



November 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:

Paul Revis

PRESIDENT BUSH VETOES WRDA ON FRIDAY NOVEMBER 2—OVERRIDE VOTES IN HOUSE AND SENATE SCHEDULED FOR NEXT WEEK

The overwhelming support in both houses of Congress for this bill, The Water Resources Act of 2007 (H.B. 1495), should be adequate to overcome a Presidential veto but it was hoped that this would not be necessary. Water resource organizations across the nation had written the President urging him to sign it including ORVA, NWC, several State Delegations and the National Waterways Alliance.

While this legislation would only authorize bank stabilization in the Ouachita Valley, funds will still need to be appropriated and justified economically. Absent this work, the Ouachita River will continue to erode its banks even to the toe of levees threatening their stability. It is indeed unusual that a navigation project would not have included bank stabilization which is normally the first action to be undertaken.

A WRDA Bill has historically been passed every two years but one has not passed since 2000 creating a major backlog of water resource projects that need approval before appropriations can be considered.

THANKS AGAIN TO THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED SO DILIGENTLY ON THIS LEGISLATION FOR SEVEN YEARS!

FISCAL YEAR 2008 APPROPRIATION

The Ouachita-Black Operation and Maintenance Funding for the fiscal year starting in October of this year is still in limbo—operating on a Continuing Resolution (CR). President's budget amount was \$9.8 million and that was adopted by the Senate Appropriation Committee. But the Senate as a body has yet to act. House of Representatives approved \$15.265 million. The House number would be adequate to fund continuation of the stoplog slot program but the Senate number would not.

Hopefully, the Senate will approve an amount up to the House number and permit the stoplog slot program that is 50% complete to continue.

PUBLIC AWARENESS TRIP—BEST EVER!

ORVA Talking Points

- 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.

Ouachita River Public Awareness Trip held September 17-28 with stops at four locations provided the opportunity for more than 700 valley residents to see the river first hand and to learn more about what it means to the region.

Held aboard the Vicksburg District Inspection Barge and pushed by the M/V Fred Lee, the trip began at Camden with stops at Crossett, West Monroe, and Jonesville. Each community developed its individual agenda with ORVA providing overall coordination with the Vicksburg District. Camden and Crossett hosted student activities while West Monroe hosted a business and community leadership luncheon. Smackover originally planned to host a luncheon but was unable to find a suitable access point to load visitors.

Kudos to Beth Osteen, Pam Ferguson, Mary Ann Newton, and Dr. John Bryant for coordinating events at the various stops on the way downstream. Photographs are available at the ORVA website for the West Monroe and Jonesville stops. Representatives of the Vicksburg District were available at each stop and discussed the Corps role in operation of the river system.



SPECIAL THANKS TO CORPS SUPPORT TEAM!

The Public Awareness Trip was tremendously successful in providing the opportunity for valley residents to see the river from the vantage point of the water. This worth-while effort took the careful planning and execution of the crew of the M/V Fred Lee and members of the Vicksburg District to make this daily effort comfortable, educational, and most of all safe! We cannot say enough good things about the cooperative attitude, schedule adjustment and

logistical support provided during this time that made it all happen without a hitch! THANKS! Crew members and support staff (Including LTC Burruss) on board at the completion of the trip at Jonesville are pictured here. (Other, behind the scene supporters are not pictured here—but their work was evident!)



Kneeling Front Row: Bobby Coco, Jr., Barry Driggers, Skip Martin, LTC Burruss
Kneeling Second Row: Andy Metts, Lewis Wilkes, Billy Cocker
Standing: Eugene Lively, Dan Carney, Charles Doshier, Michael Coco, Charles Daily, Dale Martin, Hubert Sit, Ernest Stone
Andrew LaPrairie

OLD RIVER /PORT ALLEN LOCK CLOSURES—2008

Joint Meeting of Navigation Committees of Red and Ouachita Rivers Met on October 18, 2007 and agreed to recommend the following lock closure schedule:

Port Allen Lock: Port Allen Lock would be closed for **60 days** starting 1 July 2008 to replace the river side miter gates with exact dates being published by New Orleans District.

Old River Lock: Old River Lock would be closed for **45 days** during October-November 2008. The exact dates will be published by New Orleans District

NOTE: At no time will both Old River and Port Allen Locks be closed at the same time.

BRIDGE WORK!

Work on the Columbia Highway Bridge has essentially been completed with pier removal and some cleanup work remaining.

Work is underway on the KCS Railroad Bridge at Mile 167.1 and river traffic will be delayed while the navigation span is being repaired. The M/V MELVIN L KING with retractable pilot house operated by Yazoo River Towing has been chartered to shuttle barges under the closed span as needed. They will monitor channels 16 and 71. Restricted movement through this span is expected to last until about November 18th.

MOON LAKE RECREATION ACCESS FACILITIES TO BE DEDICATED—DECEMBER 12

Colonel Mike Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District, Corps of Engineers to dedicate the renovated Moon Lake Recreation Area on December 12. The heavily used 9.5 acre day-use area downstream of Sterlington constructed in the early 1970's has been expanded and modernized to better meet the growing demands for recreation access to the Ouachita River in the Monroe-Ouachita Parrish region. This \$1.4 million contract will increase the number of boat launching ramps from two to four, update access roads and expand the parking. Other day use facilities are being enhanced by adding concrete sidewalks, new picnic tables, playground facilities, a floating dock/fishing platform, and other landscaping features. Security features are being added to improve public safety.

This modernization will give the Monroe area and Ouachita Parish a state-of-the-art facility when Comfort Stations are added in a subsequent contract.



Skip Martin Looks at new Boat Launching Ramp Under Construction at Moon Lake

VOICE FROM THE PAST!

Evidence of ORVA's long history and involvement in the region pops up at unexpected moments! ORVA Past President (1980-1982?), Glen Ham, who lives at Fairbanks, Louisiana attended the Public Awareness trip at West Monroe on September 25th and rekindled memories of current members Eunice Platt and Ed Horton.



Glen has provided a tribute to the Ouachita River, The Beautiful written by Mr. H.K. Thatcher and a newspaper article about Mr. Thatcher's life. A native of Kansas, Mr. Thatcher also lived at Hannibal, Missouri and was the Executive Director of ORVA for some 25 years working into his eighties. Mr. Thatcher had an inseparable association with water for more than 75 years. Born in a sod house in the dry, big bend country in Kansas he often made the statement, "I've been

associated with the lack of water, plenty of water, and sometimes too much water all my life."

Ham is pictured here with Board Member and Membership Chair , Mary Ann Newton, in front of the Vicksburg District display on board the Inspection Barge.

Thanks Glen for sharing this information and we invite you and others to become active again!

Waterways Lose a Dedicated Champion



Worth Hager, a lifelong advocate for inland waterways and most recently President of the National Waterways Conference, Inc. died at her Washington D.C. home August 10. Major General Don Riley, Director of Civil Works for the Corps presented a posthumous DeFluery Medal, one of the highest honors of the Corps of Engineers, at a memorial service on August 15. She was a tireless worker for passage of the Water Resources Development Act that was finally approved by Congress this year and sent to the President. Few people knew the inner workings of Congress or kept better informed!

FROM THE VP'S DESK – John Stringer

HEADS UP:

Calendar of Events:

Nov 7-9

Nat Waterways
Annual Meeting,
Mobile, Alabama

Dec

Board Meeting and
General Membership
Meeting- El Dorado

Mar 2008

Washington Office
Calls

Aug 2008

Annual Meeting

Sep 20, 2008

River Sweep

Sep ? 2008

Public Awareness
Trip

Want to be on the ORVA e-mail notification list??

Contact Paul Revis at
dmg@conwaycorp.net

www.orva.org

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

Thanks to all who have worked so diligently on passage of WRDA 2007. Of the estimated \$20 billion authorized for Corp projects, Louisiana should receive \$3.575 billion, much of which will be used for coastal restoration and hurricane and flood protection. Ouachita River inclusion will authorize critically needed bank stabilization to protect infrastructure in Arkansas and Louisiana. Passage is expected although it may come as a result of Congress overriding a Presidential veto. Senator Barbara Boxer (D), California, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works has indicated that she expects WRDA 2007 to become law soon and that the committee is working to produce a WRDA bill every two years----*John*

FROM THE FILES

Excerpts of Eulogy to *"THE OUACHITA RIVER, THE BEAUTIFUL"*

...the writer has personally been in a portion to observe the low day flow of the river which occurred on August 16, 1923 and the high day flow which occurred on April 13, 1945 at the Camden gage. The low flow day produced a gage reading on the Camden gage of 1.10 feetthe high flow day on the Camden gage read 44.82 feet indicating a passage of 482,000 acre feet. Because of some river flow controls instituted by the Ouachita River Valley Association and concurred in by the Corps of Engineers and the Arkansas Power and Light Company, neither of the two extremes can ever happen again.....

This small Valley in the sequence of time and events has attracted and helped to nurture the geological ages of the Reptiles, the Dinosaurs, the Hairy Mammoths and other fierce land animals. All of these ages consuming time as if waiting on the fruits of evolution from the coming of Humankind. The World of the Reptiles, the Dinosaurs and the big Cats lives in and flourished is the same world we live in today separated only by the flow of time. For millions of years, the benevolent Ouachita River Basin produced food and contentment for four classes of wild creatures, each animal-age lasting until Nature had prepared conditions for a more advanced age of creatures. Later, very much later,the Indians of a couple of thousand years ago, following the urge of survival, ...accepted the potential living values of this bountiful, well watered Valley. These Homo Sapiens called the region "Owa-che-tau" meaning the Big Hunt Country," because it produced such an abundance of food-wild game, fish, nuts and edible roots. Modern man has bound it ever so.....Who is to gainsay that sometime in the future Nature will not again change the rules of life to fit a more adaptable set of plants and creatures? The beholding scenery over the Ouachita River Valley from its mountain tops, through its coastal plain areas and its alluvial land is beautiful, peaceful and restful, whether the viewer see the countryside or focuses on the ever running waters.....The quiet running Ouachita can become an oracle to an imaginative listener.

The future meanderings of the Ouachita River will henceforth be minimized by the guiding hand of man, but its enticing beauty and tranquilizing effects will continued to charm homefolks and visitors alike throughout the coming generations. The beckoning call of the Valley will always remain.

Since the very recent advent of modern man, a possible 30,000 years, the waters of the Ouachita River have absorbed without a trace their strifes and conflicts; neither has it been disarranged with the growing pains of the present economic civilization. Through it all, the ebbing tides of the sturdy Ouachita roll on in grandeur.....Thus, the Ouachita River, The Beautiful, in tune with nature, flows serenely into eternity, proud of its past, smiling at the present and confident of its capabilities even unto the end of time.
-----H.K. Thatcher, 1979

RIVER SWEEP---SEPTEMBER 20, 2008

The most extensive river clean-up program in the history of the region is being planned for the Ouachita River next fall. This is the first time a coordinated two-state effort has been attempted and will cover the length of the river from Malvern, Arkansas to Jonesville, Louisiana. Both Congressman Alexander and Congressman Ross have pledged their participation and support for this effort. Support of State leaders from Louisiana and Arkansas is expected as well as local community leaders.

Multiple events are being planned and groups along the waterway are invited to participate in a history-making event that will also be worthwhile and rewarding. Please call Mary Ann Newton (318.325.1961) or Mayor Claybaker (870.837.5500) co-chairs of the event if your group would like to participate.

I WONDER WHY?

Do you ever 'wonder why' things are as they are? In the deepest recesses of our hearts we know things are why they are for REASONS! Otherwise we would be condemned to believe the absence of "cause and effect" making us helpless and pitiful victims of chance. REASONS are plural and likely a collection of those "pesky" facts.

*Progress report on the Red River at the Arkansas Governor's Conference on Waterborne Transportation in Little Rock recently was impressive! I couldn't help but 'wonder why' so much has been accomplished in recent years on the Red River. After all, the Ouachita River enjoyed a 20-year head start on bringing the river up to 20th century standards with regards to commercial navigation, economic development, recreational usage and environmental enhancement. The Ouachita is naturally a more "user friendly" and stable river requiring less effort to be productive. While we have struggled to maintain basic infrastructure and even halted planned improvements on the Ouachita, the Red River has seen construction of five new locks and dams, stabilized its banks, developed a thriving water-based recreation industry, constructed three ports with the largest being at Shreveport and work is underway to deepen the channel to Mississippi River Class depth of 12 feet, and extend navigation to near Texarkana, Arkansas. **Congratulations and best wishes to our regional neighbors who have turned a much maligned river into an economic engine, recreational showplace, environmental asset and perhaps provided a guide to others!***

But I still wonder about REASONS for the differences? Could love of the familiar, complacency, the status quo or ambition deficit be a REASON? Could shortage of imagination or vision be a REASON? Could a REASON be that we are victims of geography? Could leadership be a REASON? Could personal greed and lack of community investment in the common good be REASONS?

I hasten to say that I don't know the answer or answers or even the adequacy of the questions---but I do 'wonder why'! --Paul Revis

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
1359 Scott Street
Conway, AR 72034

Invite a friend to become a member of ORVA!



A RIVER of OPPORTUNITY-----

A CENTURY of COMMITMENT---

FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS