

ARKANSAS WATERWAYS COMMISSION

OUR RIVERS. OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

Biennial Report
Calendar years 2018 & 2019.



*Compiled by the Arkansas Waterways
Commission for the Citizens of Arkansas, the
Governor of Arkansas, and Members of the
Arkansas General Assembly*



Michael Preston
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

Deidre Smith
DIRECTOR,
ARKANSAS WATERWAYS
COMMISSION

December 9, 2019

The Honorable Governor Asa Hutchinson
State Capitol, Room 250
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor Hutchinson,

The Arkansas Waterways Commission is proud to present a review of some of the activities and initiatives the team has worked on over the past two years. The Commission has been vigilant and purposeful within its authority and resources to maximize the benefits of Arkansas' commercially navigable waterways.

The Commission recognizes and appreciates the continuous support you have shown for these treasured natural resources and your acknowledgement of the benefits they provide to Arkansas' economy.

The Arkansas Waterways Commission is the sole state agency charged with developing, promoting, and protecting the commercially navigable rivers of Arkansas for waterborne commerce and transportation. The Commission coordinates and cooperates with various local, state, and federal agencies in ongoing efforts to develop these assets as an important economic driver for Arkansas.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on how we can better utilize and develop these vital assets to benefit Arkansas' current citizens and future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

Marty Shell, Chairman
Arkansas Waterways Commission

Arkansas Department of Commerce
Arkansas Waterways Commission
10600 Industrial Harbor Rd • Little Rock, AR 72206
<https://www.waterways.arkansas.gov>

Arkansas Waterways Commission

The mission of the Commission is to develop, promote, and protect the commercially navigable waterways of Arkansas for waterborne transportation and economic development to benefit the people of Arkansas.

Authorizing legislation, responsibilities, and duties

The Arkansas Waterways Commission was established by Act 242 of 1967, and its powers and duties were amended by Act 414 of 1973.

The Arkansas Waterways Commission's powers, duties and functions assigned by law are as follows:

1. Study and coordinate efforts designed to promote the development of the navigable stream areas in this State for water transportation purposes;
2. Encourage and coordinate the development of river port and harbor facilities;
3. To recommend to the proper officials, recreational restrictions in critical commercial navigation areas in order to promote public safety and expedite water transportation.
4. Intercede on behalf of and to represent the State of Arkansas in matters pertaining to the application of fees, tolls or user charges levied or contemplated to be levied against the water transportation industry engaged in either intrastate or interstate water commerce.
5. Receive and use any federal, state or private funds, donations and grants made available for the development, use and expansion of river transportation resources of this State, provided that nothing herein shall be deemed to deny or prohibit any city, county, port authority or other governmental or private agency or authority from accepting such donations and grants they are now authorized by law to receive.
6. Cooperate with and furnish assurances to the United States Government and any agencies thereof, for improvement of the waterways of this State for the purpose of commercial navigation and other project purposes, and to contract with the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Engineers to provide the necessary lands, easements, and rights-of-way in connection therewith; to share if necessary in the costs of the projects in the event the Chief of Engineers determines that it is necessary under applicable federal laws and policy; and to otherwise furnish local cooperation requirements of the Acts authorizing projects.
7. Have and exercise the power and authority to acquire such real and personal property, in the name of the State of Arkansas, by gift, grant, purchase, negotiation or by condemnation, as the Commission deems necessary or desirable to carry out its functions and responsibilities under this Act.
8. Require all State agencies, boards or commissions, when such agencies, boards and commissions are planning industrial, residential or recreational zonings, operational

regulations or improvements involving channel alignments, bank stabilization, bank and adjacent land uses, which would directly or indirectly affect commercial navigation on any of the State's inland waterways, to coordinate such planning with the Commission.

9. Require all State agencies, boards and commissions having the power to give assurances over water resource projects to coordinate such activities with the Arkansas Waterways Commission prior to giving such assurances if such assurances are given in regard to projects and programs that are on the navigable waterways of the State or may affect these waterways.
10. Authorizes the assignment, transfer, lease, conveyance, grant or donation of any or all of its property to the United States of America or to any agency or department thereof, for use of the United States in connection with the purposes of this Act.
11. Represent this State in the promotion of the development of commercial water transportation in this State and to cooperate with other states, other agencies of this State or agencies of the United States Government, in any manner whatsoever, in an effort to develop the commercial use of the waterways in this State. The Commission is hereby empowered to study all executive orders and legislation, state and federal, which may affect the commercial development of interstate or intrastate water transportation and to make recommendations concerning any such executive orders or legislation.
12. United States Army Corps of Engineers - has responsibility for planning, improving and maintaining the inland river system to provide for flood control, navigation and recreation. It operates most locks and dams on the inland waterways system. It also administers the "Section 10" and "Section 404" federal permit programs.
13. United States Coast Guard - is responsible for the establishment of navigation regulations and the operation and maintenance of physical aids to navigation. Other responsibilities include search and rescue, and enforcement of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. It administers a program for recreational boating safety which includes the establishment and enforcement of minimal safety and signal equipment standards, and inspection of certain classes of commercial vessels. The Coast Guard also administers the laws pertinent to the construction, operation and maintenance of bridges over navigable waterways.
14. United States Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD) - is charged with the responsibility within the government to promote a merchant marine services sufficient to carry the nations domestic waterborne commerce. MARAD administers a number of programs for the industry and undertakes research to support the industry.
15. Other Agencies - These include the Department of Homeland Security which works to secure all modes of transportation, land, air and water. Securing the global supply chain, while ensuring its smooth function, is essential to the USA's national security and economic prosperity; Environmental Protection Agency, which is involved in pollution control and noise control; the Department of Labor, which is the administrator of the occupational Health and Safety Act; the Federal Communications Commission; and the United State Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers various laws regarding the protection of fish and wildlife resources.

Funding

Activities of the Commission are funded from general revenue appropriated by the General Assembly. The Commission has the authority to receive and use any federal, state or private funds, donations or grants made available for the development, use and expansion of river transportation resources of the State. In 2019, legislation was added to include \$50,000.00 from ad valorem taxes for operations and maintenance.

Through its contribution line item, the AWC supports the efforts of:

- ◆ Arkansas Waterways Association
- ◆ Mississippi Valley Food Control Association
- ◆ Red River Valley Association
- ◆ Ouachita River Valley Coalition
- ◆ White River Valley Coalition

The Commission also promotes economic development for ports on the commercially navigable rivers of the state.

River Updates

Arkansas River

The Arkansas River was blasted by historically significant flooding during the months of May and June. The event brought commerce to a halt for hundreds of miles. On May 22, weather officials provided warnings of possible significant flooding. Many towns located within the 100-year flood plain were encouraged to evacuate. Freight was rerouted to specified washouts. After flooding picked up, two fully-loaded barges broke free of their restraints and were carried swiftly towards the upstream Webbers Falls Dam. Fortunately, when the barges rammed into the dam, it only damaged a few tainter gates. The barges spilled their cargo into the river then sank to the bottom. Hundreds of homes, businesses, and even several ports along the river were completely submerged. The event took a toll on the McClellan–Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System. According to an economic impact study conducted by MarTREC at the University of Arkansas, complete disruption of operations on the MKARNS caused a daily loss of \$23 million in Gross Domestic Product within the State of Arkansas. Navigation resumed in October on the Arkansas segment of the MKARNS with a limitation of six barge tows.

White River

Navigation cannot commence until the channel is maintained and tows can move confidently to and from the Mississippi River. The Memphis District USACE is responsible for the navigation, recreation, flood control, and operation-maintenance of this navigation system. The Memphis District received \$250,000 for surveying and possible snagging of the river bed; however, high flows have suspended operations. A White River basin study is currently being conducted.

Ouchita-Black River Navigation System

In 2018, an additional \$2,000,000 was added through work plan funding for Operation and Maintenance of the Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project, Red River to Camden, AR, to the FY 17 President's Budget of \$8,445,000 along with available funding provided the most dredging and clearing and snagging operations on the waterway that has occurred in several years. The FY19 budget amount of only \$7,979,000.00 allowed minor dredging, with dredging above Columbia Lock not possible due to emergency closure. Because of this, ORVA requested channel surveys be conducted prior to the opening of Columbia Lock to pinpoint any navigation limitations in order to better determine dredging requirements. An official plan will then be developed based on said requirements. Dredging should be expedited now that the boils under the lock wall have been fixed. This should decrease the threat of further delays in waterway use.

Red River Navigation System

The USACE through Gulf Engineering Consultants (GEC) conducted a feasibility study which calls for a 50% cost share with no federal funds appropriated. The state of Arkansas agreed to allocate \$1 million for USACE to advance the study to determine if the project benefits justify a project. In February 2019, USACE announced benefits exceeded cost & will resume the feasibility study. The State is considering conducting the study through Section 203. The Arkansas Red River Commission is also pursuing public-private partnership options. There will be a reconnaissance study, which will take a brief look at engineering. It could be federally funded by USACE, but it is unlikely with a 'no earmark' policy. It could be privately funded if an A/E Firm is used. There will have to be enough of a recon/feasible study to determine the reality of a project and a political coalition for support will have to be built. By extending navigation to Index, AR from Shreveport-Bossier City, LA the waterway could save about \$75 million annually in shipping costs, and groups are now trying to fund a separate feasibility study to figure out whether there is enough cost benefit to begin construction.

Mississippi River

A meeting was held in Osceola, AR along the Mississippi River to educate local leaders, port authority board members, congressional staffers, and economic developers about the importance of waterborne commerce and how to use the navigable rivers as tools to entice industries to the region. Personnel from AEDC, USACE Memphis District, and the Osceola Port Authority made presentations, along with Big River Steel CEO, Dave Stickler, who spoke on the company locating in Osceola for lower shipping rates on the Mississippi River. Strategic plans and business development plans are being drafted for further port infrastructure and industrial park improvements. (Additional meetings have been held in Camden and Crossett along the Ouachita River to encourage economic development as well.)



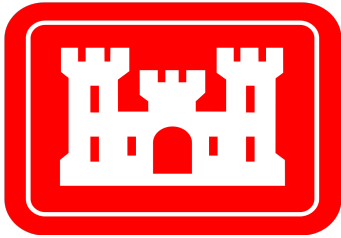
Director Smith presented at the July 2019 Osceola Port Authority Meeting and educated attendees on the role of USACE, the importance of hydropower, and the economic impact of waterborne navigation on the Mississippi River. Other speakers included Len Crescenzo, Watco commercial director, Dave Stickler, CEO of Big River Steel, and Randy McNeil, Poinsett Rice & Grain.



Left to Right: Joe Harris Jr., Arkansas Waterways Commissioner, Randy McNeil, Poinsett Rice & Grain, Deidre Smith, Director of Arkansas Waterways Commission, Dave Stickler, CEO of Big River Steel, Sally Wilson, Mayor of Osceola, Chris Caldwell, Delta Regional Authority Chairman, Vicki Watson, Memphis District USACE, Dutch King, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, and Len Crescenzo, Watco Companies



Federal Agency Partners



United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Plans, improves, and maintains the inland river system to provide for flood control, navigation, and recreation. It operates most locks and dams on the inland waterways system. It also administers Section 10 and Section 404 federal permit programs.



United States Coast Guard (USCG)

Responsible for establishing navigation regulations, and operating and maintaining physical aids to navigation. Other responsibilities include search and rescue and enforcement of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. The USCG also administers the laws pertinent to the construction, operation and maintenance of bridges over navigable waterways.



United States Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD)

Promotes merchant marine services to carry the nation's domestic waterborne commerce. The United States Department of Transportation Maritime Administration administers a number of programs for the industry and undertakes research to support the industry.



United States Department of Homeland Security

Working to secure all modes of transportation, land, air and water. Securing the global supply chain, while ensuring its smooth functioning, is essential to the USA's national security and economic prosperity.

Other Agencies: Environmental Protection Agency, controlling pollution and noise; the Department of Labor, administrator of the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers various laws regarding the protection of fish and wildlife resources.

The Commission

The Governor appoints each of the seven Commissioners to serve seven-year terms. These appointments are staggered to maintain consistency so that optimally only one is appointed annually.



Marty Shell, of Fort Smith, was appointed to the commission in 2018. A second generation port terminal operator, Shell has been employed by Five Rivers Distribution for the past 24 years being able to work with his father Buck Shell, the founder of Five Rivers Distribution for 15 of those years. Marty is active with both the Fort Smith and Van Buren chambers serving as President for the Van Buren Chamber and Political affairs for the Fort Smith Chamber. He also serves as a Civil Service Commissioner for the City of Fort Smith police and fire departments, and is the current Arkansas Oklahoma Port Operators Association president. Marty and his wife Shannon have been married for 20 years and have three children, Mackenzie, Avery, and Nathan Shell.



Joe Harris, of Osceola, represents the Mississippi River. Mr. Harris is a consultant/ lobbyist on national, state and local levels for counties, cities and organizations. He serves on The Arkansas Delta Commission. He has served three terms as a member of the Arkansas House of Representatives. Mr. Harris was Assistant Speaker Pro Temp. He served as chairman of Public Transportation and was a member of House Rules, House Management Committee, and The Tobacco Settlement Task Force. He served as an alternate member on the Joint Energy committee.



Matthew King, of Little Rock, serves at-large. Mr. King is the Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations with the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation. He has a degree in agribusiness from Arkansas State University and a Masters in agricultural economics from the University of Arkansas. Mr. King is a member of the University of Arkansas College of Agriculture Deans Advisory Board and serves as administrator for the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board. Prior to coming to Farm Bureau, Mr. King was an economist with the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service in Washington, D.C.



Jeff Rutledge, of Newport, represents the White River. Mr. Rutledge, a native of Newport, graduated from Newport High School and earned a B.S. in Plant Science from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and a Masters in Agronomy from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Mr. Rutledge has been farming full time since 1999 in Newport along the White River producing rice, wheat, corn, soybeans and milo. Mr. Rutledge serves on the Newport School Board, Levee Commission, several industry organizations and is President of the White River Valley Coalition.



Craig Mobley, of El Dorado, is an avid outdoorsman and a native of Warren. Craig and his wife J.P. moved to El Dorado in 2013. They have two children, Millee (13) and Max (9). Craig is the Executive Vice President of First Financial Bank. He serves locally on the South Arkansas Community College Foundation Board, the El Dorado Works Board, as well as the Agape House Board. He is also an active member of First Baptist Church where he serves on the Finance Committee. On a state level, Craig is a past Chairman of Group 4 for the Arkansas Bankers Association where he also served on the Arkansas Bankers Association Board.



Phyllis Harden, of Redfield, was appointed to the commission in 2019. Ms. Harden serves at large, and is primarily responsible for Legislative and Special Projects for Pine Bluff Sand and Gravel Company. She began her career with Pine Bluff in 1981. Ms. Harden was instrumental in the initiation of Pine Bluff's most successful Safety Program, which dramatically reduced injury and illness to the company's highly productive people. She is frequently in Washington, DC lobbying for Corps of Engineers waterway projects and funding. She is on the Board of Directors and a Past-President of the Mississippi Valley AGC, which is the largest geographical Branch of the Associated General Contractors of America and represents contractors on the river system from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Dredging Contractors of America, Washington, DC. and is on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the National Waterways Conference, Washington, DC. Locally, Ms. Harden is Vice-Chairman of the Pine Bluff-Jefferson County Port Authority Board.



Ken Cowling, of Texarkana, was appointed by Governor Hutchinson in 2019 to fill the unexpired term of Bill Varner, deceased. Mr. Cowling is a graduate of Southern Arkansas University where he majored in Accounting and Business. For the last 40 years, he has owned and operated Cowling Title Company, a company that deals with title business across the entire State of Arkansas. While the Red River is his area of concern, Mr. Cowling has stated that all port matters deserve attention. Mr. Cowling served as State Representative for Miller and Little River County from 2000-2006 and is an active member in the Chamber of Commerce for both counties. Mr. Cowling is married to wife, Elaine, and together they live in Texarkana, Arkansas.



In memory of William "Bill" Varner

September 5, 1934 – November 21, 2018

He was appointed to the Arkansas Waterways Commission by Governor Beebe, serving as chair for several years. Representing the Red River, Mr. Varner was heavily involved in efforts to expand navigation along the river from Shreveport, LA to near Texarkana, AR, of which the Vicksburg District of the US Army Corps of Engineers is currently studying extending navigation along the Red River. Mr. Varner has undoubtedly made an impact on the furthering of the Red River.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

As Engrossed: H3/29/19

HB1094

1 Agencies Fund Account, for personal services and operating expenses of the
2 Arkansas Waterways Commission for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, the
3 following:

4		
5	ITEM	FISCAL YEAR
6	NO.	2019-2020
7	(01) REGULAR SALARIES	\$158,806
8	(02) PERSONAL SERVICES MATCHING	51,408
9	(03) MAINT. & GEN. OPERATION	
10	(A) OPER. EXPENSE	93,879
11	(B) CONF. & TRAVEL	3,151
12	(C) PROF. FEES	0
13	(D) CAP. OUTLAY	0
14	(E) DATA PROC.	0
15	(04) STATE'S CONTRIBUTIONS	<u>2,555</u>
16	TOTAL AMOUNT APPROPRIATED	<u><u>\$309,799</u></u>

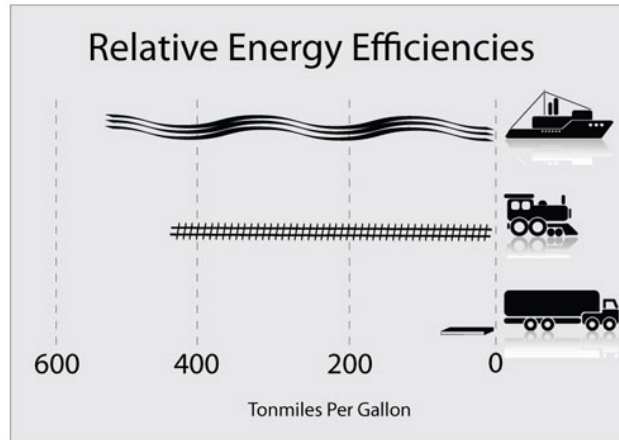
17
18 SECTION 3. APPROPRIATION - WATERWAY DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM. There
19 is hereby appropriated, to the Arkansas Waterways Commission, to be payable
20 from the Arkansas Port, Intermodal, and Waterway Development Grant Program
21 Fund, for grants to port authorities and intermodal authorities under the
22 Arkansas Port, Intermodal, and Waterway Development Grant Program for port
23 development projects as defined by Arkansas Code § 15-23-205 for the fiscal
24 year ending June 30, 2020, the following:

25		
26	ITEM	FISCAL YEAR
27	NO.	2019-2020
28	(01) WATERWAY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS	<u><u>\$5,000,000</u></u>

29
30 SECTION 4. APPROPRIATION - ARKANSAS RIVER NAVIGATION SYSTEM FUND.
31 There is hereby appropriated, to the Arkansas Waterways Commission, to be
32 payable from the Arkansas River Navigation System Fund, for expenses for the
33 development, improvement, and expansion of river transportation resources
34 within the portion of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System
35 located in the State of Arkansas for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020,
36 the following:

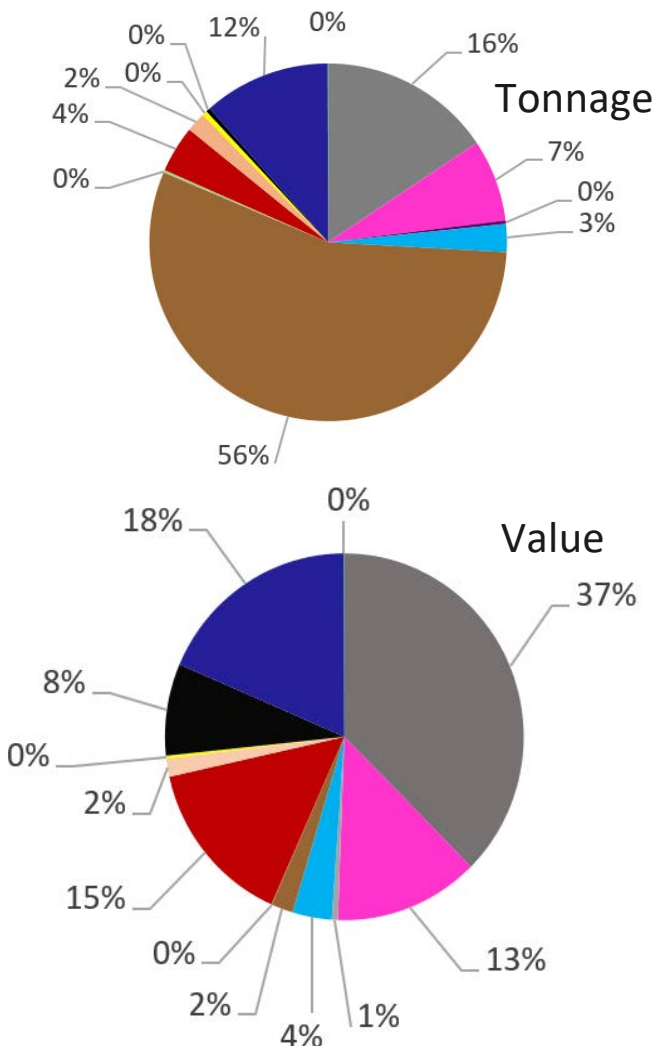
1		
2	ITEM	FISCAL YEAR
3	NO.	2019-2020
4	(01) ARKANSAS RIVER NAVIGATION SYSTEM EXPENSES	<u><u>\$2,000,000</u></u>

The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that freight volume is expected to more than triple in the U.S. from 2003 to 2020. Waterborne transportation only using 33% of its capacity offers a way to meet shipping needs without further stressing our nation's highway system.



Waterways has a clear advantage over rail and trucking.

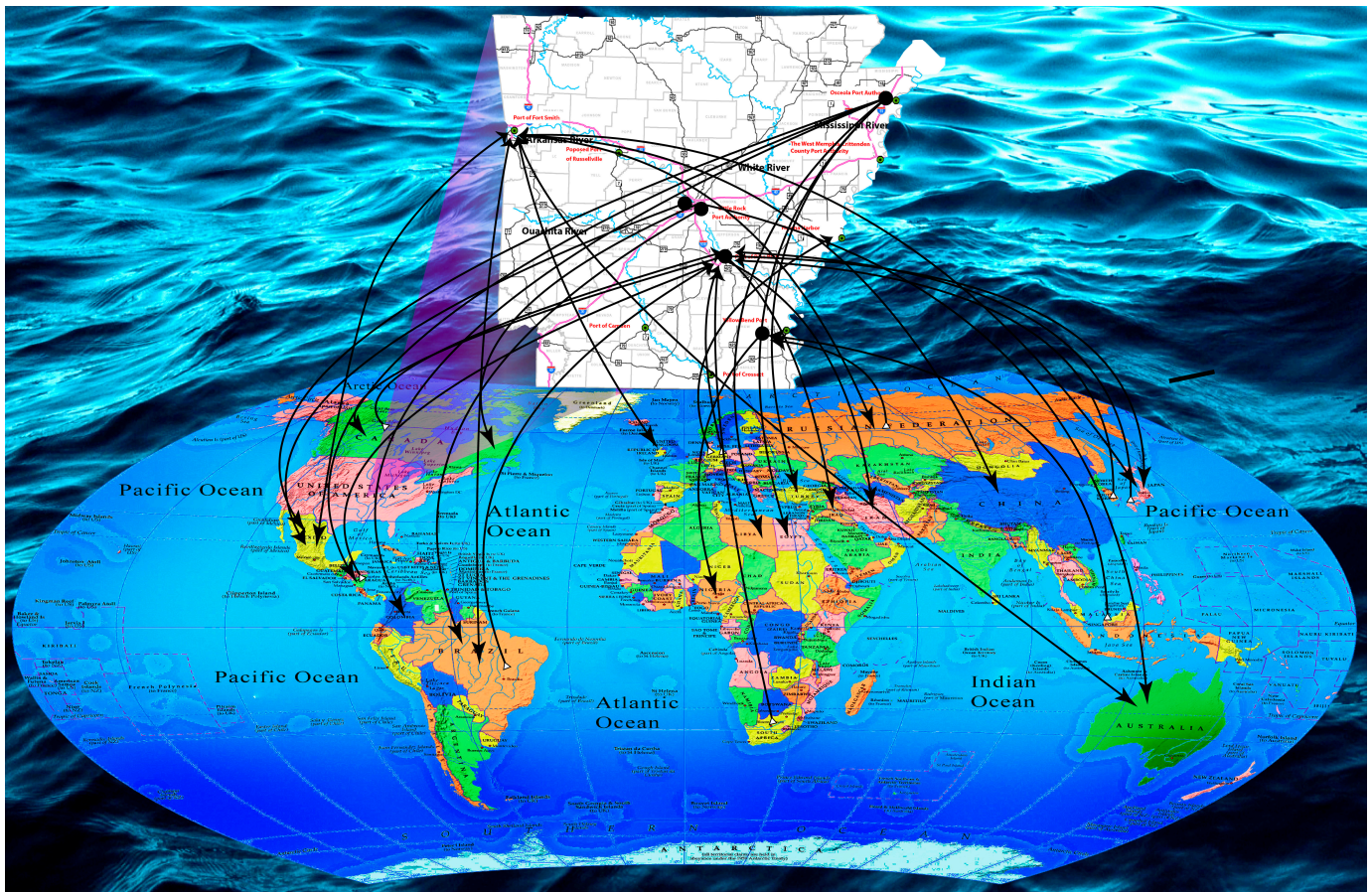
2018 Arkansas Segment Tonnage & Value on the MKARNS



	Tonnage	Value
IRON/STEEL	903,870	\$508,996,574.00
CHEM FERT	429,146	\$177,005,559.00
OTHER CHEM	17,866	\$7,369,010.00
PETRO PROD	146,300	\$48,122,459.00
SAND/GRAVEL/ROCK	3,211,109	\$26,620,094.00
COKE & COAL	13,100	\$609,150.00
MINERALS/BLDG MAT'S	244,600	\$201,171,270.00
FOOD/FARM PROD	102,042	\$21,593,108.00
WHEAT	26,800	\$3,512,408.00
EQUIP/MACH	21,977	\$109,885,000.00
SOYBEANS	665,031	\$251,009,301.00
MISC	2,800	\$592,480.00
Totals	5,784,641	\$1,356,486,413

MKARNS USERS: Improving the Economy

The McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS) is an economic driver for the State of Arkansas with the various manufacturing and agricultural industries utilizing waterborne commerce and the thousands of jobs created in the region. The map below shows commodities being shipped to and from Arkansas while giving some perspective to how vital our waterways are in regards to the economy. Our waterways provide hundreds of jobs and connects us with the rest of the world in a unique way.



Happenings Along the Rivers of Arkansas



Phyllis Harden, Pine Bluff Sand and Gravel, was sworn in as a Commissioner to the Arkansas Waterways Commission by Chief Deputy Secretary of State Bill Huffman, Jr. on February 28th, 2019. This makes Mrs. Harden the first female to serve as an AWC Commissioner.

Director Smith attended the Change of Command Ceremonies of the USACE Districts during the summer of 2019.

Pictured on the lower left, Ms. Smith presented Colonel Robert G. Dixon an Arkansas Travelers plaque for his services during his change of command ceremony. Col. Dixon served the Little Rock District from 2016 to 2019. The Little Rock District is responsible for a \$500 million program annually that maintains the Arkansas River and other waterways, including 13 locks and dams, 12 multi-purpose lakes (including Table Rock, Bull Shoals and Norfork lakes), seven hydroelectric power plants, and more than a half million acres of public lands and water.



AWC Director, Deidre Smith, addressed the 8 Western River District's DTRAIN United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Conference held in Little Rock, AR on April 12th. Director Smith opened the ceremony and talked about the importance of the inland rivers in Arkansas and the important role the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary plays in providing boat safety training, emergency response, and the monitoring of aids to navigation on the navigation systems.



Left to Right: JW Misenheimer, Arkansas Waterways Commission; Beverly Smith, Career Staffing Services, Inc.; Stephen Bell, President and CEO of the Arkadelphia Regional Economic Development Alliance; Deidre Smith, Executive Director of the Arkansas Waterways Commission; Melanie Baden, Executive Director, Arkansas Waterways Association; Lou Ann Nisbett, President and CEO of the Economic Development Alliance of Pine Bluff; and Maria Clark, Welspun Tubular, LLC.

River supporters and stakeholders gathered to celebrate the Little Rock Port Authority's 60th Anniversary. The Port is now home to more than 40 businesses from six countries, employing 4500 people and contributing \$500 million annually to the region's economy.



The Arkansas Waterways Association and Arkansas Waterways Commission in conjunction with the Little Rock Port Authority represented the State of Arkansas by attending the BreakBulk Americas in both 2018 and 2019. BreakBulk Americas has grown to be the region's largest and most influential event across Canada, the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean for all those involved in the project cargo and breakbulk community. Through BreakBulk, many connections were made and opportunities were forged.

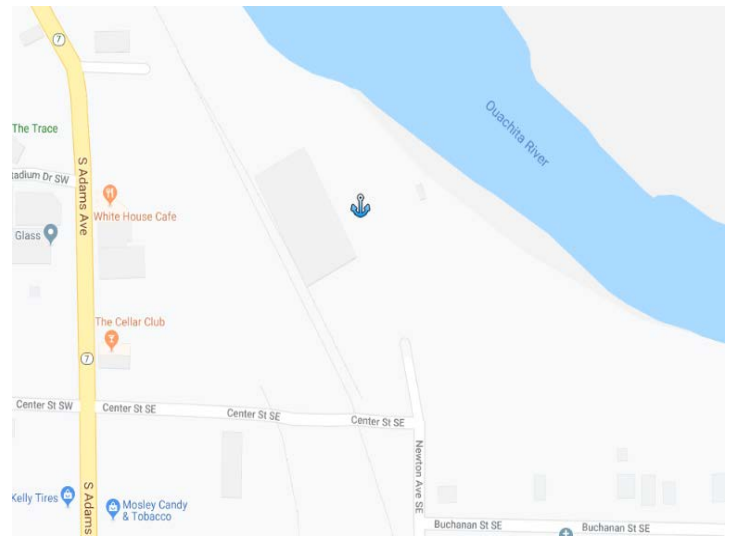


Director Smith was invited to join Congressman Bruce Westerman on a two day tour of his District. Director Smith visited the H.K. Thatcher Lock & Dam; the Union County Water Conservation District, a project Sherrell Johnson has worked on to recharge the Sparta aquifer by utilizing filtration of water in the Ouachita River for three industries to draw from in lieu of the aquifer; Blakely Lock & Dam, where she toured the hydropower plant with USACE personnel and Nicki Fuller, Executive Director of SWPRA, and the City of Camden.



Director Smith led a strategic planning meeting concerning the Ouachita River at the offices of the Ouachita Partnership for Economic Development. In attendance were several members of the Camden Port Authority, board members of the Ouachita River Valley Association, members of the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and Camden Mayor Julian Lott. A 337-mile-long Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project began in 1902 to create a navigable waterway from Camden, Arkansas to Jonesville, Louisiana, and when completed in 1924 included six locks and dams that were 84 feet wide and 600 feet in length. There are two lock locations in Arkansas, Felsenthal and Thatcher, which were both constructed in 1984.

There are opportunity zones in Camden that could offer a deferment on capital gains tax in regards to investing in businesses. Some details on these zones still have to be worked out by the IRS. There is a Union Pacific railroad located in town that could be a huge asset paired with the river. The idea was tossed around in the meeting that river traffic could connect with the SouthArk Intermodal Park to support transportation.



AWC Director Deidre Smith and J.W. Misenheimer presented at RiverWorks Discovery's Who Works The River showcase in 2018 and 2019. The river-focused event was for grades 11-12 in 2018 and elementary in 2019. It was designed as an introduction for students to Arkansas' maritime industry in partnership with Arkansas ports. Attendees were able to meet with representatives from the maritime industry and related fields in a mini-career fair, participate in a mini-deckhand training, and tour a towboat and the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum. Among the river industries represented with a booth at the event was Pine Bluff Sand & Gravel Co. A new brochure produced by the AWC and featuring the river ports of Arkansas was available at the AWA booth, and a recently-filmed video with "Arkansas port people talking about the river" was showing at the booth.

Three Rivers, Arkansas Investigations



Director Smith, Phyllis Harden, (AWC Commissioner), Thaddaeus Babb (Waterways Branch of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation), and Bob Portis (former Catoosa Port Director), met with Senator Boozman to discuss the top priorities of the MKARNS. A main topic discussed was the Preconstruction, Engineering & Design (PED) phase of the Three Rivers project. The authorized project is a plan to promote a long-term sustainable navigation system by reducing the risk of a cutoff forming near the entrance channel of the MKARNS between the Arkansas and White rivers. Opening the Historic Cutoff would allow better control over the location of future overtopping events. This opening would also restore ecosystem functions at Webfoot Lake, and reconnect Owens Lake to its former southern limb. This plan would not alter hydrology in the surrounding bottomland hardwood forests and the MKARNS will have no operational changes to navigation.



The Engineering and Research Assessment Development Center (ERDC) completed a Ship Tow Simulator model for the Three Rivers Project. Ship captains from the regional navigation ran models in November 2019. Bathymetric surveys of the project site have been completed, and that information is being processed for use during design. Aside from other field survey work, anticipation completion is expected by March/April 2020. The 35% design/plans and specs will initiate once all field surveys have been completed. Director Smith along with Leslie Jenkins, Jantran, and Dana Coburn, USACE, worked together to ensure simulations were being done to stay on schedule.

Grant Awards FY 2018 & 2019

The Arkansas Waterways Commission's Arkansas Port, Intermodal, and Waterway Development Grant Program benefits the public ports by reinvesting the ad valorem tax paid by industries on the value of the barges traversing Arkansas' navigable waterways. This grant provides funds for public ports and intermodal authorities to make capital improvements and facilitates much needed dredging projects.

“This grant program increases Arkansas’ competitive advantage on the nation’s inland river system to entice increased waterborne commerce for the navigable rivers in Arkansas,” says Deidre Smith, Director. “The waterways are an economic driver for the state and water transportation is the most cost- effective, safe, and environmentally friendly mode of shipping bulk and oversized cargo.”

Grant Awards for CY19 and CY20				
<i>Port</i>	2019	2020	TOTALS	
Fort Smith	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 295,593.00	\$ 405,593.00	Reconstruct and repair the port facility from damage caused by the 2019 flood event.
Little Rock	\$ 260,000.00	\$ 167,713.00	\$ 427,713.00	Construction of a heavy equipment connector road.
Osceola	\$ 440,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 740,000.00	Port access road improvement and resurfacing.
Helena-West Helena	\$ -	\$ 304,028.00	\$ 304,028.00	Improve water supply for current and future tenants of Helena Harbor.
Newport	\$ 141,720.00	\$ -	\$ 141,720.00	Phase II of a 3-phase process to construct access to the port site.
Chicot-Desha	\$ -	\$ 204,678.00	\$ 204,678.00	Major upgrade of overhead bridge crane (installed in 1995).
Crossett	\$ -	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	Expansion of storage space in Warehouse #2 to meet the needs of the Rescue Unit.
TOTALS:	\$ 951,720.00	\$ 1,327,012.00	\$ 2,278,732.00	

ARKANSAS WATERWAYS COMMISSION STAFF

DEIDRE L. SMITH, DIRECTOR



Deidre Smith assumed the duties as Director for the Arkansas Waterways Commission in July, 2017. Before accepting the position with AWC, Deidre served as the Waterways Manager for the Oklahoma Department of Transportation for over six of her 32 years with ODOT before retiring the end of August, 2017.

In September 2006, Deidre completed the Certified Public Manager's Program. She currently serves as Vice-chair on the American Association of State Highway Transportation Official's Council on Water Transportation, the Board of Directors for the Mack-Blackwell Transportation Center, the Executive Committee for the National Waterways Conference, Board of Directors for the Inland Rivers, Ports, and Terminals association, the Governor's Levee Task Force, Board of Directors for the Arkansas-Oklahoma Port Operators Association, and the Transportation Committee for Metroplan.

J.W. MISENHEIMER, ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST

J. W. started working for the Arkansas Waterways Commission in October 2017. J.W. acquired a Bachelor of Arts Degree in film and mass communications from Southern Arkansas University.

After college, he started his own company, Misenheimer Media, a freelance production business that creates videos and graphic designs. J.W. will be helping with research, education, marketing and web development for the AWC.



LAWANDA CAMPBELL, BUSINESS OPERATIONS



First employed with Arkansas Waterways Commission as an Administrative Assistant in 2002, LaWanda retired after 35 years of service with the State of Arkansas In January 2016 as a Budget Operations Specialist.

In October 2017, LaWanda returned to the Arkansas Waterways Commission to her former position. LaWanda is a graduate of Alabama A & M University and Pulaski Technical College. She enjoys spending time with family and traveling.