent boosts in federal investment and an increase in user fees have begun to reverse decades of declining lock and dam conditions, with unscheduled lock closures reaching a 20-year low in 2017. While this is encouraging, the system still reports a \$6.8 billion backlog in construction projects and ongoing lock closures – totaling 5,000 hours between 2015 and 2019 – harming the industries that rely on the waterways to get their goods to market. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates delays cost up to \$739 per hour for an average tow, or \$44 million per year.”

The ASCE report card also addressed resiliency in inland waterways infrastructure, citing that “a changing climate is contributing to less predictable water levels and impacting the efficiency of the waterway system. When water levels are too high or too low, a river shuts down for barge traffic, and shippers are forced to utilize other modes of transport to get



goods to market. Traditionally, flood and drought periods were more predictable, but today’s extreme weather incidents are more frequent and more severe. For example, the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge was flooded for 67 days during 2018, which in turn forced hundreds of barges to offload and shippers had to put their goods on trucks.” ❖

CONSERVATION COLUMN: HIGH GRADES FOR AMERICA'S WATERSHED INITIATIVE

By Kimberly Lutz, Executive Director, America's Watershed Initiative

You all remember your school report card – well there is a report card for your Mississippi River Basin, highlighted here in *Capitol Currents* (December 28, 2020). First Published in 2015 and again late last year in December 2020, the Mississippi River Report Card highlights key sectors in the basin – transportation, agriculture, water quality, water supply, flood control and risk reduction, and recreation. While the report card is an important tool to communicate and measure success across the entire basin, it is only part of what America's Watershed Initiative aims to achieve.

America's Watershed initiative (AWI) was self-organized in 2009 by a group of committed Mississippi River watershed leaders and incubated under the umbrella of The Nature Conservancy. AWI became an independent non-profit organization in 2018 and hired its first full time Executive Director in mid-2020. Since then, the board and staff have developed their first strategic plan that charts the course for AWI, building on a decade of success working with diverse sectors across the entire 31-state watershed.

The plan has three focus areas: improving and measuring system health, promoting integrated watershed planning and elevating basin champions.

IMPROVE AND MEASURE SYSTEM HEALTH

The Mississippi River Watershed Report Card is the primary tool through which AWI communicates the breadth of challenges and opportunities in



the watershed. Future tools include development of data information systems, knitting together the wealth of data, not currently compatible across states and platforms. Through better access to current data, decision-makers will have the tools to make informed decisions benefiting watershed health. AWI will also identify acute issues in the basin and bring together basin leaders through webinars and convenings to learn from each other and develop shared solutions that can Raise the Grade.

PROMOTE INTEGRATED WATERSHED PLANNING

The Mississippi River Watershed is often called an “orphan” because no government agency, program or entity is responsible for its health and productivity. Currently, management in the watershed is divided among many agencies and governments – often without alignment or coordination. To make meaningful improvements, we must build a diverse and robust collaboration of different sectors, public and private, looking at the whole system to shape a shared future vision and identify common priorities. We will also work to build a science agenda for the basin, using the best available science, and designed to support decision-making. Working with leading scientists in the basin, we will develop a plan for securing the best in applied research to answer not only today's questions, but that anticipate changes yet on the horizon.



Kimberly Lutz is AWI's new Executive Director.

PROMOTE BASINWIDE CHAMPIONS

Through our decade of gathering with leaders in industry, agriculture, conservation, and recreation, we know the depth of talent and knowledge that exists in the basin. Connecting the right people to have the right conversations is a key role for AWI. In addition, highlighting model programs in key areas such as water quality, flood control and risk reduction, and climate will provide information on solutions that can be adapted and customized leading to implementation of better solutions across the watershed.

As this is our first, plan, we know we will learn a lot along the way and therefore will make adjustments as we do. We look forward to opportunities to partner with the transportation sector in this work going forward and to have the opportunity to share in our success along the way. ❖

WCI MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: WARREN PAVING, INC.

WCI's members move a lot of materials on the inland waterways, but often we don't appreciate the value of the contents of these barges. Modern road asphalt is said to have been invented in 1870 by a Columbia University professor who emigrated from Belgium. The first application of asphalt paving took place in Newark, New Jersey in front of City Hall. Today, 96% of all paved roads and streets in America are asphalt.

WCI member Warren Paving, Inc, has its own unique and important history, as a state-of-the-art paving and aggregate company with locations in Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Alabama that produces asphalt and limestone for heavy highway building, construction and high-tech site work, and other specialized projects. The company was founded as an unincorporated proprietorship by Charles Warren, father of Lawrence W. Warren, in the 1950s. It was later incorporated in 1971 by Lawrence W. Warren in Hattiesburg, Mississippi with just 12 employees and an annual production of 20,000 tons of asphalt.

Fast forward to the 1980s, company growth facilitated a new asphalt plant in Petal, Mississippi, which increased its annual production to 60,000 tons. In the early 1990s, Warren Paving relocated to a new site south of Hattiesburg, installing a new, ultra-modern asphalt facility with annual production of 300,000 tons and 48 employees. Later, Warren Paving would expand to Gulfport, Mississippi, with that annual production target of 300,000 tons, and the building of a dock on the property to unload materials shipped by barge.

In its Gulfport expansion, Warren Paving acquired Necaise Construction Company, Inc. in 1999 and added a mobile crushing operation with the capability to crush recycled asphalt and concrete rubble. This expansion was instrumental in Warren Paving securing approval from the Mississippi Department of Transportation for recycled crushed concrete, which was first used to construct Interstate 10 at the Jordan River Bridge in Mississippi.

In 2007, Warren Paving, Inc. purchased land on the Cumberland River in Livingston County, Kentucky and developed the Slats Lucas Quarry that now supplies limestone aggregate to the company's asphalt facilities and third-party customers. In just two years the Slats Lucas Quarry was producing and shipping approximately 1.2 million tons of limestone aggregate.



Warren Paving's Slats Lucas Quarry in Kentucky.

Today, seven decades since its founding, the company known as "the Black Topper" produces more than 500,000 tons of asphalt, over three million tons of limestone aggregate, 500,000 tons of rip rap, operates 150 barges and has over 300 employees. Their services run the gamut from resurfacing, soil stabilization, grading, and site work to retail sales of asphalt and aggregate products. In 2016, Warren Paving, Inc. started Slats Lucas Aggregates, LLC. to operate aggregate retail yards in multiple states including Louisiana and Alabama.

"We are proud to be a member of WCI and to support the modernization of the inland waterways transportation system, which, as we can attest, has served to deliver Warren Paving products to our customers since the 1990s," said Steven Warren, President and CEO of Warren Paving, Inc.

WCI welcomes Warren Paving, Inc. as a new member, and we thank them for sharing their important company history and for laying a path forward.

Visit Warren Paving at <http://warrenpaving.com/> ❖



St. Louis is the site of WCI's Annual Meeting, Board of Directors Meeting and Fall Waterways Symposium, November 2-4, 2021.

PROUDLY INTRODUCING...

WCI is pleased to announce the birth of Henry Benjamin Blanchard, born January 5 at 7 pounds 7 ounces to Chris and Caroline Blanchard. Chris, Managing Director, Fleet Operations with Cooper Consolidated, is a member of WCI's Board of Directors. Proud dad Chris said he was "happy to share the evidence of the joy and sleepless nights."



Henry Blanchard is the newest member of the Blanchard and WCI families.

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Tracy Zea, Publisher
Deb Calhoun, Editor

499 S. Capitol Street, SW
Suite 401
Washington, DC 20003
202.765.2166

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2021 INDUSTRY CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

May 18-20: American Waterways Operators' Spring Convention and Board of Directors Meeting (Washington, D.C., The Mandarin Oriental Hotel)

May 24-26: Inland Marine Expo (St. Louis, MO)

June 2-4: National Grain & Feed Association 125th Annual Convention (Colorado Springs, CO, The Broadmoor)

September 16: Seamen's Church Institute Maritime Training Benefit Luncheon (Houston, TX, Marriott Marquis)

September 26-29: American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) Annual Convention (Austin, TX)

POSTPONED UNTIL OCTOBER 21:

Seamen's Church Institute Silver Bell Award Dinner (New York, Pier 60)

November 2-4: WCI Annual Meeting and 18th Annual Waterways Symposium (St. Louis, MO) Stay tuned for details.

December 1-3: International WorkBoat Show (New Orleans)

December 9: Seamen's Church Institute 22nd Annual River Bell Award Luncheon (Paducah, KY, Paducah McCracken County Convention Center)