

# CAPITOL CURRENTS



December 20, 2024

## TIME TO REVISIT AND REVISE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12322

By Jen Armstrong, Director of Government Relations, Waterways Council, Inc.



Jen Armstrong

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Corps of Engineers' Civil Works mission. It all began in 1824 when our Nation's fifth president, James Monroe, signed into law a bill for the improvement of navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. While Corps

projects have always been large and complex, the Civil Works mission has evolved over time to incorporate new regulations, policies, shifts from political pressures, and unfortunately, cumbersome bureaucracy.

Infrastructure projects that have such a colossal impact on our economy and our communities can sometimes be controversial and politically sensitive. How water behaves hydraulically is largely dictated by physics, and has little regard for geographical, cultural, or political boundaries. To ensure transparency and promote public involvement, the development and recommendation of a Corps water resource project for authorization by Congress follows an extensive public planning process that ensures it is economically justified, environmentally acceptable, and technically achievable.

Many credit the modern-day Civil Works program to the Reagan Administration, given the seismic policy changes of the 1980s that reformed how projects are justified, how they are funded by adding cost-share requirements from non-federal partners, how conservation is considered, and (the focus of this discussion) oversight by the Administration's Office of Management and Budget (OMB). But it was President Jimmy Carter's mistrust of the Corps' ability to recommend projects that were economically justified and protect the environment that sowed the seeds for the changes to come. Proving the phrase "all politics is local," the project at the center of Carter's attention was a proposed dam project on the Flint River in his home state of Georgia. In 1977, he announced a major review of 320 water resource projects, questioning their compliance with environmental laws and doubting that many

projects remained justified under the existing economic conditions. Ultimately, he suggested the elimination of funds for 19 water resource projects, sparking backlash from Congress and

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# TIME TO REVISIT AND REVISE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12322

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## EXECUTIVE ORDER 12322

### WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, and in order to ensure efficient and coordinated planning and review of water resources programs and projects, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1.** Before any agency or officer thereof submits to the Congress, or to any committee or member thereof, for approval, appropriations, or legislative action any report, proposal, or plan relating to a Federal or Federally assisted water and related land resources project or program, such report, proposal, or plan shall be submitted to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

**Section 2.** The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall examine each report, proposal, or plan for consistency with, and shall advise the agency of the relationship of the project to, the following:

- (a) the policy and programs of the President;
- (b) the Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies or other such planning guidelines for water and related land resources planning, as shall hereafter be issued; and
- (c) other applicable laws, regulations, and requirements relevant to the planning process.

[Sec. 2 amended by Executive Order 12608 of Sept. 9, 1987, 52 FR 34617, 3 CFR, 1987 Comp., p. 245]

**Section 3.** When such report, proposal, or plan is thereafter submitted to the Congress, or to any committee or member thereof, it shall include a statement of the advice received from the Office of Management and Budget.

**Section 4.** Executive Order No. 12113, as amended, is revoked.

Ronald Reagan,  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
September 17, 1981

projects were worthy of investment from the American taxpayers.

Following Carter’s election defeat in 1980, the incoming Reagan Administration maintained the previous Administration’s priority on reforming the Corps of Engineers. In 1981, Reagan issued Executive Order (EO) 12322 to mandate any federal or federally assisted land or water resource project proposal first be submitted to OMB for review before being presented to Congress for approval. But over the last several decades, OMB has broadened its interpretation to withhold nearly all information, including outyear funding needs, up-to-date project capabilities, approval of innovative acquisition strategies, and other information critical to Congressional decision-makers.

The EO was intended to improve coordination, remove duplicative processes, and ensure policies were consistent with the priorities of the Administration. In reality, it has effectively created an unnecessary choke point, hindering even the most rudimentary factual information to be accessible to key decision-makers. A lack of transparency often results in decisions counter-intuitive to an Administration’s goals, and overruling the judgement of technical experts, economists, scientists, and professional engineers. The impact of this over-reach has had real world consequences. Mislabeling almost all factual information as “budget sensitive” has negative and sometimes devastating impacts on the Corps’ relationships with its project partners and the public. The lack of transparent and objective information, coupled with inconsistent communication has eroded trust in the Corps’ ability to execute projects effectively. In a time when completing a single project takes decades and cost overruns continue to grow, our Nation cannot afford this unnecessary bureaucracy. It is time for a new Administration to revisit EO 12322 and address the excessive bureaucracy that delays the economic benefits our Nation needs. ❖

*In 1981, President Reagan issued an Executive Order to have the Office of Management and Budget review federal water resources projects, which today creates additional unnecessary bureaucracy and restricts vital information from Congressional decision-makers.*

# WRDA 2024 PASSES WITH PERMANENT COST-SHARE CHANGE TO 75%/25%

While the 118th Congress will not be remembered for its productiveness, having only passed just over 100 pieces of legislation compared to the typical 500-600, this year's lame duck session was fruitful for inland waterways infrastructure with the passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024 on December 10 in the House and December 18 in the Senate. The final bill included Section 1126 that permanently changes the required cost share from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) from 35% to 25%, a critical provision needed to accelerate project completion and return benefits to our Nation's economy more efficiently. The new cost share will be effective for future funding, including any projects funded in fiscal year 2025.

WCI's advocacy efforts to change the cost share received bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress with at least 50 House members and 22 Senators officially submitting the cost share change request for inclusion in the WRDA bill to authorizing committees.

This is a huge win for WCI and inland waterways infrastructure, as it allows for an estimated \$1.4 billion more dollars over a 10-year period to be available for

appropriations. In fiscal year 2024, \$123.5 million in revenues was deposited into the IWTF—up from the 10-year average of \$87 million prior to the diesel fuel tax increase taking effect in 2016. That 9-cent per gallon increase was advocated by commercial users of the inland waterways system who pay the tax so aging lock and dam infrastructure can be recapitalized faster.

All said, the annual construction program could efficiently fund more than one major navigation modernization project at a time with the revised cost share. With current project capabilities for major lock projects often exceeding \$200 million each year, the ability to fund multiple projects each year ensures a single project does not eat up all available resources as was seen during the construction of the Olmsted Lock.

The final bill also authorized one inland waterways Chief's Report on the GIWW in Brazoria and Matagorda Counties at a cost of \$322,761,000.

WCI thanks its members and partners for their continued outreach efforts throughout the WRDA process and helping WCI achieve this huge success. ❖



# WRDA 2024

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: PORT OF LITTLE ROCK



In 1959, at a wide bend in the river, just east of downtown Little Rock, an idea was born that connected Arkansas with the rest of the world. Sixty-five years ago, the City of Little Rock created the Little Rock Port Authority to develop the Port and its industrial park.

The Port of Little Rock is the largest public port in Arkansas on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS), a 448-mile stretch from the Mississippi River to Tulsa. As the nexus of river, rail and road transportation, the Port of Little Rock connects Arkansas to over 60 countries in the global economy. This world-class intermodal transportation hub extends Little Rock’s reach to every corner of the globe through the deep-water ports of the Gulf of Mexico.

To move goods and materials within the Port, the Little Rock Port Authority operates a short line switching railroad that services both the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Rail Roads. Almost 20 miles of track handles over 20,000 cars annually. And, within a few minutes of the Port, trucking companies can access Interstate 40, the country’s third longest major coast to coast highway, and I-30, the main route from Little Rock to the southwest. Logistic Services Inc. is the terminal operator for the Port of Little Rock. The Port’s full intermodal bulk and breakbulk facility on the Arkansas River averages 35 barge calls per month.



*A barge is unloaded at the Port of Little Rock’s main river terminal.*

The Port of Little Rock has wide-ranging impacts on central Arkansas’s success – thousands of jobs, billions in economic impact and the ability to connect Arkansas with the world.

“The Little Rock Port Authority recently joined WCI after participating in the 2024 Washington D.C. Fly-in. I was impressed with the level of advocacy and the respect shown to WCI from Congressional members and their staff,” said Port of Little Rock Executive Director Bryan Day. “Advocacy is critical to the success of the inland waterways, and I feel WCI is a key player in promoting and representing America’s waterways,” he continued. ❖

## PORT OF LITTLE ROCK BY THE NUMBERS

- The Little Rock Port Authority is managed by a seven-person Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor
- The Port of Little Rock industrial park is more than 5,000 acres in size
- The Port of Little Rock operates three docks; one on the Arkansas River and two within the Port’s slack water harbor
- The Port of Little Rock is home to 52 businesses from eight foreign countries
- The Port of Little Rock and its industrial partners have contributed over \$5 billion dollars to the local economy over the past five years
- The Port of Little Rock is home to Foreign Trade Zone #14 that provides opportunities for industry to utilize global markets
- The Port of Little Rock partners with the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission to recruit and attract industry from around the world

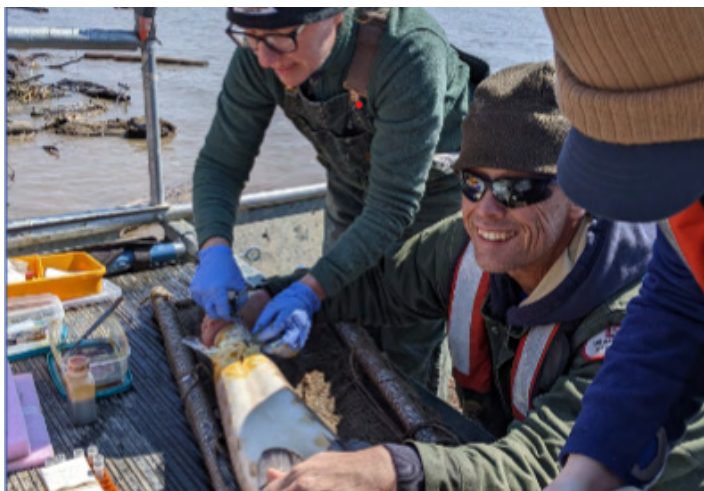
# CONSERVATION COLUMN: SUSTAINABLE RIVERS PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH LOCKS AND DAMS

Reprinted from *The Corps Environment: Summer 2024*

By Jim Howe, The Nature Conservancy, and Brian Johnson, St. Louis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The mission of the Sustainable Rivers Program (SRP) is to improve the health and life of rivers by changing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) infrastructure operations to restore and protect ecosystems, while maintaining or enhancing project benefits.

Officially started in 2002, SRP initially focused on collaborating with districts to expand environmental benefits at reservoirs. In 2016, SRP began partnering with districts to explore opportunities at navigation-oriented reservoirs (locks and dams). USACE manages 181 locks and dams across the U.S.



Officials from Corps and the Missouri Department of Conservation examine a lake sturgeon captured while spawning below the Melvin Price Dam on the Mississippi River. An SRP process helped develop environmental flow patterns preferred by spawning sturgeon. Photo by Ryan Swearingin

There is a growing understanding that navigation structures can be synonymous with positive environmental outcomes.

"We never want to lose sight of the economic importance of our locks and dams and the primary mission of supporting commercial navigation," said Jase Ousley, USACE deputy chief for navigation. "But as we've learned from our efforts to increase the beneficial use of dredged material, many opportunities exist to enhance environmental benefits at all of our navigation projects.

"Management practices at locks and dams vary, but conditions are typically managed to maintain a 9-foot channel for navigation. Working in cooperation with district Operations, Water Control and Planning offices, SRP has deployed three principal environmental strategies at locks and dams – pool-level management, conservation locking and environmental flows for fish and mussels – all with no impacts to navigation.

## Pool-Level Management

Several USACE districts are reducing pool levels during the growing season to optimize habitat, water quality and recreation at pools associated with locks and dams. A drawdown of just 6 to 12 inches in early summer can expose mudflats along shorelines that are quickly colonized by vegetation.

That vegetation provides habitat and structure for fish and also generates food sources for waterfowl and wildlife. What's more, aquatic and wetland plants along the shoreline buffer wave action, which lessens erosion and improves water quality. Thousands of acres of wetlands have been created, providing habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds and fish.

The USACE St. Louis District has adopted pool-level management at three lock and dam facilities on the Mississippi River and one on the Kaskaskia River, improving environmental outcomes while maintaining navigation and

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# CONSERVATION COLUMN: SUSTAINABLE RIVERS PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH LOCKS AND DAMS

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other project missions. Through SRP, the St. Paul District is presently evaluating a similar opportunity on the Upper Mississippi River.

In 2021, three USACE districts – Huntington, Louisville and Pittsburgh – coordinated to enroll the Ohio River Navigation System in SRP. These districts have begun exploring pool level management at several locks and dams along the nearly 1,000-mile river.

## Conservation Locking

Conservation locking is the practice of opening locks to allow fish to pass during key migration periods. USACE Operations teams strategically open gates to promote fish movement up and down rivers.

On the Allegheny River, for example, SRP worked with the USACE Pittsburgh District to time the opening of lock gates to allow fish passage. That enabled walleye and sauger to access spawning habitat upstream, increasing populations so much so that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission no longer needed to stock these fish.

SRP is currently working with USACE Mobile District to monitor fish migration and conservation-locking opportunities at two locks and dams on the Alabama River, Millers Ferry and Claiborne.

“Working in collaboration with ERDC (the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center), we have been able to document and observe the spring migrations of several keystone fish species through Claiborne Lock,” said T.J. Rickey, a biologist with the Mobile District. “With this information, we are now working to optimize fish passage opportunities on the lower Alabama River without incurring any additional costs to Operations.”

## Environmental Flows for Fish and Mussels

Lock and dam operators have also found that modifying flow releases from gates can help promote and restore biodiversity. On the Mississippi River, USACE St. Louis District partnered with the Missouri Department of Conservation to identify sturgeon-friendly flows below the Melvin Price Locks and Dam. During the spawning season, lake sturgeon require current velocities that prevent substrate from being covered with sediment while also oxygenating eggs.



*At the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Mississippi, the Sustainable Rivers Program is funding the Corps' Mobile District's efforts to explore new flow prescriptions to restore wetlands and floodplains. Photo by Evan Lowenstein*

“Once we were able to get the flow conditions right, the sturgeon really responded,” said Joan Stemler, chief of Water Control in St. Louis. “We have had successful SRP, spawns for the last three years, including the first-known spawning in over 50 years in Missouri! It’s gratifying to know that USACE can play such a key role in the recovery of the lake sturgeon.”

Similarly, freshwater mussel beds are often located downstream from locks and dams where flows and currents from gates create the proper substrate and dissolved oxygen levels. As filter feeders, mussels remove algae and nutrients from the water column. However, they can’t survive in rivers with high sediment loads and pollutants.

With that in mind, USACE lock and dam sites on the Ohio and Tennessee-Tombigbee River systems have enrolled in SRP to explore new practices to promote mussel health through e-flows.

USACE districts are showing that, working in concert with navigation and operational flexibility, there are real opportunities to provide ecological benefits at our lock and dam sites. Looking forward, SRP’s goal is to continue to work with districts at these types of structures to identify site-specific environmental opportunities and, where possible, work together to implement projects that complement both USACE’s navigation and environmental missions.

For more information about Sustainable Rivers, email [sustainableivers@usace.army.mil](mailto:sustainableivers@usace.army.mil) or visit [www.hec.usace.army.mil/](http://www.hec.usace.army.mil/) ❖

# WCI MEETS IN SAN ANTONIO FOR BOARD MEETING, ANNUAL WATERWAYS SYMPOSIUM

On November 13-15, WCI members and guests gathered in San Antonio for the organization's Annual Membership/Board of Directors Meeting and 21st Annual Waterways Symposium. This was the first time WCI has held a meeting in San Antonio, and attendees enjoyed the River Walk of restaurants, bars, and shops over the San Antonio River, which is a functioning waterway that carries water through the city. In fact, there is a small lock and dam on the River Walk that was built in 1930 to carry floodwaters in a straight course past the downtown river bend. Today, tourist and maintenance barges use the channel when the river is at normal levels.

WCI's events, held in the historic Omni La Mansión hotel, began on November 13 with the Annual meeting and Board of Directors meeting, which saw the conclusion of Cherrie Felder's (Channel Shipyard Companies) two-year term as Board Chair, and the election of Jeff Webb (Cargill) as incoming Chairman. Of WCI's successes, Ms. Felder said, "These kinds of results don't happen like this often in Washington, DC, but WCI has gotten them done. ... I thank you for your confidence in my ability to lead the Board over these two years. It has been a highlight of my career. I am extremely confident that Jeff Webb will lead us even further over the next two years, and I know you will continue to support him as WCI Chairman."



**Photo A:** WCI Chair Cherrie Felder (center) enjoys a few last laughs with WCI President/CEO Tracy Zea (center) and fellow Board members before becoming Immediate Past Chair. Jeff Webb (far right) was elected Chairman and will serve in the role for two years.

**Photo B:** WCI Board of Directors Member Mary Ann Bucci (Port of Pittsburgh Commission) catches up with Gary Statler of Campbell Transportation Company at the opening reception.

**Photo C:** Wade Beasley (Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council) and WCI Vice President Paul Rohde are happy to see each other at WCI's annual meeting.

**Photo D:** WCI's special dinner at the Alamo enjoyed a trio serenade with illuminated instruments.

**Photo E:** (left to right): WCI Chairman Jeff Webb, WCI President/CEO Tracy Zea, Waterways Symposium speaker Ken Ericksen (Polaris Consulting), and George Leavell (Wepfer Marine).

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# WCI MEETS IN SAN ANTONIO FOR BOARD MEETING, ANNUAL WATERWAYS SYMPOSIUM

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Chairman Webb said, “At WCI, we are in the lobbying business, but more importantly, we are in the infrastructure building business in America. So, let’s continue to lobby for the things that will enable the Corps to construct a better inland waterways system that we can be proud we built together for our own companies, but also for future enterprises that will follow.”

Presentations by WCI staff members Tracy Zea (President/CEO), Deb Calhoun (Senior Vice President), Paul Rohde (Vice President-Midwest Area), and Jen Armstrong (Director of Government Relations), as well as Geoff Bowman, with WCI lobby firm Van Scoyoc and Associates, were made to the Board on WCI’s priorities and work in support of them. The impacts of the November 5 elections for waterways issues and pending legislation (WRDA 2024 and FY25 appropriations) were also highlighted.

At the conclusion of the Board meeting, WCI members and guests attended an opening reception, followed by a delightful private dinner at the Alamo, where a tour of the Alamo Church and gardens was offered.

The Annual Waterways Symposium kicked off on November 14, with Rodger Baker, Executive Director of the Stratfor Center for Applied Geopolitics at RANE, who addressed the Geopolitical Importance of the U.S. Inland Waterways, noting that geopolitics emphasizes how geography has shaped nations and cultures. In America’s case, its river network allowed the country to gain economic strength, which it still maintains today despite other countries building new waterways infrastructure to embolden their national security capabilities and economies.

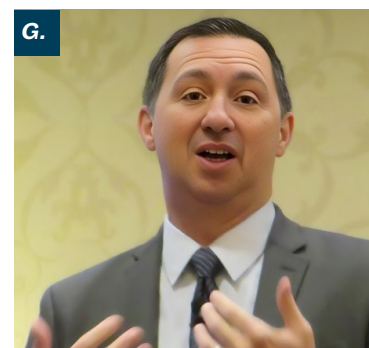
Next, Corps Director of Civil Works Edward (Eddie) Belk, gave a status of civil works projects and current work on the inland system, describing WCI as an organization that partners with the Corps. Mr. Belk reviewed the Corps’ FY25 Civil Works appropriations funding request of \$10 billion, and said, “this is where WCI has come in” for the near record-level funding requests from both the House and Senate. He also described the low-water events of the last three years and said that the industry/Corps/U.S. Coast Guard partnership has been the “secret sauce” for channel dredging and stabilization improvements. In discussing Research and

Development for the Corps, Mr. Belk said they are looking at the use of composite materials and making changes to how locks are built by, for example, utilizing one center of design vs. involvement by multiple districts and divisions.

The luncheon Keynote Speaker was Nathan Gonzales, Editor and Publisher of *Inside Elections*, who reviewed the outcomes of perhaps the most important election of our time, with Donald Trump winning the White House for a second time, and the Senate and House being led by the GOP. Gonzales, a three-peat speaker for WCI symposia, discussed the makeup of Trump voters and how difficult it was to properly gauge this election by national pollsters.

Next, American Cruise Lines’ Director of Government Affairs Kristin Meira addressed, “The Many Uses and Benefits of Inland Waterways,” highlighting that American Cruise Lines’ vessels are American-made, American-owned, and U.S. flagged. She announced that American is building 10 new cruise vessels by the end of 2027 at its Chesapeake Shipbuilding yard in Salisbury, MD. In 2025, American Cruise Lines had 188 sailings on the Mississippi River and Tributaries, which are expected to increase, along with all the itineraries across U.S. waterways.

Ken Eriksen, Managing Member and Strategic Advisor, Polaris Analytics and Consulting, finished the day with an Economic Outlook and remarks on the “Global Supply Chain for Commodities Moving on the Inland Waterways.”



**Photo F:** Kick-off Symposium speaker Rodger Baker with Rane Network addresses the geopolitical importance of America due to its inland waterways network.

**Photo G:** Keynote Luncheon Speaker Nathan Gonzales returned to WCI to discuss the outcome of the November elections with his usual wit and wisdom.

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# WCI MEETS IN SAN ANTONIO FOR BOARD MEETING, ANNUAL WATERWAYS SYMPOSIUM

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He noted that U.S. consumers are handcuffed by persistent inflation that impacts downstream investing and buying, and he compared the GDP of countries around the world. On commodities, he said that crude oil energy prices are on a downward trajectory, coal production is down more than half from 2008, but coal exports are up, and U.S. grain and soybean exports have risen for the third year, the fifth largest level in history.

With a recap of the day by WCI President/CEO Tracy Zea, a closing reception was held at Ostra Restaurant in the nearby

Mokara Hotel on the River Walk.

The National Rivers Hall of Fame National Achievement Award Presentation was also held at WCI's meeting to honor 2024 Award Recipient Captain Joy Manthey, who now navigates for American Cruise Lines, after a stellar career in the maritime industry. Earning her 100-ton operator's license at age 18 and a First-Class Pilot's license on the Lower Mississippi River from New Orleans to Baton Rouge at age 21, Captain Manthey is a true pioneer for women in the maritime industry. ❖



**Photo H:** National Rivers Hall of Fame National Achievement Award winner Captain Joy Manthey receives the award from Jeremy Putnam (Riverview Boat Store) (left); Kurt Strand and Thomas Lange (National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium) (right).

**Photo I:** American Cruise Lines' Kristin Meira (left) talks with WCI Immediate Past Chair Cherrie Felder just before her presentation to attendees of the Annual Waterways Symposium.

**Photo J:** (left to right): Lance Sannino (Enterprise Marine Products) celebrates at WCI's closing reception with Brandon Davidson and Glenn Hendon (Hines Furlong Line) on San Antonio's River Walk.

**Photo K:** WCI's Treasurer Chris Blanchard (Cooper Consolidated, LLC), left, enjoys a frosty beverage with Symposium partnering organization Waterways Journal publisher Nelson Spencer, Jr.

**Photo L:** (left to right): WCI's Office Manager/Events Coordinator Amber McClay; WCI's Director of Government Relations Jen Armstrong; Kirsten Wallace (Upper Mississippi River Basin Association); WCI's Senior Vice President Deb Calhoun; and Jessica Stephan (Bunge).

# THANK YOU TO OUR MEETING SPONSORS!

A special thank you for the generosity of these companies who sponsored the WCI November meetings:

## Platinum



## Gold



## Silver



# NATIONAL WATERWAYS FOUNDATION COMMISSIONS NEW ENO CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION STUDY ON WATERWAYS BENEFICIARIES

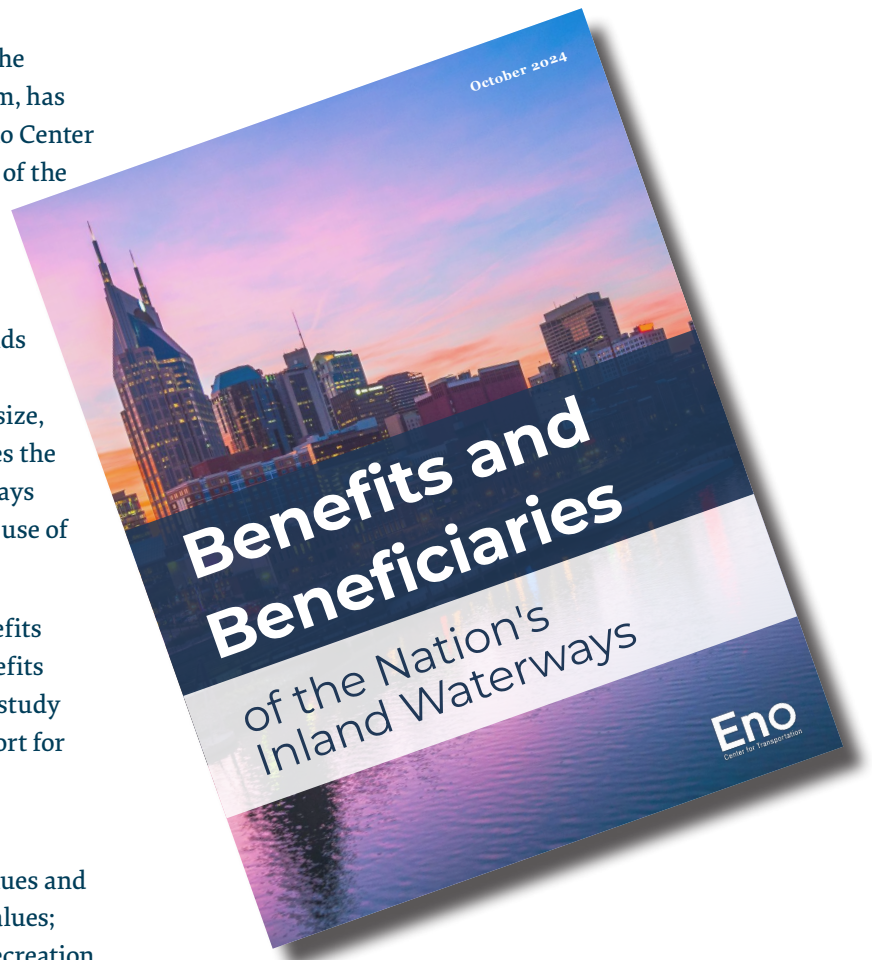
The National Waterways Foundation (NWF), the research arm for the inland waterways system, has commissioned a study just released by the Eno Center for Transportation titled “Benefits and Beneficiaries of the Nation’s Inland Waterways.”

Today’s commercially navigable inland waterways system, under the supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies, extends almost 12,000 miles and transports more than 500 million tons of goods annually, including bulk, oversize, and overweight commodities. The Eno study explores the multitude of beneficiaries of the U.S. inland waterways system that are not related to commercial operators’ use of the inland waterways for transportation.

The inland waterways yield significant societal benefits in a variety of areas, and using case studies, the Benefits and Beneficiaries of the Nation’s Inland Waterways study describes 14 benefit areas derived from federal support for inland waterways, grouped into three categories:

1. Economic development that includes industrial property development; commercial property values and waterfront development; residential property values; jobs and community impact; and tourism and recreation.
2. Energy and sustainability that includes hydropower; irrigation; water supply; cooling; and beneficial uses of dredged materials.
3. Safety, security, and resiliency that includes transportation safety and congestion alleviation; flood control; national security; and global competitiveness.

NWF Chair Cherrie Felder said, “National Waterways Foundation is proud to have commissioned this important



study by Eno Center for Transportation that examines and highlights the many beneficial uses and beneficiaries of our Nation’s inland waterways system.” ...The NWF’s work continues to create conversation around the criticality of the U.S. inland waterways, which is the most energy efficient, safest, and environmentally sound surface mode to transport America’s critical commodities, and which offers numerous under-appreciated benefits outlined in this important new study.” ❖

# SCI HONORS INDUSTRY LEADERS, HEROES

On December 5, Seamen’s Church Institute (SCI) held its 24th Annual River Bell Awards Luncheon at the Paducah-McCracken County Convention & Expo Center in Paducah, KY. The 2024 River Bell Awards Honorees were ...

**River Bell Award:**  
 Bob Blocker – American Commercial Barge Line

**River Legend Award:**  
 Charles A. Haun, Jr. – Parker Towing Company, Inc.

**Distinguished Service Award:**  
 Matt Woodruff – Kirby Corporation

**Lifesaving Award:**  
 The Crew of the *M/V Capt. Rodney Adams* – Blessey Marine Services, Inc., and the Crew of the *M/V Hallie M. Merrick* – Canal Barge Company



*Robert Blocker (center), formerly with American Commercial Barge Line, receives the 2024 SCI River Bell Award from Mike Ellis (left) and Rev. Mark Nestlehutt, SCI.*

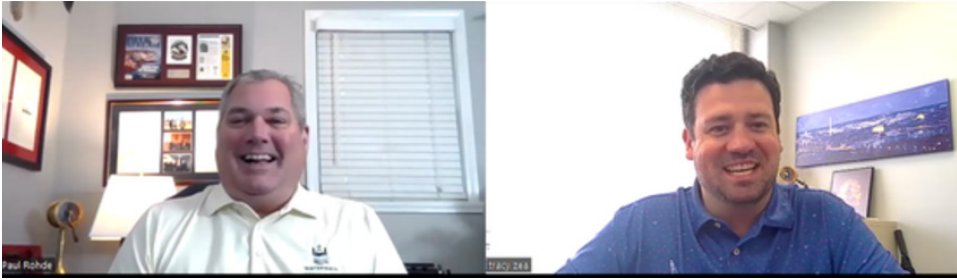


*Former WCI Chairman Matt Woodruff (Kirby Corporation) (center) was honored with the SCI 2024 Distinguished Service Award, presented by John Roberts (Ingram Barge Company) (left), and Rev. Nestlehutt, SCI. Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Roberts worked together at Coastal Towing Company early in their careers. WCI congratulates Mr. Woodruff for this honor and thanks him for his many years (and more to come!) of distinguished service to Waterways Council, Inc.*



*The SCI 2024 River Legend Award was bestowed to Charles A. Haun, Jr.,(center), Parker Towing Company. It was presented by his daughter Alison Phillips (left), also with the company, and Rev. Nestlehutt, SCI.*

# PRESIDENT/CEO TRACY ZEA WRAPS UP WCI'S 2024 'FIVE ON THE FIVE'



WCI's President/CEO Tracy Zea, interviewed by WCI Vice President-Midwest Paul Rohde (left), offered election day thoughts for the November edition of 'Five on the Five.'

WCI's November 'Five on the Five' interview series, released on the 5th of each month, featured WCI's President/CEO Tracy Zea, who, on election day, offered a look at the Senate and House races of key waterways champions that WCI was watching. This was the last "Five on the Five" for the year. We look forward to more exciting guest insights in 2025. ❖



Happiest holidays to you and your families from WCI's staff from the Alamo in San Antonio. We appreciate your support in 2024 and we look forward to another great year ahead. Thank you!

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Tracy Zea, Publisher  
Deb Calhoun, Editor

499 S. Capitol Street, SW  
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202.765.2166

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## 2025 INDUSTRY CALENDAR

### SAVE THE DATE:

**February 4-6:** Waterways Council, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting and Capitol Hill Fly-In, Washington, DC (InterContinental Hotel, The Wharf)

**February 25-27:** Mississippi Valley Trade and Transport Conference, New Orleans, LA (Westin Hotel)

**May 28-30:** Inland Marine Expo, #IMX2025, Nashville (Music City Center)

**September 15:** PIANCUSA, Smart Rivers 2025, Memphis, TN

**December 3-5:** International WorkBoat Show, New Orleans (Morial Convention Center)

**December 9-10:** WCI Annual Meeting, Board of Directors Meeting, and Annual Waterways Symposium (Nashville, TN), followed by SCI River Bell **December 11** (Paducah, KY).