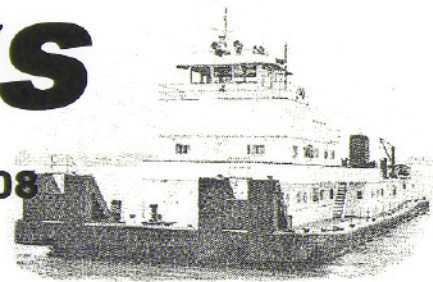


Waterways

Upper Mississippi Waterway Assoc.

Box 7006 St. Paul, MN 55107 (651) 776-3108



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In addition to jobs, lawmaker says

Better locks mean better environment

As federal lawmakers return from their Easter recess, many are receiving renewed invitations to join the Senate Mississippi River Task Force, whose goal is to modernize the locks and dams along the river. Minnesota Senator Norm Coleman has been an early leader in the effort, and has been joined by Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR) in seeking members.

Supports EMP

Sen. Pryor says he wants to re-establish wildlife habitat along the river and supports full funding for the Environmental Management Program. But he also says that the environment in general will be helped by making the system more efficient. He is urging that the more than \$400 million surplus

that has built up in the Inland Waterways Trust Fund be put to use in modernizing the system.

Pryor says the fact that a 15-barge tow can carry the equivalent of 870 semi-trailer trucks with much less pollution, will mean a great reduction in emissions on the nation's highways.

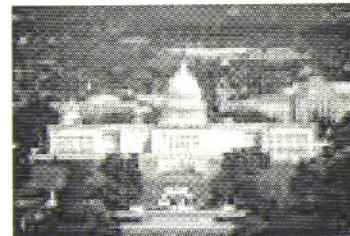
Creates needed jobs

In late March testimony before the Environmental and Public Works Committee, former Congressman John T. Meyers of Indiana also joined proponents of infrastructure improvements, pointing out that in addition to the environmental benefits, the much needed work would create and retain thousands of jobs.

Another key lawmaker, Sen.

Peter Fitzgerald (R-IL) urged that committee to include money for modernization in the Water Resource Development Act of 2004.

UMWA recently wrote to Sen. Coleman commending him for his efforts to put together the task force and move the modernization ahead.



New Missouri River plan pleases no one

The Army Corps of Engineers has finalized a new plan for operating the Missouri River that will attempt to keep water up-stream during drought, but maintain navigable levels at other times rather than creating an artificial ebb and flow.

Curtailed releases

New drought measures will curtail releases from upstream dams more often when water drops in three main reservoirs in Montana and the Dakotas. As a result, the shipping season will be shortened on the lower Missouri in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri. This year the shipping season will be reduced by 33 days.

This spring the Corps says it will manage levels to better protect fish spawning in the Oahe, Garri-

son and Fort Peck reservoirs. The plan also calls for 1,200 acres of habitat to be protected for the pallid sturgeon by July 1.

Some shipping gone

However at least two companies have already moved shipments off the Missouri to other modes because of what will likely become a split river season.

Randy Asbury, executive director of the Coalition to Protect the Missouri River, says that's because transportation depends not just on river flows at any given time, but the reliability and predictability of flows.

He told the magazine *Today's Farmer*, "In 2002 and 2003, we saw transportation terminate in the middle of the season. In it was about a 40-day shutdown. In 2003

we had a three-day reduction of flows that took flows down to 21,000 cfs, which was below minimum service navigation levels... The problem with the split navigation season is that when navigation opens on April 1, it takes a company about three weeks to get set up or staged on the river. And it takes about three weeks to stage down, to move barges off the river at the end of the season. There are costs associated with that three weeks each time. And when the river is too low for navigation in the summer, they've got to stage up and down again because for safety

Missouri to 2

From the Executive Director... Russ Eichman

Recently the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* ran an article about a faction of the Sierra Club that is calling for a stronger stance against immigration. This dissident group says increasing U.S. population and burgeoning consumption of natural resources are the biggest threats to the environment.

Past and present club leaders say the anti-immigration faction is joining with animal-rights activists in an attempt to hijack the 112-year old organization along with its \$100 million annual budget.

THE ARTICLE reported that anti-immigration groups and extremists are encouraging their followers to join the Sierra Club and vote in the ongoing election. Club members have until April 15 to cast mail-in ballots to fill five open seats on the 15-member governing body.

Since less than 10 % of the club's 750,000 members vote, the article stated, it is easy to win board seats with relatively few votes. Those seeking limits on immigration say they need three more seats to control policy.

I FOUND this article to be a little unsettling because, in my mind it reinforces the notion that some will use any argument or means at their disposal to reshape our society – in this case the linking of two hot-button issues: immigration and the environment.

In a general sense I can understand the premise that an increasing population will continue to put pressure on the environment. Even though total population – not population components – is more meaningful to environmental pressures, let's look for a moment at U.S. foreign-born population over the last 50 plus years.

In 1900, the foreign-born population was 13.8 % of total population. (Bureau of Census, 2002). In 2002 this percentage was 11.5 %, less than it was in 1900. In between those years, the immigrant population changed,

falling to a low of 4.7 % in 1970 and steadily rising to the 2002 level.

BY THE anti-immigrant argument, the 1970 environment should have been quite healthy because the U.S. had only 203 million people and of that, only 9.5 million (4.7%) of them were foreign-born. But wasn't 1970 the date of the first Earth Day that resulted in a major shift in environmental thinking? Wasn't 1970 the year President Nixon signed the Clean Air Bill calling for a national air quality standard on major pollutants?

Those two measures alone have improved air and water quality and have dramatically changed the way this nation continues to think about the environment.

Since the numbers of U.S. immigrants and environmental quality have both increased since 1970, using twisted logic, one could argue that our immigration policy was responsible for our much improved environment.

HOWEVER ILLOGICAL that logic is, it is nonetheless typical of the attitude that hype and scare tactics, not scientific facts, generate donations to environmental causes.

While the Sierra Club has not shown an interest in publicly recognizing the environmental advantages of barge transportation, we can only hope they have enough interest in their own integrity to pursue issues which are central to the health of the planet, not squander their time and resources on self-interest bickering.



Missouri from 1

reasons, they can't leave their barges moored along the river. The split season just isn't economical."

In the same magazine, Bruce Hanson, MFA vice president of transportation says that the loss of barges will translate into higher shipping prices because railroads are still recovering from car and personnel shortages and there are

also a limited number of trucks to take up the slack. He says in the past the river shipping option helped keep other rates in line.

"Alternate modes of transportation are what keeps railroad pricing in line. Sioux City used to be able to get favorable rates for gulf export/import because they had a river option. They call it water-compelled rates."

Agreement with tribes

At the same time, the Corps has reached agreement with Indian tribes and agencies from four states to enhance protection of historic and cultural sites along the Missouri River. Now Corps members will work with tribes to identify historic sites, monitor areas of erosion and vandalism, establish a law enforcement system, provide educational programs and signs and protect sensitive information.

If you'd like to learn more about the plan, it's on the Internet at www.nwd.usace.army.mil under the "master manual" link.



A smashing opening

This year's opening on the Upper Mississippi got a lot of media attention. Five Twin Cities television stations noted the arrival of the Alter Barge boat Reggie G. and six barges about 9 a.m., Saturday, March 20. There were also short articles in both newspapers. What was interesting to many in the industry was that TV footage often showed the Upper River boat Itasca as cover footage for the arrival.

Reggie G., had to break through some pretty substantial blue ice on Lake Pepin to be first up. The last Corps of Engineers measurements put the total ice at somewhere in the 10-18 inch range. The tow dropped half its 12 barge tow before making the final move to St. Paul.