

WCI



2024



WATERWAYS
COUNCIL, INC.

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WATERWAYS
COUNCIL, INC.

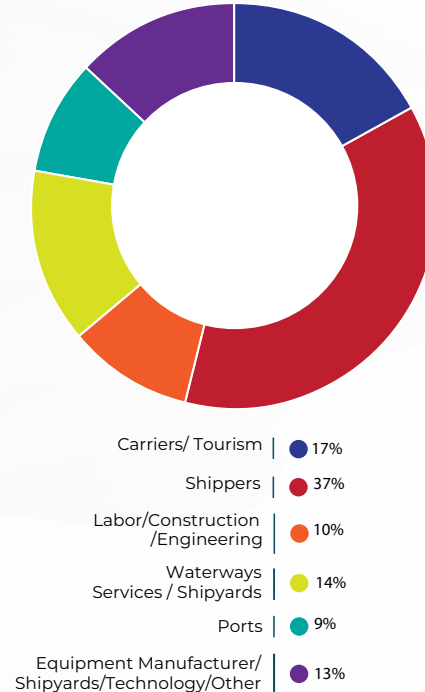
MISSION

Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) is the national unifying association of America's numerous inland waterways and port infrastructure interests, serving as the definitive resource in Washington, DC and around the country for inland waterways infrastructure.

Specifically, WCI

- works to ensure an optimal level of federal support and funding for the planning, construction and modernization, operation, and maintenance of ports and inland waterways navigation improvements,
- leads efforts to build an understanding among key policymakers, public opinion leaders and beneficiaries of the positive economic and environmental impacts to the nation from a modern and well-maintained system of ports and inland waterways infrastructure, and
- wins the confidence, support, and membership of regional stakeholders with an advocacy mission that strives to coordinate mutual efforts and ensure that waterways' interests speak with a unified voice.

WCI had a total of 171 members in 2024



WCI LEADERSHIP 2024

WCI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Andrew Brown
SVP and General Counsel, Ingram Barge Company

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Vice President, Channel Shipyard Companies

Austin Golding
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Martin T. Hettel | Secretary
Vice President - Government Affairs, American Commercial Barge Line

Damon Judd | Vice Chair
President, Marquette Transportation Company, LLC.

Lee Nelson | Vice Chair
President & CEO, Upper River Services, LLC.

Spencer Murphy
General Counsel and Vice President - Risk Management, Canal Barge Company

Tim Parker III
President and CEO, Parker Towing Company

Scott Ramshaw
Government Relations, United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters 562

Matt Ricketts | Immediate Past Chair
President & CEO, Crouse Corporation

Peter H. Stephaich
Chairman, Campbell Transportation Company

Jeff Webb | First Vice Chair
President, Cargill Marine & Terminal

Rodney Weinzierl
Executive Director, Illinois Corn Growers Association

Matt Woodruff | General Counsel
Vice President - Public & Government Affairs, Kirby Corporation

Tracy Zea | President & CEO
Waterways Council, Inc.



WCI LEADERSHIP 2024

WCI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Matt Woodruff | General Counsel
Vice President - Public & Government Affairs,
Kirby Corporation

Tracy Zea
President & CEO, Waterways Council, Inc.



WCI 2024

KEY PRIORITIES

At its February Board of Directors meeting in Washington, DC, WCI's Board of Directors approved its 2024 key priorities that set the course for WCI's work for the year as follows, with progress:

Secure Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Energy and Water Development (E&WD) appropriations for the full amount supportable by annual diesel fuel tax receipts deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF).



Secure Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Energy and Water Development (E&WD) appropriations for the full amount supportable by annual diesel fuel tax receipts deposited into the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF).



Ensure IJA-funded inland waterways construction projects remain 100% federally funded or adjust the construction cost share to 75%/25%.



Ensure enactment of WRDA 2024 bill, consistent with WCI priorities.



Secure a reallocation of funding from the MKARNS 12-foot deepening project to the Three Rivers project to ensure the Three Rivers project is completed efficiently.



Collaborate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop and update the Capital Investment Strategy.

WCI 2024

LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS



The Three Rivers Project reallocation was a top priority for WCI in 2024.

On February 28, the Corps released a FY24 construction spend plan to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that reallocated almost \$83 million (100% federally funded, as part of \$2.5 billion provided by the infrastructure package) from \$92.6 million provided to the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS) 12-foot deepening project to the Three Rivers Project. This funding will facilitate phase two of the contract that will bring this project to completion. Without the completion of Three Rivers, the MKARNS deepening project is rendered moot.

At a Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee hearing on the same day titled, “Water Resources Development Act 2024: USACE Water Infrastructure Projects, Programs, and Priorities,” Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Michael Connor announced the reallocation and committed to finding any additional resources needed to complete the Three Rivers Project.

The Inland Waterways Users Board (IWUB) approved a motion to reallocate funds between these projects at its April 13, 2023, meeting. The Three Rivers reallocation was a top priority for WCI in 2024.

The Three Rivers Project is centered on the confluence of the White and Arkansas Rivers with the Mississippi River, upstream from Montgomery Point Lock and Dam. The mouths of the White and Arkansas are at differing elevations and start to hydrologically merge during high water events. A breach would create dangerous crosscurrents during high flows and a loss of navigation pool during low flows.

FY24 Energy & Water Development Appropriations Bill Funding the Corps of Engineers Passes, Avoids Grave Setbacks to Inland Navigation Construction

Inland Waterways construction projects received a record amount of funding at **\$456 million** with no cost-share requirement for that funding from the IWTF. By comparison, **\$409 million** was the previous record allocated in **FY17**.

On March 6, the House followed the Senate and passed a \$435 billion FY24 appropriations package of six bills that included Energy & Water Development (E&WD), funding the Army Corps of Engineers through September 30. In total, the Corps of Engineers received \$8.68 billion, an increase of \$1.27 billion from the FY24 President’s budget request.

Passage of the FY24 E&WD appropriations bill was the top priority for WCI this year and avoided a catastrophic setback to the inland waterways’ construction program that would have occurred if Congress enacted a full-year Continuing Resolution (CR). Under a full-year CR, the most funding that inland waterways construction projects could have received was \$59.3 million, nearly \$400 million below what is included in this bill.



LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

On May 13, the Corps of Engineers released its FY24 Work Plan for allocating funds provided in the FY24 E&WD appropriations bill. The program scored two huge wins for inland waterways modernization in the plan, record-level funding of \$456 million for inland waterways construction projects and no cost-share requirement for that funding from the IWTF. By comparison, \$409 million was allocated in FY17, the previous record amount. The following construction projects were funded:

- **Chickamauga Lock** - \$236.8 million, requested by Cong. Fleischmann (TN-03)
- **Three Rivers** - \$103.17 million, requested by Cong. Crawford (AR-01)
- **Lower Mon** - \$41 million, requested by Cong. Reschenthaler (PA-14), Sens. Capito (WV), and Casey (PA)
- **Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP)** - \$120 million to be divided between navigation and ecosystem restoration, requested by Cong. S. Graves (MO-06), Luetkemeyer (MO-03), Sorensen (IL-17), and Budzinski (IL-13), Sens. Baldwin (WI), Duckworth (IL), Durbin (IL), Klobuchar (MN), and Smith (MN). The Corps provided the total amounts and specifics when the FY24 workplan was released on May 13.

The Investigations account received \$132 million, up \$1.75 million from the FY24 President's budget request. Funded inland waterways studies include:

- **Bayou Sorrel Lock:** received \$800,000, requested by Cong. G. Graves (LA-06)
- **J. Bennett Johnston Waterway:** received \$500,000 (to examine the feasibility of deepening the waterway to 12 feet), requested by Sen. Cassidy (LA)

Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) - \$367 million, which represents a \$140 million increase from the President's FY24 budget request. Some inland waterways projects funded include:

- **Channel Improvements:** \$57.9 million for Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee
- **Helena Harbor:** \$580,000
- **Baton Rouge Harbor, Devils Swamp:** \$564,000
- **Greenville Harbor:** \$1.23 million, includes a \$300,000 increase above the budget request of \$934,000, requested by Senator Hyde-Smith (R-MS)
- **Vicksburg Harbor:** \$1.24 million, includes a \$300,000 increase above the budget request of \$944,000, requested by Senator Hyde-Smith (MS)
- **Memphis Harbor:** \$2.43 million

The Operations and Maintenance (O&M) account was allocated \$5.55 billion, a \$1.24 billion increase from the President's FY24 budget request.



President's FY25 Budget Request

On March 11, the President released the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) budget that requested \$7.22 billion for the Corps' Civil Works program, down from FY24's request of \$7.413 billion.

In the Construction account, \$1.986 billion was requested, a 3% decrease from the FY24 request of \$2.02 billion.

Despite an IWTF balance of at least \$150 million available for FY25, \$0 was provided for ongoing and new Construction and Major Rehabilitation projects. A repeat of FY24's budget request, this remained a major disappointment to WCI and the industry overall.

The President's budget request for the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) account of \$4.16 billion includes \$2.47 billion for all Corps mission areas except ones funded by the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF); \$965 million for inland waterways O&M and \$1.73 billion to be derived from the HMTF. This represents a \$150 million decrease from FY24's request of \$4.31 billion.

Some inland ports receiving dredging money that were hit hard during low water in 2023 included:

--Greenville Harbor: \$1,334,000

--Memphis Harbor: \$2,436,000

--Vicksburg Harbor: \$1,045,000

--Osceola Harbor: \$656,000

In the Investigations account, \$110.59 million was requested, a decrease of \$19.2 million from what was requested in the FY24 President's Budget of \$129.8 million.





WATERWAYS
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Over the last 11 years, WCI has secured \$2.2 billion in additional appropriations, and \$2.9 billion in supplemental funding for a total of an additional \$5.1 billion in construction funding.

Overall, WCI's efforts have resulted in the Corps' Civil Works funding almost doubling, from \$5 billion 12 years ago to nearly \$9 billion in 2024.

FY25 Appropriations

WCI's advocacy work throughout the FY25 appropriations process resulted in significant increases in funding above the President's budget request. However, FY25 appropriations have not yet been finalized this year. If a full-year Continuing Resolution is passed, available funding for inland waterways construction projects will be based on the FY24 funding.

House Appropriations Committee Passes Energy & Water Development Bill With Record Funding

On July 9, the House Appropriations Committee marked up and passed the Energy & Water Development and Related Agencies appropriations bill, which recommended nearly \$10 billion for the Corps' Civil Works mission, a record funding level. FY25 E&WD funding was \$1.28 billion above last year's (FY24) enacted level and provided \$423 million for construction and major rehabilitation projects on the inland waterways system.

For the FY25 Construction Account, \$1.85 billion was recommended, a decrease of \$170 million from the FY24 President's budget request.

Inland waterways construction and major rehabilitation projects received another strong year of recommended funding in the House bill at \$423 million. Construction projects specifically recommended for funding include:

- **Kentucky Lock and Dam, Tennessee River:** \$218 million, requested by Cong. Comer (KY-01)
- **Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP):** \$54 million, all of which will go toward ecosystem restoration efforts. Recommended funding requested by Representatives S. Graves (MO-06), LaHood (IL-16), Luetkemeyer (MO-03), Sorensen (IL-17), and Budzinski (IL-13), Senators Baldwin (WI), Duckworth (IL), Durbin (IL), Klobuchar (MN), and Smith (MN)

The remaining funding for inland waterways construction is contained in an additional funding pot that the Corps will allocate in its FY25 work plan that will be released 60 days after enactment of the final E&WD bill.

LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Investigations account recommendation was \$159 million, up \$48.42 million from the FY25 President's budget request. Specifically, studies recommended for funding by the House included:

- **St. Anthony Falls, Lock and Dam 1, Mississippi River:** \$100,000
- **Upper St. Anthony Falls, Mississippi River:** \$50,000

The Mississippi River and Tributaries account recommendation of \$370 million represents a \$125.16 million increase from the President's FY25 budget request. Some inland waterways projects recommended for funding include:

- **Channel Improvements:** \$81.18 million for Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee
- **Helena Harbor:** \$581,000
- **Baton Rouge Harbor, Devil's Swamp:** \$69,000
- **Greenville Harbor:** \$1.33 million
- **Vicksburg Harbor:** \$1.04 million
- **Memphis Harbor:** \$2.44 million

The Operations and Maintenance account recommendation included \$5.71 billion, a \$3.24 billion increase from the President's budget request.

Powerful Progress: The Senate Appropriations Committee's FY25 Energy and Water Development funding was a record amount for the Corps of Engineers at \$10.34 billion, up from FY13's \$4.72 billion.

The Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously passed the FY25 Energy & Water Development Bill, providing record funding at \$10.33 Billion.

In the Senate, the inland waterways received the highest amount of Congressionally Directed Spending (formerly earmarks) requests for projects not included in the President's FY25 budget, with \$218 million for Kentucky Lock and \$205 million for Montgomery Lock.



FY25 Appropriations

On August 1, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed unanimously by a vote of 28-0 the FY25 E&WD and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

The bill included \$10.344 billion for the Corps' Civil Works mission, which represents record funding and is even higher than the nearly \$10 billion the House Appropriations Committee recommendation approved on July 9.

For the Construction Account, \$2.98 million was recommended, an increase of \$1 billion from the FY25 President's budget request. This included \$423 million for two ongoing construction projects, specifically:

- **Kentucky Lock:** \$218 million, requested by Senator McConnell (KY); and
- **Montgomery Lock:** \$205 million, requested by Senators Casey and Fetterman (PA)

The Senate recommended \$107.8 million for the Investigations account and \$200 million for a new Planning, Engineering, and Design account that included activities previously included in the Investigations account. Projects recommended for funding included:

- **Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and Black Warrior River Deepening study:** \$2.9 million, requested by Senators Britt (AL) and Wicker (MS)
- **J. Bennett Johnston Waterway Deepening study:** \$500,000, requested by Senator Cassidy (LA)

LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

MR&T received \$375.5 million, which represented a \$130.7 million increase from the President's FY25 budget request. The Senate recommended an additional \$12.78 million for dredging on the system to be allocated to specific projects in a work plan. Some specific projects recommended for funding included:

- **Channel Improvement Construction:** \$42.83 million
- **Channel Improvement Operations and Maintenance:** \$81.12 million
- **Greenville Harbor:** \$1.63 million, requested by Senator Hyde-Smith (MS)
- **Vicksburg Harbor:** \$1.35 million, requested by Senator Hyde-Smith (MS)
- **Memphis Harbor:** \$2.44 million

The Senate recommended \$5.85 billion for the O&M account, a \$300 million increase from last year's enacted levels.

The Senate included report language for two important issues to the inland waterways. The first directed the Corps, under certain circumstances, to use its existing continuing contract authorities for construction projects that cost share with the IWTF and dam safety projects. The second prohibits the Corps from using any funds for remote lock operations until the Committee is provided with the National assessment completed on lock and dam remote operations and a stakeholder engagement plan.



Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2024

WCI's efforts in WRDA 2024 resulted in a permanent cost-share change at 75% general Treasury revenues/25% IWTF for inland waterways construction projects and major rehabilitation. This change will result in nearly \$500 million (vs. \$357 million at the previous 65%/35% cost-share) available each year for waterways improvements, which will greatly accelerate the completion of inland waterways construction projects and ensure more reliability in the system.

WCI 2024

LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Senate WRDA 2024 bill (Section 109) that passed the EPW Committee on May 22, and later unanimously by the full Senate on August 1, provided 100% full Federal funding for navigation projects in the IIJA. It also permanently adjusted the inland waterways cost-share for construction and major rehabilitation projects to 75% general revenues/25% IWTF (from the current 65%/35%).

On June 26, the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee marked up and passed its WRDA 2024 bill that, disappointingly, did not include any provisions for modernizing the inland waterways, despite the support of more than 50 House Members for WCI's WRDA 2024 request. The bill passed on the House floor under suspension rules with no changes or amendments on July 22.



LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

Like the Senate, the House bill authorized one inland waterways Chief's Report, Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Brazoria, and Matagorda Counties at a cost of \$314,221,000 (\$204,244,000 from the Federal treasury and \$109,977,000 from the IWTF).

The House, like the Senate, included a provision that restricts the Corps from using remote operation activities to replace personnel at Corps' navigation and hydroelectric power generating facilities. The restriction will remain in place for 10 years unless the Corps provides Congress with written notice that the use of remote operations will not affect operations and maintenance for navigation, that it addresses cyber and physical security risks, is necessary to increase the availability and capacity for the project and is developed with personnel and other stakeholders who may be affected by use of remote operations.

After the House's disappointing outcome, WCI enlisted the help of organizations to sign a coalition letter urging that Section 109 of the Senate WRDA bill be included in the final WRDA bill. The letter was signed by 30 organizations (American Chemistry Council, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Iron and Steel Institute, American Soybean Association, American Waterways Operators, Associated General Contractors of America, Big River Coalition, Great Lakes Dredge and Dock, Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association (GICA), Illinois Corn Growers Association, Illinois Soybean Association, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Missouri Corn Growers Association, Missouri Farm Bureau, Missouri Soybean Association, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Corn Growers Association, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Grain and Feed Association, National Mining Association, National Oilseed Processors Association, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, Portland Cement Association, Tennessee River Valley Association, Tennessee-Cumberland Waterways Council, The Fertilizer Institute, Upper Mississippi River Basin Association, Warrior-Tombigbee Waterway Association, Waterways Association of Pittsburgh, and WCI, sent to the Senators Tom Carper and Shelley Moore Capito, Chairman and Ranking Member, respectively, of the Senate EPW Committee, and Representatives Sam Graves and Rick Larsen, Chairman and Ranking Member, respectively, of the T&I Committee.

On December 10, WRDA 2024 passed in the House, followed by the Senate on December 18, and included Section 1126 that permanently adjusts the inland waterways cost-share for construction and major rehabilitation projects to 75% general revenues/25% IWTF (from 65%/35%). This is a huge victory for WCI and inland waterways infrastructure, as this cost-share change allows for an estimated \$1.4 billion of additional dollars over a 10-year period to be available for appropriations in an Energy & Water Development bill. Specifically, with annual IWTF revenues of \$115 million, a 75%/25% cost-share allows for \$460 million in appropriations, an increase of \$131 million above the 65%/35% formula.

Other noteworthy provisions included in the final WRDA 2024 bill include:

- **Section 1118** adds new considerations for awarding contracts in the Inland Waterways Regional Dredge Pilot Program including improving navigation reliability on the inland waterways that are accessible year-round, increasing freight capacity on the inland waterways, and has the potential to enhance the availability of containerized cargo on the inland waterways.
- **Section 1149** allows the Corps to perform remote operations only after the Secretary provides written notice to Congress that the remote operations do not affect the operation and maintenance of navigation or hydroelectric power generating facilities, addresses cyber and physical security threats, is necessary to increase availability and access, and was developed under a public process that includes engagement with personnel and stakeholders who may be impacted by the activities.
- **Section 1370** directs the Corps to use all relevant authorities to expeditiously provide technical assistance, including engineering and design assistance, and cost estimation assistance to request Federal entities to address the impacts to navigation along the Tennessee River at Wilson Lock and Dam, Alabama.
- **Section 1401** authorizes the GIWW Brazoria and Matagorda Counties project for \$322,761,000.

WCI 2024

COMMUNICATIONS & GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES



COMMUNICATIONS & GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES

As a way to continually communicate to members and partners, WCI issues *Breaking News* that highlights key developments within the inland waterways industry; the *ebrief* that captures information shared on WCI's Legislative Roundtable calls held generally on the second and fourth Friday of each month; the *President's Recap* distributed to the WCI Board of Directors on the weeks the *ebrief* is not issued; and *Capitol Currents*, WCI's newsletter issued quarterly.



Politico, the prestigious "Inside the Beltway" Washington, DC, publication that covers Congress, the Administration and politics, published a feature story on July 4, "[Big River: Can the Mississippi Build America Again?](#)" that highlighted the importance of the inland waterways transportation system to the U.S. economy, shippers and farmers, the environment, and our quality of life. WCI worked with two reporters on the story for nearly two years leading up to its publication.



BY THE NUMBERS

In 2024, WCI issued:

 **20**
ebriefs

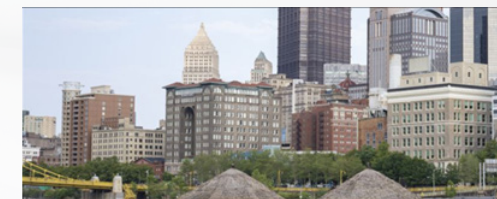
 **20**
President's Recap
to the Board of Directors

 **4**
Capitol Currents

 **16**
Breaking News

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

WCI, with its members Campbell Transportation Co., Port of Pittsburgh Commission, and Gateway Clipper Fleet, worked with the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on a feature story that appeared on Sunday, December 1 which highlighted the many users and beneficiaries of the Monongahela, the Allegheny, and Ohio Rivers



Centuries later, the rivers that run through Pittsburgh still keep businesses afloat



It's the principle of it



The IFTTT principle—the “If This Then That” is a tech principle that’s used in many different software applications to automate tasks and generate new functionality. It’s a very simple process, which makes it easily accessible to users without any programming knowledge.

But IFTTT could also be applied to current day Congress, which has been recessed for the entirety of October in the run-up to the recent November elections. If Congress acts on two key pieces of legislation before the end of the 118th Congressional session, THEN the inland waterways construction program could significantly move forward. But IF Congress fails to act, THEN the inland waterways construction program could be significantly set back.

Specifically, before the end of 2024, Congress must enact a Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA) policy bill and a Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Energy and Water Development (E&WD) appropriations bill that funds the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers bill.

While all inland waterways navigation projects are cost-shared 65% from general Treasury funds and 35% from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF), the Senate’s WRDA 2024 bill (section 109) includes a provision authorizing the navigation projects funded by the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) remain 100% federally funded for the balance of their construction period. These projects include Kentucky Lock, Three Rivers, T.J. O’Brien Major Rehabilitation, Lock and Dam 25, Montgomery Lock, Emsworth

Lock, and the deepening of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS). Also included in the Senate bill provision is a permanent cost-share change from the current 65%/35% to 75% general Treasury/25% IWTF. This change would provide the inland waterways construction portfolio at least an additional \$120 million a year overall if enacted into law. These additional funds would facilitate reductions in costs, construction timelines, and allow for increased efficiency.

The House WRDA 2024 bill contained no inland waterways provision, despite the support of more than 50 House Members signing on for WCI’s priorities in the bill.

With Congress on recess during the month of October, staff negotiations continue to reconcile the differences in the House and Senate bill.

All signs point toward a lame-duck enactment of WRDA 2024 after the elections, if the bill gets passed at all. This process mirrors WRDA bills enacted in 2020 and 2022. Since 1986, only five of the last 14 WRDA bills have been signed into law before the November elections. But, over the last 10 years, WRDA has seemingly become muscle memory for Congress, with five bills passed biennially. This experience could lead to a smoother enactment process should a lame-duck enactment of the WRDA 2024 be necessary.

The other must-pass bill is the FY25 E&WD bill, which has not fully passed both the House and Senate. The federal government is currently operating under

a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) through December 20, as the E&WD bill is pending along with the 11 other appropriations bills that fund the entire federal government. The impact of a short-term CR on the inland waterways is driven by the “least of” rule. During a short-term CR, the most funding a Corps project is eligible to receive is the lesser of the amount included in the President’s budget request for FY25, the amount in the FY25 House appropriations bill, or the Senate appropriations bill. Since the President’s budget requested \$0 for inland waterways construction, no new funds could flow to the inland waterways until a final bill—or CR extension of funding—is passed.

If, after December 20, a final appropriations bill cannot be negotiated and a full-year CR is enacted into law, the inland waterways will be in a better place, considering that FY24 saw a record amount of project funding at \$456 million. In this case, it is likely that the inland waterways could receive over \$400 million in construction funding, a significant amount, since the inland sector has only received this level of funding three out of the last 11 fiscal years.

So, while the inland waterways construction program is strategically in a good place, politics rule the day in Congress. “If This Then That” will mean that if WRDA 2024 and FY25 E&WD appropriations can be passed by the end of December, then efficient changes will come to the inland waterways’ navigation construction program, which benefits the nation at large. And if not, then the program, and the nation, will fall backwards and behind.



Tracy Zea
President/CEO
Waterways Council Inc.

Photo Credit: Shutterstock/ Randy Ruchatz



On April 29, Mike Pearson, Broadcast Director of Farm Progress and host of the nationally syndicated agriculture news show called “This Week in Agribusiness,” interviewed Tracy Zea on WCI priorities and the legislative outlook for the ag sector this year.





Participants of the 2024 WCI media tour stand at Chickamauga, as work continues on the lock replacement project slated to be operational in 2027.

2024 Media Tour

On August 19, WCI hosted its annual media tour, this year at Chickamauga Lock to receive a briefing from the Corps of Engineers on the status of the lock replacement project in Chattanooga on the Tennessee River. For more than a decade, WCI has hosted these tours at different lock sites around the country as a way to help further educate the news media on the inland waterways system and its lock and dam infrastructure.

Reporters and editors from trade outlets *Waterways Journal* and *Engineering News Record* joined local media from the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* and TV stations *WDEF* Fox Channel 12 and *WTVC* ABC NewsChannel 9, plus WCI members Tennessee Soybean Promotion Board, Ingram Barge Company, ACBL, and LIUNA. The WCI tour was led by Senior Vice President Deb Calhoun and Director of Government Relations Jen Armstrong. WCI Board Chair Cherrie Felder and Cline Jones with Tennessee River Valley Association also participated in the events. News articles were published from every media outlet that participated, and a podcast interview with WCI and the Corps, also resulted from the tour.



COMMUNICATIONS & GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES

Social Media

WCI's social media efforts in 2024 shared information to Advocate, Educate, and Elevate.

We shared advocacy Action Alerts and engagement with Congress, and highlighted WCI's work with individual constituents and the Corps that impact Congressional decisions.

We also educated followers about modal comparisons, lock construction and maintenance progress, the inland waterways system's economic impact, and industry updates and media coverage.

WCI emphasized our member visits, content, and events to elevate the benefits of membership and the support and fellowship WCI provides.



4,077
FOLLOWERS



3,921
FOLLOWERS

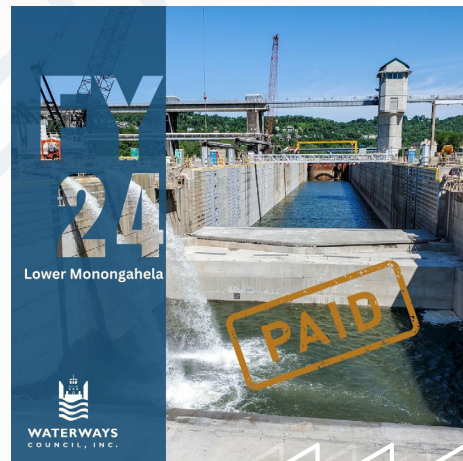


944
FOLLOWERS



865
FOLLOWERS

The Corps of Engineers FY24 Work Plan, from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (IIJA) funding appropriations selected four inland construction projects including the Lower Monongahela River Project. #RiversMoveUS



Our top posts in 2024 included



This Earth Day, and everyday, #RiversMoveUS



Just a few characteristics of our industry that make us great. We're excited to witness greatness from Team USA this Olympics!





WCI ACTION ALERTS

WCI Action Alerts were sent to our more than 4,000 opted-in advocates to facilitate communication with Members of Congress and to advocate for the inland waterways. Evergreen action alerts also populate our website's Action Center year-round. Opt-in to receive Alerts by email here or by texting. LOCKS from your smartphone to 202-979-0993.



We Need YOU

Text LOCKS to (202) 979-0993 now to sign up for our Action Alerts!



TIME TO REVISIT AND REVISE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12322

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



Jan Armstrong

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Corps of Engineers' Civil Works mission. It all began in 1964 when our Nation's 34th president, Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law a bill for the improvement of navigation on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. While Corp 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 hydrologically 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 change 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 enactment of the Corps' ability to recommend projects that were economically justified and protect the environment that moved the needle for the change to come. Pivoting 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 240 water resource projects, questioning their compliance with environmental laws and deciding 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

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1. WCI's 50th Anniversary
- 2. WCI FY24/25 Cost-Share Priority
- 3. Member Spotlight: Port of Little Rock
- 4. WCI Meets in San Antonio
- 5. National Waterways Foundation Celebrates New Study on Waterways Beneficiaries

Continued on page 2

WCI's newsletter Capitol Currents was issued four times this year on April 2, July 16, October 8 and December 20.

During WCI's 2024 Digital Advocacy Week in February that coincided with WCI's Capitol Hill Fly-In on February 6, more than 700 emails, calls, & Tweets were sent to legislators about the importance of the inland waterways.

2024 PHOTO CONTEST

WATERWAYS connect US

CAREERS Many call waterways their workplace. Waterways provide careers in transportation, shipping, recreation, and conservation, among others. This category focuses on showcasing the people at work on and along the nation's rivers, canals, and waterways.

COMMERCE Waterways connect us to the materials we need, food on the tables, gas in vehicles, building materials, and other critical commodities we use every day. Commerce photos will focus on the vessels, machines, tools, materials, and pathways (such as locks & dams, ports, terminals) that help deliver goods and services to communities across the country.

CONSERVATION Waterways, throughout their steady march to the sea, connect ecosystems and impact the many species that live in and beside them. Photos in this category focus on sharing the natural beauty of our rivers, such as sunrises, sunsets and wildlife, and conservation efforts, including clean-ups.

CULTURE Waterways connect us to our culture and impact our communities and the recreation we enjoy. Photos in this category focus on sharing the recreational activities connected to our rivers, such as river history, recreational boating, canoeing, kayaking, showboats, music, and so much more.

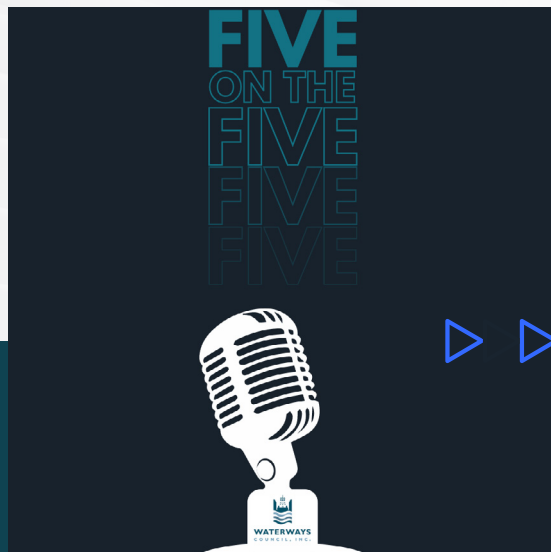
PHOTOGRAPHERS: KYLE HENDLEY, SCOTT DUPRIEST, JUSTIN CARLISLE, MAUREEN KRISTOF, RICHARD MONTGOMERY, BAILEY SUITER, RICHARD LEESE, JUSTIN CARLISLE, JOHN MILLER, GARY COLEMAN, JOSEPH FOSTER, JACK BROWN.

Again, this year, WCI, along with *Waterways Journal* and *We Work the Waterways*, sponsored the #WaterwaysConnectUS Photo Contest, which received more than 300 submissions within categories of Careers, Commerce, Conservation, and Culture. And the winners are...



COMMUNICATIONS & GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES

Five on the Five



In 2024, WCI's members-only 'Five on the Five' interview series of five questions distributed on the 5th of each month, profiled legislators and other important industry representatives, as follows:

[WCI Director of Government Relations Dustin Davidson](#) (January 5)

[John Kane, Director of Infrastructure, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works](#) (February 5)

[Rep. Rick Crawford \(R-AR\)](#) (March 5)

[Ryan Hambleton, Staff Director of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment](#) (April 5)

[Spencer Murphy, Chairman, Inland Waterways Users Board](#) (May 5)

[Rep. Dale Strong \(R-AL\)](#) (June 5)

[Senator Pete Ricketts \(R-NE\)](#) (July 5)

[Senator Chuck Grassley \(R-IA\)](#) (August 5)

[Deb Calhoun \(WCI SVP\)](#) (October 5)

[Tracy Zea \(WCI President/CEO\)](#) (November 5)

Other Corps Events

The Corps' Pittsburgh District held a commemoration ceremony to rename Lock 4 on the Monongahela River to the John P. Murtha Locks and Dam August 28. Shown here, the first celebratory towboat locks through the new navigation chamber after a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the lock. *(Photo credit: Michel Sauret, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District)*



WCI 2024

MEMBERSHIP & MEMBER ACTIVITIES





WATERWAYS
COUNCIL, INC.

WCI MEMBERS GAINED IN 2024

- American Cruise Lines
- Birdon America, Inc.
- Bollard Marine Consulting
- Massman Construction
- Poinsett Rice & Grain
- Port of Little Rock
- Reliant Maritime Solutions, LLC
- SEA O.G
- Tennessee Corn
- Tennessee Soybean Association
- Texas Terminals International
- Upper Mississippi Fleeting

WCI MEMBERS DROPPED IN 2024

- Alan K. Goldstein
- Acuity International
- Bollard Marine Consulting
- Devall Towing & Boat Service
- First Citizens Bank Equipment Finance
- Heritage Petroleum, LLC
- Inland Marine Service
- International Liquid Terminals Association
- JB Marine Service
- Kansas Corn Growers Association
- Knoy Consulting LLC
- New Madrid County Port Authority
- Placid Refining
- Port of Palacios
- Shimmick Construction
- Southern Towing
- Trabus Technologies
- Watco Companies



MEMBERSHIP & MEMBER ACTIVITIES

WCI MEETINGS 2024

WCI Board of Directors Meeting and Capitol Hill Fly-in, Washington, DC

Waterways Council, Inc. held its Board of Directors meeting on February 6 in Washington, DC, where, among other actions, the Board approved WCI's 2024 priorities. The next day, WCI's members in attendance divided into state teams and visited nearly 100 offices in the House of Representatives and Senate to advocate for the Nation's inland waterways and WCI priorities which included the passage of FY24 and FY25 appropriations, and WCI's request for WRDA 2024.

WCI social events included an opening reception on February 6 at Pearl Street that was attended by WCI members and supporters, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Michael Connor, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jaime Pinkham, and Corps of Engineers staff, and a reception on Capitol Hill following the day's Hill meetings, attended by WCI members, supporters, and Congressional staff.



At the meeting on February 7, Senator Baldwin was presented WCI's 21st Annual Leadership Service Award for her championship of the nation's inland waterways and support of the Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). Shown here (left to right): Anne Thompson (Farm Credit Council); Tracy Zea (WCI); Jeff Webb (Cargill, WCI Vice Chair); Cherrie Felder (Channel Shipyard Companies, WCI Chair); Senator Baldwin; Molly Isnardi (Upper River Services, LLC); and Kirsten Wallace (Upper Mississippi River Basin Association).



The WCI Alabama team meets with Senator Katie Britt as part of WCI's Capitol Hill fly-in.



WCI members from ADM (ARTco) and the Iowa Corn Growers stand with Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-IA) during the WCI meetings in February.



The WCI Pennsylvania team is ready to take the (Capitol) Hill for the inland waterways.



MEMBERSHIP & MEMBER ACTIVITIES

WCI Annual Meeting and Waterways Symposium, San Antonio

On November 13-15, WCI held its Annual Board of Directors meeting and Waterways Symposium in San Antonio at the Omni® La Mansión Del Rio Hotel.

During the Board meeting, WCI staff reviewed with its members legislative, stakeholder, and communications activities that occurred since its last meeting in February in Washington, DC.

November 14 kicked off WCI's Annual Waterways Symposium, co-sponsored with *Waterways Journal*, 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.

Next, Edward Belk, the Corps' Director of Civil Works, and keynote speaker Nathan Gonzales, Editor and Publisher, *Inside Elections*, addressed the USACE and political landscapes.



WCI Chair Felder (left) ended her Chair-ship and welcomed Jeff Webb (right) as WCI's Chairman for the next two years.



Edward Belk, the Corps' Director of Civil Works



Kristin Meira, Director of Government Affairs, American Cruise Lines, Inc., discussed "American Cruise Lines: The Many Uses and Benefits of Inland Waterways," and Ken Eriksen, Managing Member and Strategic Advisor, Polaris Analytics and Consulting, provided the "Economic Outlook: Global Supply Chain for Commodities Moving on the Inland Waterways."

As part of WCI's meetings, The National Rivers Hall of Fame 2024 National Achievement Award for significant contributions to America's waterways was presented. Established in 1985, the National Rivers Hall of Fame collects, preserves, and shares the stories of the people who have had a significant impact on the rivers of America. The award was presented by Kurt Strand, President and CEO, National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium, to Captain Jay Manthey, American Cruise Lines.



Ben White, ACBL, (left) catches up with Paul Dittman of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association (GICA), a WCI partnering organization, at the November meeting's closing reception in San Antonio.



WCI's opening special event was held at the Alamo on November 13, where WCI staff stood for their holiday 2024 photo.



WCI's closing reception was held at Ostra Restaurant in the Mokara Hotel. Pictured here are WCI members (left to right) Lance Sannino (Enterprise Products), Brandon Davidson and Glenn Hendon (Hines Furlong Line).

SPONSORS



Co-Sponsored by *Waterways Journal*, WCI's Annual Waterways Symposium (#SYM24) was once again generously supported by sponsoring member companies, as follows:

the **WATERWAYS JOURNAL** Weekly

DC February Capitol Hill Fly-In Sponsors:

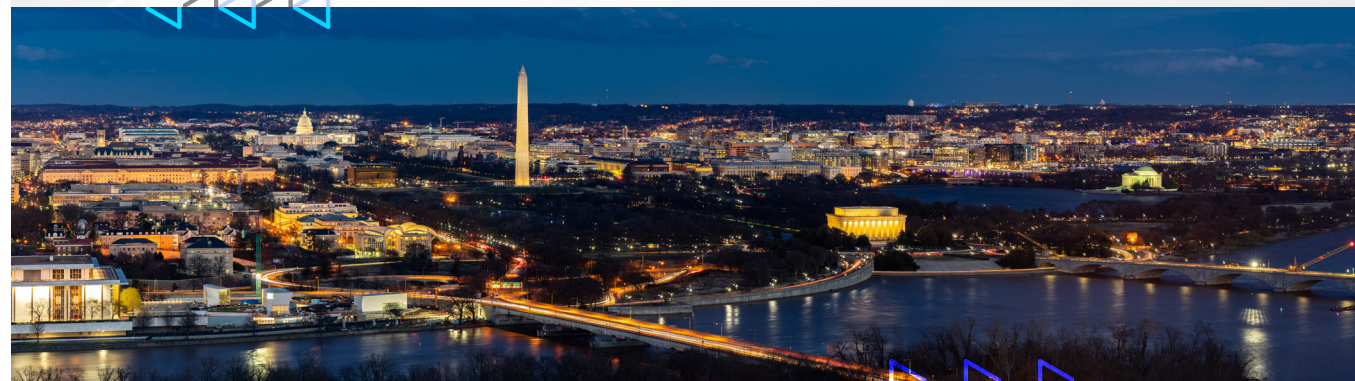
Platinum (\$5,000)



Gold (\$3,500)



Silver (\$2,000)



SPONSORS

WCI November Meeting and Annual Waterways Symposium Sponsors:

Platinum (\$5,000)



Gold (\$3,500)



Silver (\$2,000)



San Antonio was the site of WCI's 2024 Annual Waterways Symposium and meetings.



OTHER EVENTS OF THE YEAR

Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study Scoping Meetings

In February and March, the Corps of Engineers Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive (LMR Comp) Management Study team held 32 public scoping meetings throughout the country, including a virtual meeting. WCI developed talking points for WCI members to utilize at the meetings, noting that Inland navigation stakeholders are not opposed to the comprehensive study but would like to ensure that no negative impacts to the inland navigation system come from any study recommendations; the inland navigation community believes there is an opportunity in this study to advance the system. We believe the Corps could address the Lower Mississippi River operational maintenance at 12 feet, as authorized by Congress per the Flood Control Act of 1944; and when looking at dredging the Lower Mississippi River, it's important to not only think about the main channel but also the harbors and supporting areas. If you cannot access or exit harbors, no tonnage can move down or up the river's main stem.

In July, the Corps released a public scoping report to provide a summary of comments received during the scoping meeting. The Study Team will use this information to shape the scope of the Study, inform the development of alternatives, and guide the NEPA analysis.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Michael Connor Visit Lock and Dam 25



On May 3, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Michael Connor visited Lock and Dam 25 to underscore the importance of the inland waterways to agriculture. The visit also highlighted the Biden Administration's investments in infrastructure that are vital to getting the products grown and raised by America's farmers, ranchers and producers to market efficiently and priced competitively. The event also focused efforts to help U.S. agricultural exporters and producers strengthen their presence in existing markets and open new market opportunities around the world, as well as strengthen local and regional supply chains in the states along the Mississippi River and across the country.



Lock Outages at Demopolis, Holt, and Wilson Disrupt Operators and Shippers, Economy



Ty Melton, a lock mechanic with the Corps' Nashville District, dons diving headgear with the help of Matt Williamson, a fellow mechanic at Wilson Lock, to dive-inspect the cracks in the land and river sides of the gates at Wilson Lock that closed on September 25. Photo credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



In 2024, the system – and operators and shippers – suffered three major disruptions when failures occurred at Demopolis Lock, Holt Lock and Wilson Lock.

Demopolis

On January 16, Demopolis Lock, located near the junction of the Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers in Alabama, experienced a catastrophic failure when a large portion of the concrete upper sill fell away, allowing water to flow under the upper gates.

The Corps' Mobile District, along with partners from the Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC), the Inland Navigation Design Center (INDC), other USACE Districts, including Pittsburgh, and the O&M Contractor (R&D Maintenance Services), worked tirelessly to repair the breach and reopen it on May 16. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the lock typically experiences 12 daily transits of various critical cargoes, such as feedstock, steel, coal and crude oil across Alabama and beyond, and almost 12 million tons of cargo transit through this lock on an annual basis. Economic losses during the Demopolis closure were estimated to be between \$1-2 million a month when the lock was closed.



Holt

Holt Lock and Dam, located on the Black Warrior River in Holt, Alabama, was closed on June 22 when cracks and leaks in the lock's structure were found, creating instability issues that posed a safety risk to personnel and waterway users

During the closure, the Corps' Mobile District installed a new bulkhead railing system on the culvert to help relieve pressure on the lock's monolith. The lock reopened on October 2 after 102 days of closure. Next, anchors will need to be installed to reduce pressure on the monolith bulkhead, which is expected to take more than a year and is estimated to cost between \$25-\$100 million. The closure has disrupted primarily coal transport, as well as other commodities.

Wilson

On September 25, Wilson Lock on the Tennessee River near Florence, Alabama, was closed after a Corps' Nashville District and Tennessee Valley Authority inspection and risk assessment of the lower miter gates determined that the main lock chamber experienced cracks in the lock gates on both the land and river sides. Wilson lock's smaller auxiliary lock is open and available for navigational use during the main chamber closure, which will require full dewatering. Repairs are expected to continue until Summer 2025.



A view into the de-watered main chamber of Wilson Lock November 25. The lock was emptied of water to allow engineers to further inspect the lock miter gates and begin critical repairs. (Photo credit: Michael Davis, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

USACE Planning Associates Meeting



On April 22, WCI was again invited to present to the meeting of the Corps' Planning Associates -- an advanced training opportunity in water resources planning -- on the navigation industry panel along with Paul Dittman of the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association and Neil Maunu of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association. Held in Vancouver, WA, the Planning Associates meeting helps to broaden Corps planners' competencies in solving complex water resources problems and challenges.



Embassy Staff Waterways Tour



On May 14, transportation staff from the Washington, DC-based Embassies of Germany, Switzerland, France, Canada, Portugal, the UK, the Netherlands and the EU Delegation enlisted WCI's help in organizing a visit to the Port of Memphis, as part of the group's tour of transportation logistics hubs. The group rode aboard a Wepfer Marine harbor boat to learn more about the inland waterways and the Port of Memphis.



Inland Waterways Users Board

On February 11, the IWUB announced that 11 organizations were selected to serve on the Board for a two-year term ending January 30, 2026:

American Commercial Barge Line (ACBL)

Campbell Transportation Company

Canal Barge Company

Cargill, Inc., Cargill Marine and Terminal

CGB Enterprises

Crouse Corporation

Holcim (US)

Ingram Barge Company

Kirby Corporation

Marquette Transportation Company

Shaver Transportation Company

Spencer Murphy (Canal Barge Company) serves as Chairman, and Damon Judd (Marquette Transportation Company) serves as Vice Chairman.

Major General William “Butch” Graham, Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was selected to continue as the Executive Director for the Board.

A new Designated Federal Officer, Paul Clouse, was also announced. Mark Pointon served as the Board’s Designated Federal Officer since the early 1990s. WCI expressed its thanks to Mr. Pointon for his years of dedication to the IWUB and wished him well in retirement.

The IWUB met three times in 2024, holding its first meeting of the year on April 11 in Springfield, VA, where Board members were sworn in by Executive Director for the Board Major General William “Butch” Graham, Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

New IWUB members are sworn in by Major General Graham, Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Chris Reddell and Tim Lauth of the Corps’ St. Louis District explain scour remediation to WCI staff and other participants during a tour of Lock and Dam 25, held the day before the IWUB meeting on August 1 in St. Louis.

The 103rd meeting of the IWUB was held in St. Louis on August 1 with a tour of Lock and Dam 25 on July 31.

The 104th IWUB meeting was held on December 13 in Arlington, VA.

WCI Addresses National Defense University Eisenhower School



National Defense University's Eisenhower School celebrated its 100th year in 2024, and WCI's Jen Armstrong and Deb Calhoun (center) were invited to address NDU students on March 15, discussing the importance of the inland waterways to the economy, the supply chain and national security. WCI has been gratified to present to NDU for more than 20 years.

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

In 2024, WCI continued to appreciate its partnership with other associations and organizations, including the American Waterways Operators and the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association, that results in shared success for the inland waterways.



WCI STAFF



Tracy Zea
President/CEO



Debra Calhoun
Senior Vice President



Paul Rohde
Vice President - Midwest



Jen Armstrong
Director of Government Relations



Amber McClay
Office Manager/Events Coordinator



Dustin Davidson stands with WCI Chair Cherrie Felder at WCI's Capitol Hill reception in February just before beginning his new position with the Governor of Louisiana.



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