

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**  
**OUACHITA RIVER VALLEY ASSOCIATION**  
**WASHINGTON, D.C., CONGRESSIONAL/USACE VISITS**  
**MARCH 6-8, 2017**

ARKANSAS AND LOUISIANA CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS

1. OUACHITA-BLACK RIVERS NAVIGATION PROJECT, AR & LA.

**MAJOR NEED: ADDITIONAL \$2.0M DREDGING FUNDS IN FY17.**

**Support funding and completion of WRDA 2016 study to determine the feasibility of modifying the Navigation Project to include bank stabilization as a project feature.**

**Support adding water supply as a feature of the Navigation Project.**

**Support adding the lower 14,000 feet of Little River as a project feature.**

Background:

- The level of service at lower two locks (Jonesville and Columbia) returned to 24/7/365 operation on November 15, 2015, after being operated at two shifts per day since July 2012. The upper two locks' (Felsenthal and H. K. Thatcher) level of service set at 10 hours daily Monday - Friday from 5 a.m. - 3 p.m. with no weekend service.

-FY16 Budget of \$8,076,000 was inadequate and did not receive the requested \$2.0M capability for dredging in FY 16 (District had and used \$1.2M for dredging). Without the requested \$2.0M limited dredging operations completed included 5 shallow locations from just below Columbia L&D to the mouth of Black River. ORVA had hoped the Corps would have been able to dredge the remaining sites in AR that were not dredged in FY 15 which would restore the authorized channel depth/width and provide local industrial development agencies the opportunity to recruit water based industry to the area. Surveys indicate an adequate channel up to the Crossett, AR, Harbor. The USCG completed resetting buoys in October 2016.

- FY17 Budget of \$8.4M is inadequate. The project needs to be funded at \$11M annually for efficient operation and maintenance of all four locks 24/7/365 and required dredging. With the current upper two locks operating 10 hours daily 5 days a week, the project **budget is still short \$2.0M** in dredging funds. The additional \$2.0M for

dredging would provide for the restoration of the authorized channel up the Camden, AR, the Head of Navigation.

- ORVA believes the project is at risk due to a number of factors:

1) Tonnage dropped below 1M tons in 2015 for the first time since 2013. In 2016 tonnage was 884K tons.

2) Dredging funds were not received in 2016 and not included in the 2017 President's Budget.

3) Dramatic reduction in number of shippers on the system - from 17 in 2010 to 5 in 2015.

4) No commercial tonnage moving out of the AR portion of the project in 2016. (One tow has moved and others are planned to move in AR portion of project in 2017.)

5) Significant reduction in recreational craft using locks - from in excess of 1,600 in 2010 to 194 in 2016 (no weekend service by upper two locks).

- Our commercial shippers have warned this would occur with implementation of the Inland Marine Transportation System Study (IMTS) in July 2012. Commercial shippers will shy away from systems that aren't operated on a dependable 24/7/365 basis. There are other causes for decreased usage, such as depressed oil prices, insufficient dredging, depressed economic conditions, etc. However, there is no question that the chief reason for decline is implementation of IMTS and the resulting Corps decision to reduced levels of service at Felsenthal and H.K. Thatcher locks and initially at Jonesville and Columbia locks. ORVA has reiterated that implementation of IMTS and the resulting decision to reduce levels of service was not and is not the Congressional intent for project operation. ORVA has briefed the Commander and senior staff of the Vicksburg District in this regard.

- ORVA has initiated an economic study to determine the value of the project. ORVA believes the value this project adds to the region and Nation is substantial and has enlisted the University of Louisiana at Monroe, LA, to take the lead in determining the overall economic/environmental worth. We believe the study results will enable us to better articulate the project value. ORVA thinks there will be substantial economic growth in the LA portion of the project in the future now that a full level of service has been restored to the Jonesville and Columbia locks, and there are planned tow movements in 2017 in the upper portion of the system however it is going to take time to recover.

Section 7001 of the 2014 WRDA:

- ORVA supported two proposals that were resubmitted by the Louisiana Department of Transportation for project modifications of the Navigation Project. ORVA had previously submitted these proposals in November 2014.

1) Add bank stabilization and water supply as project features of the Navigation Project. This would authorize the Corps to construct bank stabilization measures and ensure water supply is fully considered in project operation.

2) Add the lower 14,000 feet of Little River as a project feature which would authorize the Corps to dredge sediment deposition in this area that has resulted from the Navigation Project.

- Both requests were denied in 2015 by the ASA (CW). The bank stabilization denial was due to concerns with the overall cost and Little River due to a "single-user" policy issue. The proposals were resubmitted in March 2015, and the bank stabilization proposal was included in the 2016 WRDA to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of modifying the Navigation Project to include bank stabilization as a feature. Also, WRDA 2016 included language directing the Secretary of Army (CW) to consult with the USCG regarding placement of navigation aids on the Ouachita-Black Rivers. Both proposals were resubmitted by the LADOTD in September 2016. The Little River proposal included additional information that will address the "single user" issue **(enclosures 1, 2, 3, 4)**.

- The Water Supply portion from the proposal submitted was dropped due to perceived cost for infrastructure. ORVA is not aware of any water supply infrastructure requirements. This project supplies much needed water supply for industrial, municipal, and agricultural needs that are drawn from the navigation pool, especially in the El Dorado, AR, and Monroe-West Monroe, LA, areas of the project. It is imperative for future growth in this region that water supply be included as a feature of the Navigation Project and project operated accordingly.

## ARKANSAS CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS

### 2. OUACHITA RIVER BASIN CORPS LAKES (LAKES OUACHITA, DEGRAY, AND GREESON)

**Support funding for the construction of a new DeGray Lake Field Office to replace the antiquated project office building.**

**Support funding the additional capability items of the Corps in the following amounts: Lake Ouachita-\$758,000; DeGray Lake- \$2.3M; and Lake Greeson-\$1.1M. This funding is to better serve the American recreating public (such as March flood repairs, debris removal, restore recreation to acceptable level of service, road maintenance, coordination of water supply agreements and general facility upgrades, etc.).**

#### Background:

- These are multi-purpose lakes with annual recreation attendance of ~9,500,000.

- These lakes are very important to the economy of the upper Ouachita River Basin as they provide water supply, recreation and tourism, hydropower, flood control, and environmental enhancement, therefore sufficient annual funding is of critical importance.

- Campground upgrades represent one of the best infrastructure investments to quickly stimulate the economy through a Federal "jobs bill" type program.

-NOTE PER DEGRAY LAKE PROJECT OFFICE: The FY17 budget guidance (only include items that could be awarded in 5 months) required the removal of the \$2.3M from the FY17 capability. THE CORPS HAS THE PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS 90 PERCENT COMPLETE. THIS WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT PROJECT THAT COULD BE CONSTRUCTED RAPIDLY SHOULD A JOBS BILL OR SOME OTHER SOURCE OF FUNDING BECOME AVAILABLE. ESTIMATED COST IS \$2.3M. An explanation of project office condition and photo is at **enclosure 5**.

Following is what Bill Barnes, local tourism industry leader, recently had to say:

"Arkansas' second largest industry is now – SOLIDLY- tourism with gross receipts last year of over \$5.7B (that is a B!) in sales; employing almost 120,000 people; and generating almost \$500 million in taxes. Tourism is the only industry in the state that has been stable and growing over the last 10 years and is one of the largest employers of youth in entry level positions.

Arkansas' tourism industry is only as good as its products. The three Vicksburg District Corps of Engineers lakes in the Ouachita Basin are a huge component of Arkansas'

tourism product. I am delighted to report that the five counties surrounding Ouachita, DeGray, and Greeson - Clark, Hot Spring, Pike, Garland, and Montgomery - have shown substantial tourism tax revenue increases from 2014 to 2016. Because this tax is collected on attractions - lodging, marina, campgrounds, and slips – we believe it's an accurate indicator of the business.

The most unfortunate situation is the condition of the Corps of Engineers campgrounds, many of which have had virtually no improvements or renovations in 20+ years. The Camping/RV public is expanding at a terrific rate with camper trailer sales increasing 38 percent from 2014 to 2016. We have virtually no up-to-date campgrounds to offer them. This would be one of the most important investments the Corps could make in the lakes' tourism product.

Tourism in Arkansas and the Corps of Engineers investment on lakes Ouachita, DeGray, and Greeson generate one of the largest returns on investment, which equates to additional tax dollars of any public money investment. At the rate tourism is growing, it is anticipated that it will become the #1 industry at some point. BUT, we must have a quality product to continue that growth.

### 3. WATER SUPPLY

**Support the approval of the Lake Ouachita Water Supply Reallocation Report.**

**Support finalizing the DeGray Lake Water Storage Agreements with Central Arkansas Water and the City of Hot Springs.**

#### Background:

- Lake Ouachita Water Supply Reallocation Report: The Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance, which includes 27 water utilities in eight counties in central Arkansas, along with the City of Hot Springs and the North Garland County Water District provided funding for the USACE to study the reallocation of 50,000 acre feet of water storage for water supply from Lake Ouachita. The final package of the reallocation report has been sent to HQUSACE and the ASA (CW) for formal review and approval. The ASA (CW) has approved the draft agreement with the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance. The Environmental Assessment for the study is complete and resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact. The Hydrology and Hydraulic study is complete. The Demand Model was approved by HQUSACE and the Water Supply Reallocation Planning Center of Expertise. Once ASA (CW) report approval is received, water storage agreements can be signed with various cities and withdrawal can commence. The ORVA encourages the USACE to finalize approval of both the report and the water storage agreement with the Mid-Arkansas Water Alliance.

- DeGray Water Storage Agreements: DeGray Lake is authorized for 152 million gallons per day (MGD) of water storage. Central Arkansas Water (CAW) and the City of Hot

Springs (CHS) are seeking to finalize water storage agreements with the USACE for 100 MGD and 20 MGD, respectively. There has been a disagreement between the Hydro Power Community (Southwest Power Association, SWPA) and CAW and CHS as to where water is withdrawn, i.e., lower pool or upper main pool. Coordination with affected local, state, and Federal agencies to develop a plan for water withdrawal out of the main pool has been underway and agreements promising. The Vicksburg District held a meeting with SWPA, CAW, and the City of Hot Springs on February 2 to further explore a solution that would provide the water for water supply without drastically reducing the potential for hydropower to generate electricity. Several alternatives were proposed ranging from pumping water from the lower pool to upper pool via an external conduit, dual withdrawal from lower and upper pool, pump back using USACE facility, dual withdrawal unless lower pool is drawn down, then withdraw from upper pool and CAW, and CHS pay for hydropower benefits foregone. The next step is for CAW and the City of Hot Springs to determine which alternative(s) they desire to pursue. Upon acceptance of an alternative by the Hydropower community and CAW and CHS, a legal agreement will be drafted by the Vicksburg District.

#### 4. DECEMBER 2016 U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS) MANAGEMENT REQUEST FOR OPERATION OF THE FELSENTHAL DAM.

- The Vicksburg District honored the USF&W 2016 request to raise the pool to elevation 68 feet. Starting on December 15, the Vicksburg District began raising the pool to elevation 68 feet. Due to heavy rain in the basin, elevation 68 feet was reached and was 68.2 on December 29. The pool was maintained at elevation 68 feet until January 15. Starting January 15 until the end of January, the pool was drawn back down to the normal pool of 65 feet. The Vicksburg District said there was positive feedback from the hunters and general public.

#### Background:

- The Corps operates the Felsenthal Lock&Dam in accordance with the project's Water Control Plan. Normal operational goal is to maintain an elevation of 65 feet year round. Variance from the operational goal of elevation 65 feet is only considered when an official request from the USFWS is received.

- The Water Control Plan allows, upon request from the USFWS, raising the pool up to an elevation of 70 feet then dropping back to 65 feet during the November – January timeframe. The last time the USFWS requested a variance was in 2008, but the pool did not get to elevation 70. In 2015, without a USFWS request and due to heavy rainfall in the basin, the pool elevation was elevation 71 feet on January 1 and elevation 74 feet on January 15 with no differential while the Corps was operating to get to elevation 65 feet.

LOUISIANA CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS

5. OUACHITA RIVER LEVEES, LA (CONST.)/RED-OUACHITA BASIN LEVEES, LA (MR&T MAINT.)

**Support adding the lower 63 miles of the east bank levee to the MR&T Project.**

**Support adding water supply as a feature of the Navigation Project.**

**Continue to support to ensure the Vicksburg District funds the \$31M provided by the Emergency Supplemental and completes repairs to the Monroe floodwall.**

Background:

- Levee project unfunded in FY16/FY17 – Last year ORVA/Tensas Basin Levee District supported the additional FY17 capability of \$1,900,000 the Corps had identified to repair deficiencies affecting levee stability, surface graveling, and investigation of other issues along the levee/floodwall. Currently the Corps is showing no capability for these items. These projects have not been funded in years, and there is major need to provide gravel in the Chauvin Bayou Pump Station reach north of Monroe, LA, in the amount of \$200,000. Photo of levees needing gravel surfacing, bank stabilization, and flood wall repairs are **enclosures 6, 7, 8 and 9**.

- All segments of the levee project needs to be classified as part of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project - the lower 63 miles of the east bank levee where the majority of the bank caving problems exist are not part of the MR&T Project. The upper portion of the east side and west side of river features were placed under MR&T Project by the 2007 WRDA (**map encl 10 and suggested language enclosure 11**).

- Amount of erosion of banks and subsequently levees far exceed the financial capability of the Tensas Basin Levee District to maintain project to acceptable standards (**suggested bank stabilization language enclosure 12**).

- Corps of Engineers has notified FEMA that levees are not certifiable for the National Flood Insurance Program due to excessive bank caving.

6. LITTLE RIVER ADDITION--OUACHITA-BLACK RIVERS NAVIGATION PROJECT, AR & LA

**Support adding the lower 14,000 feet of Little River as a project feature.**

Background:

- Sediment from Ouachita-Black Rivers during high-water events is deposited in the lower 14,000 feet of Little River, thereby hindering navigation access to the Archie, LA, fuel terminal owned by Placid Refining Company, LLC.
- Archie Terminal Company distributes an average of 40 million gallons of gasoline and 30 million gallons of diesel fuel per annum throughout 15 parishes in LA and 3 counties in MS service area. This amount equates to ~225,000 tons being transported on the Ouachita-Black system annually or ~25% of the system total tonnage.
- The ASA (CW) disapproved ORVA's request to add the lower 14,000 feet of Little River as project feature of the Navigation Project in reference to Section 7001 of the WRDA of 2014. ORVA strongly supports addition of Little River as a project feature of the Navigation Project. This would have allowed the Corps of Engineers to dredge this area as needed.
- LADOTD resubmitted the proposal in September 2016 with additional information developed to address the "single-user" issue. **Enclosures 1, 2, 3, and 4.**

7. LAKE PROVIDENCE HARBOR, LA

**Support the \$1,199,000 capability to dredge Lake Providence Harbor, LA.**

**Support the proposed language to provide the authority to stop Stack Island Chute from flowing into the Lake Providence Harbor during high-water events that result in sediment deposits requiring dredging. Enclosure 13.**

Background:

- Major issue is there are no dredging funds in President's FY17 Budget for Lake Providence Harbor-- Dredging funds needed:
- Lake Providence, LA, Harbor--\$1,199,000
- Stack Island Chute flows into the Lake Providence Harbor during high-water events that result in sediment deposits requiring dredging. Stopping and/or reducing the Stack Island Chute flows from entering the Lake Providence Harbor would reduce the dredging requirements and save tax payer dollars. **Enclosure 13.**

8. Madison Parish Port, LA

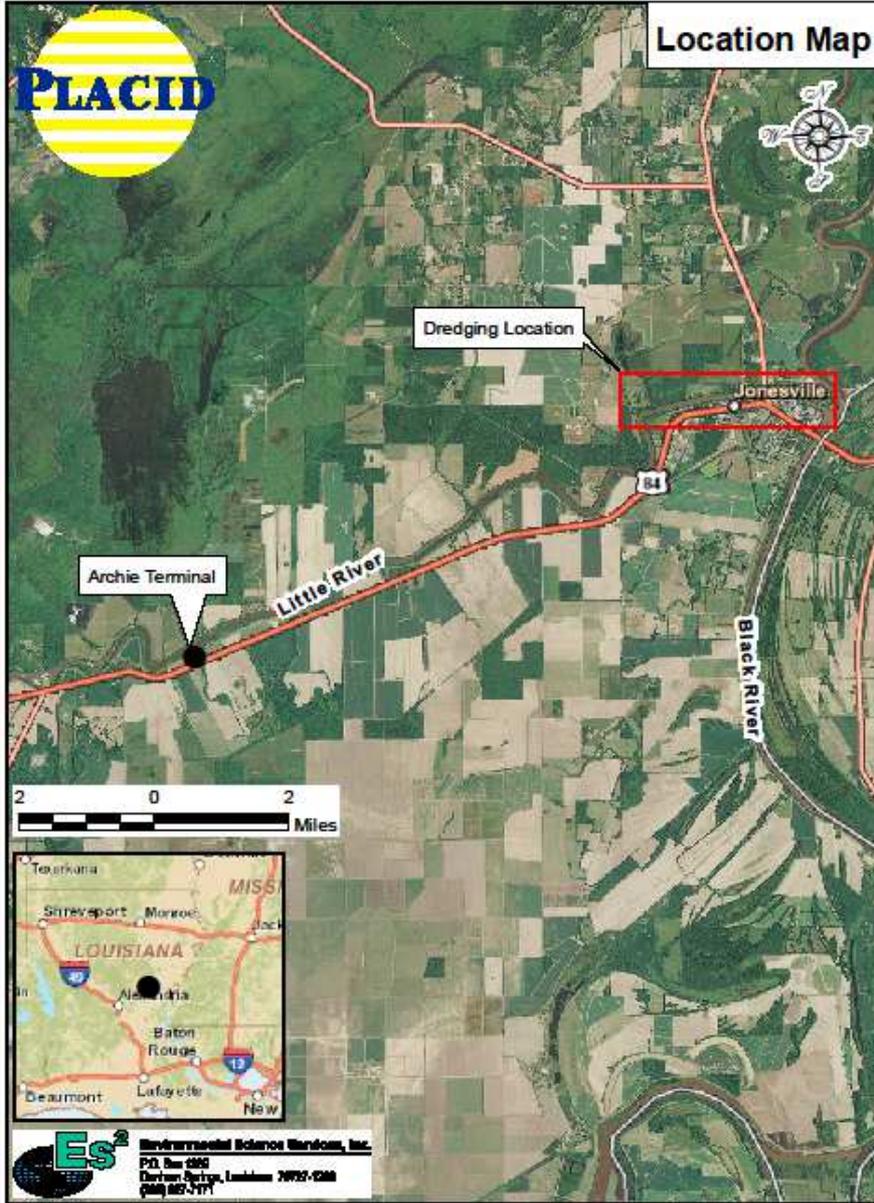
**Support continued funding to dredge the Madison Parish Port, LA.**

Background:

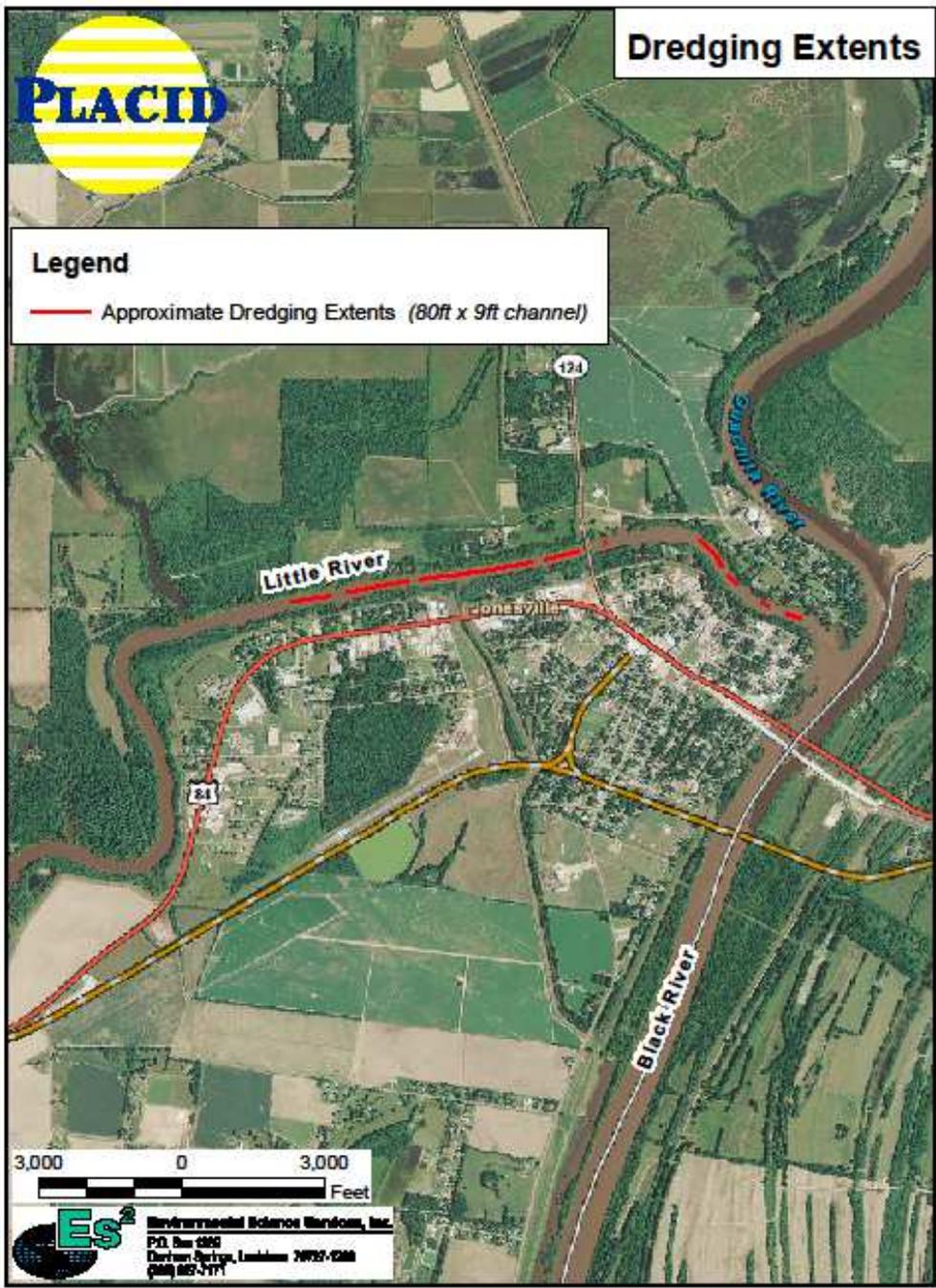
- Dredging funds of \$150,000 in President's Budget in FY 17 is adequate.
- Dredging completed November 2016.

**ENCL 1-** LITTLE RIVER- LA SUGGESTED BILL Language

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, acting through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is hereby directed to perform dredging operations (to a depth of 9 feet) on the lower 14,000 feet of Little River near Jonesville, LA, as a project feature of the Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project-AR & LA. This dredging will be at full Federal cost with local interests providing lands, easements, rights-of-way, relocations, disposal areas, etc. This dredging will insure that thousands of residents of the central portion of the State of Louisiana will be furnished necessary fuels for economic development including transportation, crop production, and evacuation during emergency conditions, and will contribute value to the Nation.



ENCL 2



ENCL 3

**Service Area**  
**Archie Terminal Company, LLC (ATC)**  
**Archie, LA**



**ENCL 4**



**ENCL 5**

**PHOTO SHOWS EXISTING FACILITY**

**DEGRAY LAKE FIELD OFFICE**

The DeGray Lake Field Office is a converted building that was utilized by a Contractor as an office and vehicle shop during construction of the lake in the early 1960s. The southern portion of the building was a vehicle repair shop at that time and has since been converted to additional office space. The existing building therefore utilizes 1960 era construction design and materials. The metal flat roof and masonry constructed walls contain little insulation and consequently demand large usage of energy. Much of the building materials used during this era were either asbestos or asbestos-containing material. The floors contain at least two level changes that are a minimum of one step up or down, resulting in potential tripping hazards.

The windows are aluminum frames with a gear crank opening design with a single pane of glass and little to no insulation value. The electrical service is obsolete and does not meet current Electrical Code minimum requirements.

Plans and specs for the new office building were developed and have completed a 90 percent review stage. The projected cost of the new facility is \$2,300,000, and if received, funds can be obligated in Fiscal Year 2017.

In conclusion, the existing field office is sub-standard and does not present a favorable impression to the visiting public who obtains information about amenities offered at DeGray Lake and the surrounding communities.



**ENCL 6**

**Ouachita River Levee Needing Gravel Surfacing**



**ENCL 7**

**Ouachita River Levee Needing Gravel Surfacing and Bank Stabilization**



**ENCL 8**

**Bank Caving site on Ouachita River Levee**



**ENCL 9 Monroe Floodwall Needing Repair**

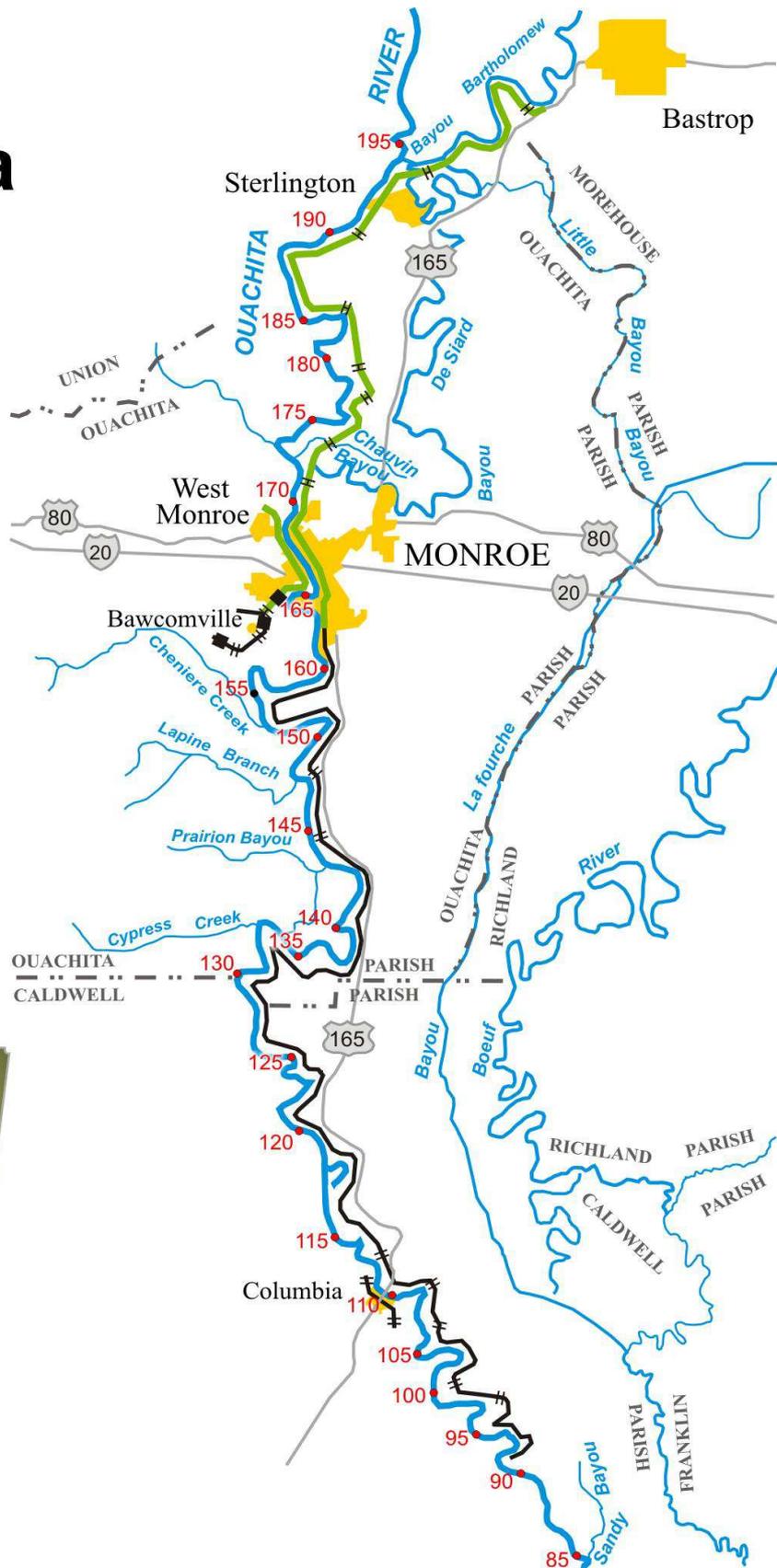
# Ouachita River Levees

**LEGEND**

-  Existing Levee
-  Authorized by Sec 1 - FCA of 1928
-  150 • River Mile
-  Drainage Structure
-  Pumping Plant



Location Map



**ENCL 11 – OUACHITA RIVER LEVEES - SUGGESTED BILL LANGUAGE  
RED-OUACHITA RIVER BASIN LEVEES, ARKANSAS AND LOUISIANA  
FLOOD CONTROL, MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES  
MAINTENANCE**

Section 3013(b) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-114; 121 Stat. 1109) is amended by striking the language after “except” and inserting “that the levees and floodwalls on the east bank of the Ouachita River from Sandy Bayou, station 5585+00, to below Monroe, LA, station 2270+00, and thence up the east bank of Bayou Bartholomew from station 2270+00 to Bastrop at station 0+00; and the ring levees and floodwall on the west bank of the Ouachita River at West Monroe, LA, authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1928, sections 1 and 6; at Columbia, LA, authorized by the Flood Control Act of 22 June 1936, section 5; and at Bawcomville, LA, authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 17 May 1950, section 101; and the Monroe Floodwall authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act of 17 May 1950, Section 101 shall be incorporated into the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1928, section 1 and afforded operation and maintenance responsibilities as provided under section 3 of that Act (45 Stat. 535)”.

**ENCL 12 - BANK STABILIZATION - AR & LA SUGGESTED LANGUAGE**

OUACHITA AND BLACK RIVERS, ARKANSAS AND LOUISIANA – (A) IN GENERAL – the project for Ouachita and Black Rivers, Arkansas and Louisiana, authorized in Rivers and Harbors Act of 1950, as amended by rivers and Harbors Act of 1960, is further amended by adding bank stabilization from mile 0 on the Black River, Louisiana, to mile 460 on the Ouachita River, Arkansas, as a project purpose, to be accomplished at full Federal expense. The existing navigation project is otherwise unaltered.

Or

The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, acting through the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, is hereby directed to construct bank stabilization measures from the mouth of the Black River to River Mile 460 on the Ouachita River beginning with the most critical areas in AR and LA. This construction will be at full Federal cost with local interests providing lands, easements, rights-of-way, relocations, disposal areas, etc. These improvements will provide for the overall betterment and efficiency of the Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project, AR & LA, the Red-Ouachita Basin Levees, LA, Project and for ecosystem restoration, flood damage reduction, recreation, water supply, fish and wildlife, hydropower, etc., purposes of the Ouachita River on up to River Mile 460 at Rammel Dam near Hot Springs, AR.

**ENCL 13 - LAKE PROVIDENCE HARBOR/STACK ISLAND – SUGGESTED LANGUAGE**

LAKE PROVIDENCE HARBOR-STACK ISLAND CHUTE: The Lake Providence Harbor has historically had sedimentation issues at its mouth due to its location at the downstream end of the Stack Island Chute. Stack Island Chute is a side channel of the Mississippi River that empties into the harbor access channel resulting in sediment deposition in this channel that requires periodic dredging. In order to correct this problem the Corps of Engineers is hereby authorized under the MR&T Channel Improvement Construction Program to evaluate a preliminary diversion plan whereby a new outlet channel is dug from the Stack Island Chute to the MS River and a closure placed in the Chute to prevent the flows within the Chute continuing downstream to the area of the harbor carrying sediment. Should a satisfactory solution be agreed upon by the USFWS, MSWF&P and LDW&F then the Corps is hereby authorized to construct this Diversion at a cost of not more than \$3.0M from this same authorization.