



WATERWAYS

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER

CARIA Visits Washington Seeking Support for the Alabama River in FY 04

WATERWAYS
Spring/Summer
2003

CARIA representatives visited Washington, DC the week of March 3 to seek funds for federal projects on the Coosa-Alabama River system. President Ralph O Clemens, Jr. led the group, which included Judge Otha Lee Biggs of Monroe County, Mayor James Perkins of Selma, Ken Fairly of Alabama River Pulp, and Executive Vice President Jerry Sailors. Along with other waterway associations, the group made calls on each of the Alabama delegation and, on Wednesday, March 5, co-hosted a reception in the Senate Russell Building for members of the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Energy and Water.

Of major importance to CARIA was the effort to reinstate sufficient funding in the FY 04 E&W appropriations to dredge the Alabama River. For the last three years, the President's Budget has eliminated that funding. In FY 02, Congress put the money back in. In FY 03, no add-on dredging funds were included in the omnibus appropriations bill passed in February of this year. The Alabama delegation pledged to support CARIA's requested add-on of \$3 million in FY 04, but cautioned that future requests for add-on funding for dredging will be problematic if barge traffic on the navigation channel does not increase.

CARIA also requested \$1.5 million

to begin the upgrade of Swift Creek Park near Autaugaville.

Swift Creek Park has tremendous potential for recreational development. Miles of waterfront on a large cove, just off the main channel of the Alabama River, combined with the park's level, heavily forested lands, provide the setting for what could be one of the Corps of Engineers' premier campgrounds. The location of Swift Creek Park in the fast-growing metropolitan areas of Montgomery and Autauga Counties assures a demand for recreational facilities.

Additionally, CARIA requested \$100,000 for a study to determine the engineering feasibility of an inter-modal port in the Montgomery area.

With projected increases of cargo into the Gulf of Mexico from Latin America over the next 20 years expected to triple current levels, it is imperative we review alternative transportation for truck traffic between Mobile and Montgomery.

Montgomery is situated at the confluence of all modes of transportation and conceivably could be a transshipment point. The funding requested would come under General Investigations. (*Matrix on Pg. 4*)

Inside this issue:

<i>President's FY 04 Budget</i>	2
<i>CARIA Moves Office</i>	2
<i>Endangered Mussel Habitat</i>	3
<i>AL River Atlas a Joint Effort</i>	3



Visit our website,
www.caria.org
for in-depth
coverage of
waterway issues
and photos of
recent events.

President's Budget for FY 04 Proposed Tapping IWTF and HMTF to pay for O&M

The President's Budget for FY 04 proposed to pay for up to 50% of operations and maintenance of inland waterways with funds from the Inland Waterways Trust Fund and the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund.

The proposal got a resounding "NO" from Congress after waterways groups complained vociferously that the proposal reneged on an agreement between the federal government and waterway interests and would lead to additional taxes on shippers and operators.

In a point paper, *Waterways Work!*, a Washington-based lobbying firm for the waterway industry, made several points:

- a) Waterborne transportation is vitally important to the U.S. economy.
- b) The Inland Waterways Trust Fund (Trust Fund) embodies a commitment to the future of the inland waterways system.
- c) This proposal inevitably leads to a tax increase.
- d) This proposal will have a dramatic and adverse impact on the agricultural, energy, and transportation sectors at time when the economy is struggling to recover.
- e) This proposal breaks faith with waterways users.
- f) This proposal is unfair.

"The barge and towing industry pays a diesel fuel tax of 20 cents per gallon into the Trust Fund under landmark cost-sharing legislation enacted in 1986. These funds, after being matched by general revenues from the federal government, are dedicated by law to underwrite the cost of modernizing locks and dams on the fuel-taxed inland waterways. Unfortunately, instead of being used immediately as originally intended to rebuild Congressionally-approved inland projects, more than \$394 million has been allowed to accumulate and

remain unspent in the Trust Fund.

Contrary to existing law, the President's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2004 unwisely proposes to use this existing balance and future Trust Fund revenues to finance 25 to 50% of inland operations and maintenance (O&M). Congress has rejected this idea on two prior occasions.

The Inland Waterways Trust Fund would be bankrupt in three years or less under the Administration's proposal, and future revenues would be inadequate to address demands.

In a position statement on the recently enacted omnibus appropriations measure, the Administration itself recognized that proposals of this nature inevitably lead to tax increases.

Congress must reject the certainty of future fuel tax increases implicit in this proposal."

CARIA and other waterway associations from Alabama made the same points to the Alabama delegation during a visit to Washington the week of March 3.

CARIA Office Moves

CARIA has moved its offices from the old Riverfront Center on Coosa Street in Montgomery to the Union Train Station on Water Street.

Prompting the move was the City of Montgomery's plans to build its new baseball stadium on the site where the Riverfront Center now stands. In fact, CARIA offices were just about where first base is going to be in the finished stadium, which is scheduled to open for play in April of 2004.

Our new address is **300-A Water Street, Suite 307, Montgomery, AL 36104-2558**. Telephone, fax numbers and e-mail address remain the same.

WATERWAYS

Alabama River Included in Proposed Critical Habitat for Freshwater Mussels

Under a court order, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing that some 1,093 miles of rivers and streams in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee, be designated as critical habitat for 11 federally-listed freshwater mussels listed on March 17, 1993, under the Endangered Species Act. Affected systems are:

- Tombigbee River in Mississippi and Alabama;
- Black Warrior River ;
- Alabama River from mouth of Cahaba to Robert F. Henry Dam;
- Cahaba River;
- Tallapoosa River in Alabama and Georgia
- Coosa River in Alabama and Georgia;

The proposal is in response to an order by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District Court of Tennessee to submit for publication a proposed critical habitat determination by March 17, 2003 and a final determination by March 17, 2004. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently seeking public comments on this proposed designation until June 24, 2003.

For more information go to <http://southeast.fws.gov/hotissues>. The Alabama-Tombigbee Rivers Coalition is reviewing the proposal to determine potential effects on commercial and recreational interests in the Mobile River Basin.

Alabama River Atlas being Developed by Envision 2020 and CARIA

Jerry Sailors, CARIA EVP, is chairing the Water Subcommittee of the Roads & Mass Transportation Task Force for the Envision 2020 project in the Montgomery Area.

The Subcommittee is charged with developing programs and initiatives related to water issues with the overall mission of improving the quality of life in the five-county area surrounding Montgomery.



One of the first projects undertaken by the Subcommittee is production of a River Tour Guide consisting of a touring atlas, a website and a brochure that will highlight historical, cultural, geological and natural attractions in the river corridors of the Envision 2020 region.

Initial planning has begun with some exciting programs in the offing. The group hopes to have the project completed by January 31, 2004.

Corps Hosts CARIA Members Aboard the *EB Wallace*

The Mobile District of the US Army Corps of Engineers recently hosted several CARIA members for several outings on the Corps' survey boat, the *EB Wallace*. Captained by Jeff Williams and piloted by Steven Patton, the *EB Wallace* began the journey at Mount Vernon on the Mobile River before turning up the Alabama River on March 26. With stops at Claiborne Lock, Millers Ferry Lock, Selma, RF Henry Lock, Montgomery, and Wetumpka, the crew returned over the same route, beginning on April 2.

Participating on at least one of the legs were Sheldon Morgan from Warrior-Tombigbee Waterway Association in Mobile; David Lazenby and Tim Casey from Alabama River Pulp; Slaton Crawford and Owen Goff from Wilcox County; Mayor James Perkins and Dir. of Public Works Tommy Smith of Selma; Bill O'Dell of O'Dell Mining ; Robert F Henry, Jr of Henry Tile, Montgomery; Captain Pat Dozier of Montgomery Marina; Peggy Collins of Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel; Mayor Scott Golden of Wetumpka; Mayor Jim Byard, Boo Rogers and Gina Smith of Prattville; Bobby Shuford of Bob Shuford Construction in Montgomery, and Slade Hooks, owner of Waterways Towing and Offshore Services of Mobile. Accompanying the group much of the way was CARIA Executive Vice President, Jerry Sailors.

Mobile District officials participating were Wynne Fuller, Chief of Operations of the Mobile District, and Fred Horn, Chief of navigation from the Tuscaloosa Project Office. The journey offered the participants an opportunity to observe the Mobile District's operations on the river systems of Alabama and to absorb the natural beauty of a magnificent river. Photos can be viewed on CARIA's website: www.caria.org.

Project	President's Budget (\$mil)	CARIA Request (\$mil)
Alabama-Coosa (Incl.Claiborne L&D)	2.961	5.961
Millers Ferry	5.429	5.429
RF Henry	5.726	7.226
Allatoona	6.000	6.000
Carters Lake	10.012	10.012
Alabama River Nav Study - Montgomery		.100 ³
TOTAL	30.128	34.728

1. \$3 million add-on for dredging the Alabama River navigation channel.
2. \$1.5 million to begin renovating and upgrading Swift Creek recreation park near Autaugaville.
3. \$100,000 to determine feasibility of an intermodal port in the Montgomery area, authorized by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on July 24, 2002.