

September Highlights

Michael Graham, President, WAP welcomed members to our meeting. Twenty-five members were registered.

Michael took a moment to welcome back the Port of Pittsburgh Commission as they have not attended any meeting for over a year. He then introduced Mary Ann Bucci, Executive Director of POPC for their report. Mary Ann took the podium and announced she would not be giving the monthly report but wanted to speak to the membership regarding grievances with the Waterways Association of Pittsburgh. Mary Ann advised she had determined POPC would take a hiatus from participation in WAP events due to what she considered unprofessional conduct by two of the board members regarding a committee she had been tasked to form concerning Low Use Rivers.

Mary Ann stated she had received both a letter and e-mail from these board members questioning her integrity when she initially did not invite any WAP members to participate on the new committee. In her defense she stated she had just begun to explore the issue with a now retired member of the USACE and that the accusation of non-involvement with the WAP was both premature and uncalled for.

Since POPC's last attendance at a WAP meeting and being aware of the misstep, President Michael Graham had reached out to Mary Ann both by phone and a personal visit in an effort to make amends and bring POPC back into a participative level with the WAP.

Michael Graham and other Waterways Association members stated that participation by the POPC is an important part of our membership and that their good work as a lobbyist for the inland waterways is imperative to our membership. It is hoped that we can count on their future participation in our meetings, educational and networking events.

Navigation Committee Report

David Podurriel, Vice President and Navigation Committee Chair reports the following:

During the week of August 30th, we had our first significant High Water/Flooding event that set in motion Waterway Action Plans throughout the Ohio River district. The National Weather Service started to warn us early on August 29th of the potential remnants of hurricane Ida which helped Industry prepare ahead of time. The Coast Guard activated the Hydro Committee and we had daily calls, also, the Vessel Location report was set up and over 43 vessels were in fleet watch. Thank You to the companies that helped with this.

The Stakeholders Engagement meeting was held August 26 virtually. Current and future Lock outage projects were discussed. I felt it important to Industry that they have the schedule through 2022 for planning purposes, it can be found below.

2021

Ohio River

Montgomery Mile 31.7

10/25-12/17

Primary Chamber Closed, no weekend openings. Major Delays

Willow Island Mile 161.7

11/1-12/9

Aux chamber, minor delays

12/9 thru 1/6/22,

Primary Chamber, significant delays

2022

Ohio River

Emsworth Mile 6.1

2/22-4/15

Primary Chamber, no weekends, Major Delays

Dashields Mile 13.3

3/7-3/31

Primary Chamber, concurrent w/ Emsworth, Major Delays

4/1-4/22

Aux Chamber, Minor Delays

Belleville Mile 203.9

5/2-6/24

Primary Chamber w/ Aux passing traffic, significant delays

Hannibal Mile 126.4

7/5-10/6

Primary Chamber, significant delays

Note: This might get pushed out to 2024, will advise when I hear confirmation.

Cannelton Mile 720

10/1/21-7/5/22

Intermittent closures of either Lock chamber, maximum of 2-12 hour closures in a 7 day period of Primary Chamber. Significant delays

7/5-11/22

Primary Chamber, significant delays

Montgomery Mile 31.7

10/17-12/16

Primary Chamber, possible weekend openings, Major Delays

David also noted that in the spring of 2023 the auxiliary chamber at Montgomery will be shut down and the current work on the main chamber, although painful, will ensure no closures during the auxiliary chamber shut down.

Port of Pittsburgh Commission

Scott Harshman reported the following:

The Port of Pittsburgh Commission continues advocating for the inland waterways at both federal and state levels. One of the tools used to bring attention to our waterways is the Freedom Boat Club. POPC invites congressional staffers on enjoyable river outings, an important way to show legislators how and where

money is spent. Both sides of the aisle participate. This is a great opportunity to also educate our legislators not just on money spent, but where funds are needed for future maintenance and improvements.

POPC is always looking for funding of existing infrastructure and low use areas. In low use areas monies are hard to come by and the results affect entire communities. POPC uses their influence to reach out to legislators in an attempt to let them know that populations around our inland waterways are affected by the areas in which monies are spent and especially in those areas where monies are not spent.

Tours of the rivers with Congressmen and local legislators allow POPC to explain many of the repair and maintenance issues at our locks and dams and how industry attempts to keep order through no wake zones and restricted navigation areas. Education is key to getting our government representatives enthused about funding for our needs.

There was additional discussion including membership and Mary Ann Bucci, Committee Chair for the Low Use River Committee regarding methods to bring low use rivers back into regular use. We must find additional haulage commodities and new uses. Simultaneously, we must make sure we have enough equipment on the river to get new work done.

POPC advocates for funding wherever it can be found. Working with Marad (Maritime Administration) funding through USDOT is available for the Federal Marine Highway. Pittsburgh is the start of the Federal Marine Highway and as such is eligible for USDOT funds set aside for this purpose. See the POPC website for further information regarding the Federal Marine Highway.

Another educational experience POPC can offer legislators are tours of facilities that work the rivers. Seeing this work first-hand can be very helpful in getting legislators to look our way when it comes to funding.

Legislative Committee Report

Patrick Kelly, Ex -Officio President, WAP and Legislative Committee Chair deferred to POPC and their expertise in providing legislative news.

Patrick also noted the WAP's appreciation of POPC advocating on our behalf to attain as much funding for the inland waterways as possible. He stated he feels that POPC is an important extension of the WAP and their participation is vital to our organization.

His hope is that WAP could assist in making the Low Use Rivers Committee a success. Discussion followed regarding the designation of "Low Use" included John Dilla of USACE advising this determination is based on an equation: Tonnage X Mileage. Membership feels this equation is a difficult one to record given real life is not as simple as this equation; pickups and drop offs of commodities are not recorded properly and perhaps a new way of measuring use should be determined.

The Low Use River Committee is an important opportunity for the Pittsburgh area to find real ways to make a change.

Coast Guard News

CDR Velez stated the cutter Osage would be in dry dock until December. He reminded membership, with the approach of the anniversary of September 11, remember the adage, "See something, say something". He also advised some of the Coast Guard staff had been temporarily assigned to Mississippi to assist with hurricane Ida clean-up.

CDR Velez took a moment to recognize Alicia Miller of NOAA and David Podurgiel of WAP and acknowledge their important work of notification to mariners in our area regarding weather and river updates

during hurricane Ida. He presented each of them with a “Challenge Coin” for a job well-done. He reminded all members of the importance of good communication during events such as these that affect river traffic.

MST1 Schneider presented the attached USCG report.

Army Corp of Engineers

John P. Dilla of the USACE reminded members that the current work on the Montgomery lock is to make it as reliable as possible so when the auxiliary lock shuts down in 2023 for repairs, we will not experience closures.

He briefly discussed the Hydro-power studies in the rivers (drillings and mussels) which are on-going could be a very positive for development on our rivers. Currently Rye Corp owns most of the permits and licenses for these potential developments. All locks are being considered for low head power generation.

LTC Albert Butler of USACE advised COL Adam Czekanski is currently in Louisiana assisting in the restoration of power to meet the needs of local citizens.

In addition, John provided the **attached report**.

NOAA

Alicia Miller of NOAA advised Ida moved fast with less rain than anticipated. NOAA planned for the worst, but changes in the direction and speed for the most part spared our area.

She advised utilizing the attached website for updates on a regular basis during severe weather events:
<https://www.weather.gov/pbz/rivermon>

Additionally she provided the **attached report**.

Education Committee Report

Michael Graham, President and Education Committee Chair, provided the following report:

- **Breakaway Barge Seminar**
 - Thursday, October 21 at the Fez in Aliquippa
 - This location will allow for waterfront training at Industry Terminal & Salvage
 - Contact will be made with presenters to firm up agenda
 - Registration forms to go out week of September 20

Networking Committee

Michael Graham confirmed our next event will be the Golf outing on Friday September 17. Invitations and Sponsorship opportunity information has been sent out.

Seven Oaks Country Club will be the venue for a second year, offering a challenging course. If weather permits, dinner will be served outdoors.

Please RSVP for attendance or sponsorship by September 9, 2021

Our final event for 2021 will be the Holiday Party. It will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, Southpointe on Friday, December 10. Special room rates are available for those of you who would like to stay the night. Details to follow soon. Mark your calendar!

New Business

None to report.

Old Business

West Virginia Personal Asset Taxation, Hancock County

Mary Ann Bucci, Executive Director of Port of Pittsburgh Commission reports initial findings are:

- There are actual deeds showing ownership of the riverbed by the County of Hancock
- This is a county issue, not state
- She is in contact with legislators to find out what she can, and if POPC has any influence on this issue
- She feels there is a “sensitivity” issue here, taxation on personal assets that are in place on a single date of the calendar year seems not to make sense; also risking alienation of industry who can choose not to do business in Hancock County

Old Business

There was no old business to report

October Membership Meeting

The **next** membership meeting is:

Wednesday, October 13

Joint Meeting with Huntington District

Lafayette Hotel

Marietta, OH

Invitations will go out by Oct 1