



# RIVER CURRENTS

UPPER MISSISSIPPI, ILLINOIS & MISSOURI RIVERS ASSOCIATION - UMIMRA

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## McMurray Addresses 2007 Tri-State Development Summit

UMIMRA Chairman David McMurray recently addressed the Tri-State Development Summit. His remarks regarding the rivers' importance to the Midwest region are reprinted below.

The Upper Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri waterways are critical to our region and the nation. Millions of tons of cargo, thousands of boaters, multitudes of fishermen, and untold gallons of excess waters are handled annually by this waterway system. Most citizens, many politicians and planners are either not aware of its importance or choose apathy or avoidance when considering the needs for maintenance, modernization or development of this invaluable resource and its adjacent river valley.

We are no better equipped to manage an event of the magnitude of "The Great Flood of '93" than we were in '93. An exception would be areas along the Missouri River in the suburbs of St. Louis and the Des Moines, Iowa area. There is limited engagement by Congress, the States, or Counties in pushing or promoting the improvement of the river system. Federal executive orders favor stagnation and decay.

How do we change this? By action and not indifference. Issues that the Summit supports and monitors regarding our Midwestern navigable river systems are flood control, navigation, economic development, recreation and environmental stewardship.

We support the authorization of the "Com-

prehensive Plan" to develop a systemic flood control system for the Mississippi and Illinois rivers. The basic goal of this effort is to develop a system of flood control that will pass a flood event similar to, or greater than, the Great Flood of 1993 with the minimum amount of damage. In evaluating the merit of this system, regional future economic benefits must be considered. Reliance on the current standard of a national economic benefit analysis will prevent Middle America from efficiently utilizing the inland waterway system and its adjacent land areas. To integrate this vision with appropriate environmental concerns we support the effort for appropriate organizations to define the environmental problems, set goals for success, and adopt action programs that are not detrimental to the other goals of flood control, economic development or recreation.

The Summit has supported the State of Missouri in opposing a spring rise plan for the Missouri River. This debate also involves flow rates, navigation and long term flood control issues. We must remember that policies and decisions made for the Missouri River also affect the Upper Mississippi River.

Our goal is a better region through a proper and balanced development of our waterway system. This will take action - not apathy, involvement - not indifference. Remember, we have a system that is, or was, the envy of the world. Let us not let either indifference or apathy destroy this great resource or the region's potential. Thanks again for your continued support.

## Annual Conference Held in Peoria

UMIMRA's 2007 Annual Conference was held February 16 at the Holiday Inn in Peoria. Speakers included Tom Waters, Chief of Planning and Policy for the Corps of Engineers Directorate of Civil Works and Worth Hager, President of the National Waterways Conference, who both traveled from Washington to provide their keen insights into national water resources policy and how the new Demo-

cratic majority in Congress will shape policy in the future.

Both talked of the need for a broader, watershed perspective, but were clear that projects will be funded on a regional basis. It is anticipated that Congress will focus on funding

see CONFERENCE page 2

# IN THIS ISSUE OF RIVER CURRENTS

## COVER

McMurray Addresses the 2007 Tristate Development Summit

Annual Conference Held in Peoria

## TWO

WRDA Back on Track

Corps of Engineers Outlines Revised Comprehensive Plan Option

## THREE

UMIMRA Representatives Visit D.C.

## FOUR

2007 Annual Conference Sponsors

UMIMRA Welcomes New Members

## WRDA Back on Track

The 2007 Water Resources Development Act was approved by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on a voice vote on March 29, just before Congress adjourned for its spring break. WRDA is the bill that will authorize new locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi. The overview below was provided by Worth Hager, Executive Director of the National Waterways Conference, of which UMIMRA is a member. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee previously approved its version (HR 1495).

No amendments were accepted, although there are around seven project-centered amendments that will be considered when the full Senate takes up the measure. There is no word yet on any policy amendments.

The bill is not yet listed on the Library of Congress website, but we expect that it will be available, with a legislative number, in the near future. In the meantime, you can access the version the Committee reviewed through a link on NWC's website at [www.waterways.org](http://www.waterways.org)

As you read the bill, there is much that is welcome and certainly appreciated, including the authorization of the Upper Mississippi projects

as well as fixes for New Orleans. Unfortunately, you will also note that some of the more worrisome sections of the Feingold-McCain Corps reform provisions were included. These include the Water Resources Coordinating Committee (unrelated federal agencies deciding Corps policies including a revision of the Principles and Guidelines), Independent Review for projects over \$40 million (we estimate at least 300 or more projects) as well as reviews for all flood control projects, a Director of Independent Review in the office of the Asst. Secretary (duplicative function and added bureaucracy), peer review after a study has been finished rather than concurrently, an expansion of the definition of what constitutes a project study for independent review, and an assumption of judicial review.

Senators hope to keep momentum going so as to pass the bill by mid-May. It has been suggested that in order to avoid a loss of momentum, it may prove helpful to alert Senator Boxer and others to the fact that many hold grave misgivings about the potential of some of the policy provisions to undermine the ability of authorized projects to go forward to construction.

While it was hoped that the House WRDA would see floor action before the Easter break, it now looks like it could be one of the first items on the calendar when Congress returns on April 16th. You may also access that bill through NWC's website.

## Corps of Engineers Outlines Revised Comprehensive Plan Option

In response to requests from some residents south of St. Louis about proposed Plan G of the Comprehensive Plan for Flood Control, the Corps of Engineers has offered a modification to Plan G known as Plan M. A new map of Plan M – which only modifies Plan G south of St. Louis – is available on UMIMRA's website at [www.umimra.org](http://www.umimra.org) on the Facts and Alerts page. Anyone needing a hard copy can contact UMIMRA at 217/522-4109.

### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As UMIMRA members, we welcome your input on the format, content and suggestions for future articles for River Currents. Please direct your comments to Kim Robinson, UMIMRA, 600 S. Second St., Ste. 403, Springfield, IL 62704 or [kimrobinson@umimra.org](mailto:kimrobinson@umimra.org).

### River Currents

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### CONFERENCE from page 1

operations and maintenance projects, but that fewer new projects will be undertaken. Waters said that the Corps is increasingly looking at risk and impact rather than economics alone when determining projects. He said that the Corps is trying to refocus its efforts with regard to the Comprehensive Plan for Flood Control to ensure that they generate a plan that does take a systems approach. However, he also said that it is the Corps' policy not to encourage development in the floodplain.

We were also joined by FEMA representatives, Gary Loss of the Rock Island District of the Corps of Engineers who provided a congressional budget overview, Jim Stiman who gave provided the annual flood outlook and representatives from the Iowa, Illinois and Missouri Farm Bureaus who offered their perspectives on a variety of river and agriculture topics. Copies of the power point presentations provided at the conference are available on the website at [www.umimra.org](http://www.umimra.org) on the Events page.



Tom Waters (right) offered his perspective on national water resources policy at UMIMRA's Annual Conference.



UMIMRA Chair David McMurray thanks outgoing board member Dan Wiedemeier for his years of service.

# UMIMRA Representatives Visit DC

UMIMRA board members made their annual trek to Washington DC last month to communicate our priorities to area Congressmen and Senators. Among the items topping our agenda this year were: Completion of the Comprehensive Plan for Flood Control, passage of WRDA, concerns over management of the Missouri River and funding for the US Army Corps of Engineers. Our fact sheet is included below which provides additional information.



UMIMRA board members Vicki Stoller and David McMurray meet with Congressman Leonard Boswell (center, D-IA) in his DC office.



UMIMRA representatives meet with Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) and his staff in his DC office. Pictured left to right are Board Chairman David McMurray, Executive Director Kim Robinson, Sen. Bond, Board members Mike Klingner and Vicki Stoller and Karla Klingner of Sen. Bond's staff.

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## FY '08 Budget Priorities

### Comprehensive Plan for Systemic Flood Control on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers

- We support a systemic approach to flood control for the Mississippi and Illinois River Valleys. The current approach of piece-meal projects is inadequate and exposes people, communities and property to undue risk. There should be a continuing authority similar in concept to that provided statutorily to the Lower Mississippi River Valley.
- The draft Corps of Engineers study shows systemic flood protection on the Upper Mississippi is possible.
- UMIMRA supports Plan G or M which offer the greatest level of protection to the greatest number of citizens and communities.
- Research from the Tennessee Valley Authority shows that significant economic benefits result when adequate flood protection is in place. In fact, every dollar spent on flood protection would generate a seven-fold return.
- We are requesting an FY '08 appropriation of \$686,000 to complete the Plan.

### Army Corps of Engineers

- We support funding to meet Corps capability for PED and related construction on Upper Mississippi & Illinois Rivers as defined in NESP.
- We support the appropriation of maintenance funds for dredging projects.
- We support the Corps' request for badly-needed Lock and Dam Rehabilitation projects on the Mississippi River.

## Other Legislative Priorities

### Water Resources Development Act

- We strongly support the passage of WRDA pass without further delay.
- We support language that considers regional and local economic costs and benefits, as well as potential loss of life that may result from flooding, in project cost-benefit analysis.

## Administrative Issues

### Missouri River Operating Plan

- UMIMRA does not believe a spring rise is justified scientifically or economically.
- We are concerned with adaptive management initiatives being formed without sufficient consideration of flood control, economic development, navigation or recreational interests on Missouri, Mississippi and Illinois Rivers or adjacent areas.

### Corps of Engineers

- We oppose efforts to increase base water levels in reservoirs which intentionally increase the risk of flooding downstream. Reservoirs were built to provide relief from flood flows.
- We support evaluating, prioritizing and implementing environmental projects based on their positive benefit to other concerns such as flood control, economic development and recreation. We believe that there is much opportunity for mutual benefit and coordination of these efforts.

### Agriculture

- Crop insurance should cover flood damage caused by governmental action.

### FEMA

- Programs for FEMA re-certification of levees now entail a closer evaluation of levee slope. Most of these levees were designed by the federal government so correction of any deficiencies should be at federal expense.
- The cost to certify levees every five years is a cost-prohibitive expenditure for many levee and drainage districts. Annual Corps inspections should be adequate.

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# UMIMRA Welcomes New Members

The following new members  
have joined our ranks:

**Big Swan Farms**  
Winchester, Illinois

**Des Moines County**  
Burlington, Iowa

**First State Bank**  
Winchester, Illinois

**Hartsburg Levee District**  
Hartsburg, Missouri

**Henderson County**  
Oquawka, Illinois

**M&P Missouri River  
Levee District**  
Council Bluffs, Iowa

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