

December 2007

ORVA News

Ouachita River Valley Association

"Dedicated to Quality of Life in the Ouachita Valley"

Mission:

ORVA is a non-profit organization engaged in the development of projects that have been proven to be economically sound, socially justified that enhance the welfare of the people in the Ouachita River Basin in Arkansas and Louisiana.

OFFICERS:

President:

Mayor Chris Claybaker

Vice President:

John Stringer

Secretary/Treasurer:

Ed Horton

Board of Directors:

Louisiana

Gary Acklin

Johnny Martin

Randy Martin-Nez

Paul Trichel

Mary Ann Newton

John Bryant

Monty Adams, Jr.

Arkansas

Dr. Robert Nunnally

Billy Neal

Mayor Scott McCormick

Jim Cutbirth

Mayor Steve Northcut

Clark Langley

Judge Bobby Joe Edmonds

Committee Chairmen:

Navigation:

Johnny Martin

John Hoopaugh

Finance:

Gary Acklin

Nominating Committee:

Todd Davison

Executive Director:

Vacant

FISCAL YEAR 2008 APPROPRIATION

Appropriation of \$11.651 million for the Ouachita-Black project was approved on December 18 at a level of between what the House approved \$15.3 million and the President and Senate proposal of \$9.8 million. It is uncertain as to what this means regarding advertisement of the contract for construction of stoplog slots at Felsenthal Lock. This critical work has now been postponed for two consecutive years.

It is true that the President and Congress determine the funding of the waterways and not the Corps of Engineers. However, the Corps of Engineers has considerable influence in developing the President's recommendations in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). And, the Division and District staffs also have notable influence regarding the degree to which projects are funded as well as the work items within each appropriation.

Prognosis: Hard but not impossible funding future! The total waterway budget is a small percentage of total. Ouachita-Black is but one among many projects being under-funded.

We have built a society based on predictable outcomes and not relying on the mercy of the elements such as "flood and drought". Waterway infrastructure helps to overcome these vicious cycles and provide opportunity for economic development.

What can we do? Impress on our communities, state leaders, Congress and the President the importance of improving and maintaining our waterways.

THANKS TO WATERWAY USERS AND BRIDGE OWNERS!

Highway bridge replacement at Columbia and repairs to the KCS Railroad Bridge at Monroe (Mile 167.1) went as well as could have been imagined due in large part to the spirit of cooperation demonstrated by everyone involved. The USCG Bridge Section at St. Louis deserves a large degree of credit as does the consulting engineering firm that planned and executed the repairs at Monroe. The Navigation Committee Meeting held in West Monroe during the Annual Meeting opened communications that were so important to the success.

- 1. The first message is that we should maintain the assets we have received in stewardship from those who preceded us and pass to them in equal or better condition to those who follow. **This reduces simply to maintenance!** A true bargain when the alternatives are weighed.
- 2. Multiple-faceted benefits to the region and nation include: water supply, recreation, transportation savings, pollution reduction, fish and wildlife habitat, groundwater protection, power generation, and economic development.
- 3. The Ouachita-Black System is part of a national network of inland waterways.
- 4. A national asset worthy of long range planning.

MOON LAKE RECREATION AREA DEDICATION

It was a cool and misty-rainy day at Moon Lake Recreation Area on December 12 but the spirits of those in attendance at the Modernization



Dedication Ceremony were warm and bright! The ceremony was led by Vicksburg District Commander, Colonel Mike Wehr, with remarks by Louisiana Representative (Senator Elect) Kay Katz, U.S. Representative Rodney Alexander representative, Jonathon Johnson, and Paul Revis, ORVA Executive Director. Sheriff Elect Toney was also in attendance as were several other Corps employees and local

citizens. Wayne Stogsdill, Vicksburg District Assistant Operations Project Manager and Skip Martin are credited with providing consistent support for the project that was initiated during a 2005 ORVA meeting in Monroe. ORVA Board members present included Gary Acklin, Monte Adams, Jr. and Clark Langley accompanied by his wife Glenda.

As noted by Colonel Wehr and Revis, the work was made possible through Congressional funding. It was also mentioned that this is the first renovation of an Ouachita River recreation site since construction in the mid-1970's and that usage had far outstripped the initial development. The \$1.4 million project doubles the number of the boat launching ramps, provides paved parking, new toilet facilities, improved security, and picnic areas. All of the work was made possible by Operation and Maintenance funding for the Ouachita-Black Navigation System.

Colonel Wehr talked about benefits coming as a result of team work from the local citizens, organizations such as ORVA, State leaders and members of Congress. He described the completion of the project as a "home run" using a base ball analogy and presented Paul Revis, as a representative of the Ouachita River Valley Association, a baseball signed by all speakers and representatives on the dais.



The event was reported by Channels 8 and 12 television stations and the *Monroe NewsStar*.



NATIONAL WATERWAYS CONFERENCE-MOBILE, ALABAMA

The November 2007 NWC Annual Meeting was another great gathering of waterway interests from across the nation. Contributions of Worth Hager to the Waterways of the nation were recognized during the opening ceremonies. Theme of the conference on the banks of the Port of Mobile was *Waterways: Meeting Tomorrow's Freight Needs*. Mobile is the 11th largest total throughput tonnage seaport in the nation. Containerization is a rapidly expanding part of the port's operation and that topic was explored by Brian Clark.

Transportation infrastructure was attributed as the major attraction to ThyssenKrupp Steel Company, Duisburg, Germany for locating its new mega- tonnage steel mill in Mobile. Bob Hess, Intermodal Consultant, emphasized that the driving force is supply chain management and not mode. This point was also made by Butch Brown with the Mississippi Transportation Department who urged attendees to sell "Freight" and not mode. MDOT has established a new Division called "Freight" and is investing \$10 million annually in "freight" infrastructure which will include all modes. Jim Kruse with the Texas Transportation Institute provided some highlights of study just being completed on modal effects on the nation's populace.

Speakers from the Corps of Engineers included Steve Stockton, Deputy Director of Civil Works, Gary Loew, and Jim Walker. Concepts conveyed by these individuals were that we are living on the infrastructure investments made by our predecessors; there is a need for waterway interests to strengthen alliances with other modes and interests; Corps needs to be an integrator of national, state, local and private interests; budgets are 'frozen' and there is a strong need to simplify and make the budget process more transparent. Steve Stockton also quoted Lewis Carroll, "If you don't know where you are going—any road will get you there."

Entertainment at Lunch on the opening day was provided by Humorist and Story Teller, Clyde Ray Webber, from our region at Jonesville, Louisiana who did an outstanding job of telling about "his relatives" in a very entertaining manner. Gary LaGrange, President and CEO of the Port of New Orleans was elected Chairman of the new National Waterways, Inc.. Slide presentations of the meeting are available at www.waterways.org/NWC_presentations.html

FROM THE VP'S DESK – John Stringer

A common question to me about the passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is, "What does this mean?" No it has no money but it is the first step in the two step process of "authorization" and then "appropriation." With it came new authorities for the Corp to address bank caving on the Ouachita River. Bank caving is threatening levees, roadways, historical sites, and commercial and private property. This critical legislation will greatly benefit residents of the Ouachita River Valley by ensuring a safe flood protection system as well as a stable navigation project. The Act also confirmed that much of the Ouachita levee system in north Louisiana is under the MR&T Project. Many thanks to our Arkansas and Louisiana Congressional delegations for their help in passing WRDA!

Sadly, Paul Revis will be leaving his position as Executive Director of ORVA at year's end. His leadership and tireless effort was instrumental in bringing ORVA back to the forefront as an advocate for sustaining funding for the Ouachita-Black River system. All who benefit from waterways in the Ouachita River Basin owe Paul a tremendous debt of gratitude. He is well deserving of his retirement and we all wish him and Rosalie happiness in their leisure and enjoyment of their grandchildren.-----John

IN REMEMBRANCE:

Larry Harper: *Deputy Chief of Operations, Vicksburg District and former Chief of Staff of 412th Engineer Command succumbed to cancer in September after a lengthy illness. Larry had a long history of distinguished service both in the Vicksburg District and as a USAR officer. A major accomplishment most recently was overseeing the Vicksburg District response to hurricane Katrina. He is remembered for his hard work, high ethical standards and dedication to his faith and family. He is survived by his wife Sandy.*

Henry Pryor: *Former Treasurer of ORVA, banker and a community leader at Camden, died December 9th in Oklahoma City traffic accident during the ice storms. Henry received his MBA from Louisiana Tech University and served in senior management positions at several banks in the region including Farmers Bank and Trust of Camden and First National Bank and Trust of Shawnee, Oklahoma. He is survived by his wife, Angela Woodward Pryor.*

BENDWAY ENHANCEMENT— Mayor Chris Claybaker

One of the pleasant parts of my job as mayor of the City of Camden is that I get to talk with a lot of different people from many walks of life. I particularly enjoy talking to the old timers, hearing about the “good old days.”

During the time that I was building the Downtown Riverfront Development on the Ouachita River, I heard stories about the old Coker’s Landing. At one time, at the end of Washington Street, just down from the downtown area, an old commercial fisherman lived in a stilt house with his commercial fishing boat tied off on a rather large oak tree below a bluff. Coker would fish for buffalo, drum and catfish, come back to house with his daily catch and sell it to the locals. The old timers wonder what ever happened to those days when they could always buy some fresh-caught fish. “Whatever happened to all the commercial fisherman that made their living on the fish from the Ouachita River? What happened to all the fish that used to be in the Ouachita River?” they ask.

The answer, some believe, is that the Ouachita River has “matured” and has become “tamed.” The natural action of alluvial rivers over time is to erode the banks at the outside (convex side) of bends until that erosion proceeds far enough to intersect the river further downstream, forming cutoffs or oxbow lakes. This action may be allowed to occur without regard to other considerations or it can be moderated consistent with other uses such as navigation, fishery nurseries, and erosion control. Portions of the Ouachita-Black Project channel have not been reviewed for possible navigation improvement since construction of the four 9’ locks and dams that were completed in the 1970’s. The result has been no new cutoffs or oxbow lakes. These oxbow lakes are natural fish spawning areas. So it is no surprise that during this time it has been reported that the quality of fishery has not been improving consistent with other waterways with similar characteristics.

Bend way enhancements were originally proposed to be built on the upper Ouachita River in the 1980’s but were met with resistance. Since that time, bend way enhancements on the Red River have proved to be valuable assets to fisheries and other aquatic species as well as important sites for development off the main stem of the river. Maintaining connection to the Red River has proved to be an important part of the design for these bend ways and will be important in the reevaluation of the project. This has not been the case on the Ouachita River.

In addition to a drop in quality of fishery, significant problems with navigation on the Ouachita River have been experienced in recent years. Because authorized bend way enhancements were never constructed and the existing radius of bend ways above Monroe, LA is too small for tows to make the turns without “light loading” of barges, waterway users are indicating that resulting increases in transportation costs are affecting production costs and the ability to maintain adequate raw material supplies.

So what is the answer?

The Navigation Committee of ORVA would like to initiate steps to evaluate possibilities for controlling erosion, improving navigation conditions, and improving fishing opportunities.

The Committee’s Plan of Action:

1. Hold a series of meetings with Corps of Engineers representatives and stakeholders to identify problems and opportunities.
2. Meet with individual stakeholder groups separately to foster open communications.
3. Meet with combined groups as outline of plan is developed.

FY 2008 appropriation does not include funds to investigate this problem. Additional funds are needed for a reconnaissance level study to determine whether authorized cutoffs are economically feasible, environmentally sustainable, and publicly acceptable. In a positive note, however, the Corps of Engineers is planning a Section 216 review to gather preliminary information regarding these issues. The Ouachita River Valley Association supports this effort and is working with stakeholders to determine available avenues for relief of these problems.

A PERSONAL NOTE:

It is with sadness of leaving a job unfinished or incomplete that I relinquish the Executive Director position on January 1, 2008. But, it is one of those jobs that will always be incomplete and perhaps that is what makes it such a challenge. There is a season to all things and a time to step aside. It is my sincere hope that I have helped advance the ball, to use a football metaphor. At the risk of offending many consistent supporters, I want to recognize two individuals who have been major sources of encouragement to me and contributed much to the ORVA mission. John Stringer in a quiet and behind the scenes manner has always been available to do 'heavy lifting' when needed. And Gary Acklin should be credited with solving the thorny problems of finances and membership and always having a thoughtful and enthusiastic 'can-do' attitude. There are certainly many others who have been strong supporters and played significant roles in the successes we have enjoyed. Their contributions will always be remembered. As groups we cannot overstate the importance of our corporate members, the Corps of Engineers at all levels, U.S. Coast Guard, and most importantly, the Arkansas and Louisiana Congressional delegations and staffs.

I look forward to witnessing the completion of the Ouachita-Black Project and seeing the people in the Ouachita Valley achieve the economic and environmental success that is possible.

With warmest regards,

Paul N. Revis

ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON WATERBORNE TRANSPORTATION-ARKANSAS WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

This conference has evolved into a regional meeting that overlaps waterway entities in neighboring states including Louisiana which connects through the Ouachita and Red River navigation systems. The 2007 October meeting hosted a number of state legislators and included testimony to the Joint Transportation Committee of the Arkansas Legislature, U.S. Coast Guard representatives and senior Corps of Engineers representatives included Gary Loew who also spoke at the ORVA Annual Meeting in May. Perhaps one of the most succinctly instructive sessions was the presentations of three highly respected and knowledgeable waterway leaders humorously titled, "*The Three Wise Men*". Some of the marquee thoughts, any one of which could be the focus of a major presentation or study, are listed below:

Fred Caver—Former Deputy Director of Civil Works

- Competition for federal dollars increasingly intense, waterway share of federal budget is decreasing,
- Congress is less understanding of benefits of waterway development,
- Water interest groups are segmented-balkanized-each advocating for its own narrow interests,
- Develop projects that are broader in scope and serve multiple users and
- Search for synergy with intersecting groups-develop common messages.

Don Waldon—Executive Director, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway

- We have failed to sell the public on value of waterways and have not developed strong advocates at the state level and in Congress;
- Since 1975, the national budget has increased almost 9 times while Corps budget increased 3 times and percentage of total spending has decreased from 0.49 percent to 0.17 percent;
- States are overlooking the advantages of reduced highway maintenance through more use of federally funded waterways for freight movement,
- Benefits of water-induced rail rates not recognized where water transportation is available(water rates are 25% lower than rail) and
- Nation needs to implement a national freight transportation program and seek more effective financing mechanisms such as a federal capital budget and reconstruction finance corporation.

Dick Voth—Tulsa Port of Catoosa

- Arkansas Basin Development Association organized in 1946 for development of the Arkansas River from Mississippi River to Tulsa and funds were appropriated nine years later,
- Public ports and private terminals are coming of age for the length of the waterway with more than 150 businesses and \$5Billion in private investment with an annual payroll of \$300 million,
- Challenges today include Operation and Maintenance funding, deepening channel to 12 feet, security and environmental issues,
- Growth areas include new commodities, value added consumer services such as Containers on Barge,
- Public education on water transportation and water resource development is needed.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK – Chris Claybaker

Back during the summer of 1994, Dr. Bob Nunnally and Eunice Platt asked me to attend a meeting at the Museum of Natural Resources concerning the Ouachita River. They said they wanted me to meet someone. Since my wife and I would be driving past the museum on our way to Mississippi to watch our son play in a baseball tournament, I decided to drop by for a few minutes

I left my wife sitting in the car while I ran in for a few minutes to “use the restroom.” Two hours later I emerged from the meeting as chairman of a committee to plan for our area’s first intermodal transportation conference and into the welcoming arms of a furious wife. If it hadn’t been for Eunice shielding me from my wife, I would have been dead meat.

The result of the intermodal conference was an announcement from the Corps of Engineers that they would resume dredging on the upper Ouachita River and a decision by Cross Oil of Smackover to build an oil terminal so they could begin bringing their crude oil up river by barge. And for me personally, just as significant a result of that initial planning meeting and the subsequent conference was the professional relationship and lifetime friendship I developed with Paul Revis.

Paul was executive director of the Arkansas Waterways Commission (AWC) and was deeply concerned with the Ouachita River, one of five navigable rivers in Arkansas he was charged with helping develop, promote and protect. He had come to Camden to try and jump-start activity along our river system. I believe that Paul Revis is directly responsible for the Corps’ decision to resume dredging on the upper Ouachita River. I also believe he helped influence Cross Oil to pull the trigger on shipping crude oil by barge to their refinery at Smackover.

Paul has pushed, cajoled, threatened and shamed me during the past 13 years to become active and work on Ouachita River issues. Together, we worked with other like-minded individuals to form the Arkansas Waterways Association and began the annual Governor’s Conference on Waterborne Transportation. Paul has been a tenacious advocate of river issues for over 50 years. When he decided to retire from the AWC, the ORVA was lucky enough to convince Paul to become our executive director.

As executive director, Paul has helped lead us through some of the worst and best of times. When President Bush zeroed out the Corps budget for operations and maintenance on the Ouachita River, Paul helped pull together users and beneficiaries along the Ouachita River in Louisiana and Arkansas who were able to illustrate the importance and necessity of keeping our river system open. And since that time we have seen the appropriations for the O & M budget swell to the largest in the history of the waterway. In addition, the formation of the Navigation Committee within ORVA has given a unified voice of the river users with the Corps of Engineers. Paul’s insight and understanding of the workings of a river system as a retired Corps engineer has been invaluable to our organization.

And now, after helping bring the ORVA up to the next level, Paul has decided to retire. Although I am not all that surprised by his announcement – the grandkids are growing up too fast – I’m still in disbelief that I will not have Paul to lean on like I have had the past 13 years. To say that ORVA will miss Paul Revis is an understatement. That he will be hard to replace is a fact---Chris

HEADS UP:

Mar 12, 2008
Washington Office Calls

Aug 2008
Annual Meeting

Sep 20, 2008
River Sweep

Sep ? 2008
Public Awareness
Trip

Our Thanks to Cross Oil Refining and Marketing for Support of the ORVA Web Site!

www.orva.org

Visit this site and provide your thoughts on how to make it more helpful to you!

Note: ORVA YEAR IN REVIEW is posted on website.

Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA)

Membership Application

I/We hereby subscribe the sum of \$_____ annually, payable in advance, for a one year membership in support of the Ouachita River Valley Association, Inc. (ORVA). This membership becomes effective immediately and will remain in force so long as I/we remain a member/members in good standing and pay the membership dues when due each year.

Name: _____

Contact person (organizations only): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Fax Number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Membership Fees:

Individuals:

____ \$50 per year (minimum)

____ \$100 Small Business

____ \$500 Corporate

____ \$200 Civic/Professional

____ \$200 Public Entity

____ \$2500 Primary User

Contributing Members:

____ \$250 Silver

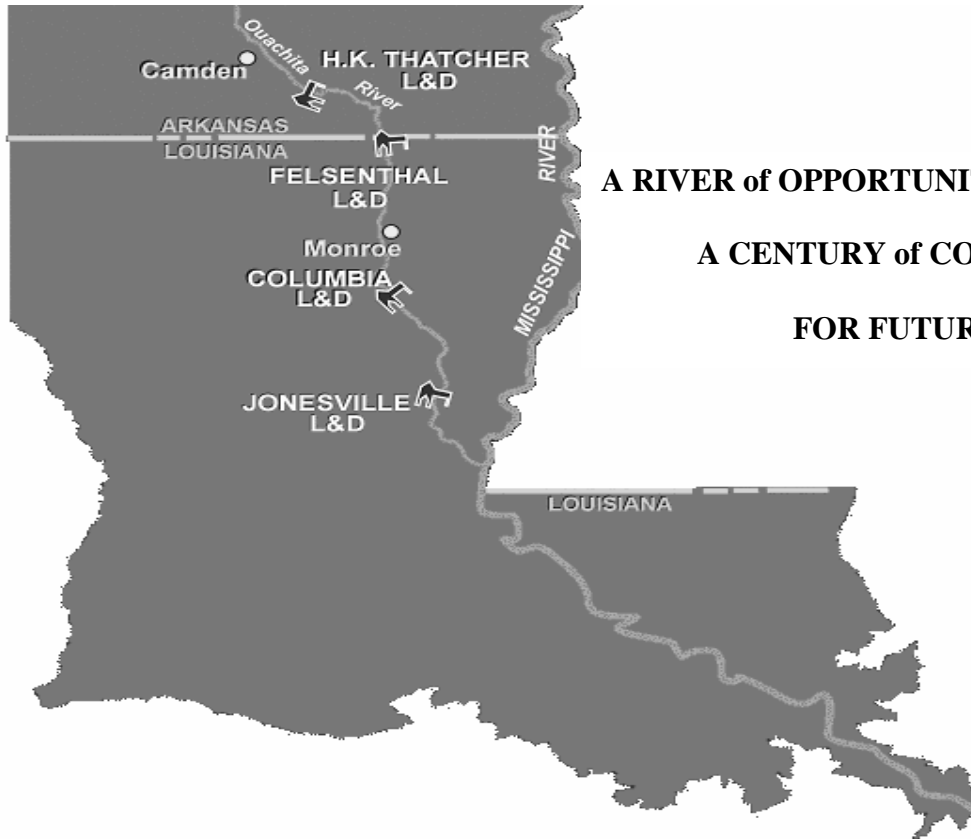
____ \$500 Gold

____ \$1000+ Platinum

Please return completed form and cashier's check, money order or personal check to
Ouachita River Valley Association
PO Box 913
Camden, AR 71701

Ouachita River Valley Association
P.O. Box 913
Camden, AR 71701

Invite a friend to become a member of ORVA!



A RIVER of OPPORTUNITY-----

A CENTURY of COMMITMENT---

FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS