



# TRVA News



Winter 2011 Newsletter

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## TRVA Members Conduct Delegation Visits in Washington DC

Members of the TRVA traveled to Washington, DC March 6-10, 2011 to participate in the National Waterways Conference (NWC) Annual Legislative Summit.

While in our nation's capitol, members of the TRVA Delegation called on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Headquarters, staff of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, staff of the House Energy and Water Subcommittee on Appropriations, the Office of Management and Budget, and Members and staff of the Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee Congressional Delegations.

Many of the visits during the week were made in



Members of TRVA Join U.S. Senators Alexander and Corker for Tennessee Tuesday

conjunction with the Coalition of Alabama Waterway Associations (CAWA) of which TRVA is a participating member.

Primary topics of discussion important to the Tennessee and Cumberland River Valleys were: the need to reform the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF), the source of funding for the Chickamauga

Lock Replacement and the Kentucky Lock Addition Projects on the Tennessee River (\*1); USACE Operations and Maintenance Budgets for the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers; encouraging a definition of "earmarks" that does not include congressionally authorized and carefully scrutinized critical water resource projects (\*2); and the need to develop common sense water supply planning in the southeastern United States that addresses the potentially adverse effects of interbasin transfers.

A diverse TRVA delegation included representatives of a towing company and a barge line that operate in and beyond our region, a shipper dependent on our region's

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### Upcoming Events:

American Waterway Operators  
2011 Spring Convention  
April 5-8, 2010  
Washington, DC

Inland Rivers Ports &  
Terminals Annual Conference  
May 4-6, 2011  
Pittsburgh, PA

Warrior Tombigbee Waterway  
Association Annual Meeting  
May 12-13, 2011  
Point Clear, AL

Join TRVA Today!!!

Tennessee River Valley  
Association is now on  
Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tennessee-River-Valley-Association/219651447941>

## Recreation Impacts the Valley Economy

In addition to the tremendous economic benefits realized by Commercial Navigation, Recreational Boating makes significant contributions to the economy and Quality of Life in the Tennessee Valley.

Built primarily to enhance commerce, Tennessee River navigation locks are used extensively by recreational craft to "lock through" from one section of the river to another, just as the towboats and barges do.

On average, over 20,000 recreational craft of all shapes and sizes transit locks on the Tennessee River each year.

TVA estimates that recreational boating alone pumps more than \$25 Million into the valley economy annually, and overall water-based recreation generates over \$2 Billion in annual revenues throughout the Tennessee Valley Region.



Recreational Boaters Transiting a Navigation Lock on the Tennessee River

## U.S. Representative Chuck Fleischmann tours Chickamauga Lock



**Congressman Fleischmann (center) briefed by LTC Anthony Mitchell and Chickamauga Project Manager Wayne Huddleston**

U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, a freshman Republican serving Tennessee's 3rd District, pledged strong support for the ongoing Chickamauga

Lock Replacement Project during a press conference after touring the construction site on February 23, 2011.

Fleischmann indicated that he intends to explore ways to fund the completion of a new lock currently under construction, which includes looking at and addressing issues with the Inland Waterway Trust Fund.

"Going forward, we all realize that we're in a tight fiscal budget, and there are challenges there, we have looked at this from several angles. I've gotten input from TVA and the Army Corps. We've studied the project. What we need to do is to reform the Inland Waterway Trust Fund. That's going to be critically important. We think that is the best long-term solution. I am committed to help, I was before, I am now. And I'm committed to staying with the project. This lock is

critical to our national security and to the great commerce we have moving up and down the Tennessee River," Fleischmann said after touring the lock. "I'm committed to funding the lock."

Prior to his tour of the project site with LTC Anthony Mitchell and Nashville District personnel, TRVA offered a presentation to Fleischmann and district staff members in his Chattanooga office on February 2, 2011. Rep. Fleischmann repeated his strong commitment to the Chickamauga Project during a meeting with a TRVA delegation in his Washington office on March 9, 2011.

TRVA will actively support Rep. Fleischmann's efforts to build consensus in Congress that will insure the timely completion of this crucial Tennessee River Project.

## Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Forecasts Record U.S. Farm Exports in 2011

On November 30, 2010, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released the forecast for U.S. agricultural trade in fiscal year 2011.

The USDA announced that U.S. farm exports in fiscal year 2011 are forecast to set an all-time record high of \$126.5 billion. The new high exceeds fiscal year 2008, formerly the highest level on record at \$114.9 billion, by \$11.6 billion, and tops a strong fiscal 2010 by \$17.8 billion. Furthermore, agriculture continues to be one of the only major sectors of the American economy with a trade surplus – expected to be \$41 billion in this fiscal year.

According to Vilsack, "This forecast demonstrates that the demand for U.S. food and agriculture around the world is stronger than ever. Sales are surging in China, Southeast Asia,

North America and the Middle East. In fact, today's forecast sees China pulling within \$500 million of Canada, the United States' top export market in fiscal year 2011."

This report is particularly encouraging news for all Americans during trying economic times, especially those who live in rural America or earn a living in farming, ranching and agriculture-related industries such as transportation. Each \$1 billion in exports supports 8,000 jobs, meaning that agricultural exports alone in fiscal 2011 are expected to support more than 1 million U.S. jobs.

Integral to achieving President Obama's goal of doubling U.S. exports over the next five years is a well-maintained inland marine transportation system. America relies on rivers and waterways to eco-

nomically move our nation's farm products to Great Lakes and Gulf Coast ports for overseas shipment.

From the Upper Mississippi to the Tennessee Valley, efficient waterborne transportation is vital to the success of this important sector of the U.S. Economy.



**Valley Farm Products loaded onto a Barge in Decatur, Alabama for shipment via the Tennessee**

## Alabama, Florida & Georgia Water Wars Enter the Next Phase

A tri-state dispute threatening the water supply of roughly 3 million people in metro Atlanta resumed in an appeals court on March 9, although those involved in the case expect that negotiations not a court order will bring a resolution.

Lawyers representing Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal's administration and metro Atlanta communities are asking the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn a 2009 ruling by District Court Judge Paul Magnuson that found Atlanta has little legal right to take water from Lake Lanier. The judge's order would cut water withdrawals from the lake to levels last seen in the 1970s, when the city was a fraction of its present size. It takes effect in July unless Georgia strikes a political settlement with neighboring Alabama and Florida.

During the drought conditions that existed in 2006-07, users who rely on water flows for municipal and in-

dustrial supply as well as ecosystem support downstream in Alabama and Florida realized significant disruptions. Currently, a La Nina weather pattern similar to that of 2006-07 is in place and could potentially result in drought conditions in our region later this year.

In oral arguments, lawyers representing Deal's administration and other Georgia parties argued that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has the legal authority to release water from Lake Lanier to metro Atlanta, contrary to Magnuson's decision. The state also contends that Magnuson did not properly consider the harm his order would cause before setting the deadline for curtailing the region's water supply, among other issues.

As metro Atlanta and other growing areas in northwest Georgia look elsewhere for the water needed to support their growth, they continue to look to the Tennessee River to accommodate forecasted needs.

In an address to the Annual Meeting of the Coosa-Alabama River Improvement Association in Rome, Georgia on February 11, 2011, John Bennett, Chairman of the Coosa-Northwest Georgia Water Planning Council stated that Georgia creeks and streams empty into the Tennessee but they are unable to withdraw water from the river that flows just beyond their state border.

In 2008, Georgia was unsuccessful in an attempt to move their state line to gain access to the river. Alabama and Tennessee have taken actions to prevent interbasin transfers from the Tennessee in an effort to protect critical flows for municipal and industrial users downstream.

A Coosa-North Georgia Water Development & Conservation Plan will soon enter a public comment period. TRVA will submit comments and continue to closely monitor developments as they occur. (\*3)

## Obama Administration Responds to Capital Development Plan

On December 21, 2010, the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works, Jo-Ellen Darcy provided the Administration's views regarding a report of the Inland Waterways Users Board (IWUB) in a letter to the Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. (\*4)

The Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Capitol Projects Business Model report dated April 13, 2010, had been developed over a one and one-half year period by high ranking officials of the USACE and members of the IWUB to address the insolvency of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF). The IWTF funds Lock and Dam construction, rehabilitations and improvements on the nation's

12,000 mile inland waterways network.

The plan is supported by over 200 organizations (\*5) including the TRVA, whose Board of Directors formally endorsed the recommendations of the plan on April 30, 2010.

Both Chickamauga and Kentucky Lock Construction Projects on the Tennessee River are cost-shared IWTF Projects and as a result of the insolvency, face impending long term suspension without program reform.

Included in the Darcy response is Administration agreement with many of the goals of the IWUB for the inland waterways. "The Civil Works program of the Army Corps of Engineers facilitates commercial navigation by providing for safe, reliable,

highly cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable inland waterborne transportation systems."

The Administration also expressed serious concerns with several major recommendations in the report, including changes in cost-sharing for dam construction and major rehabilitations, which over the next 10 to 20 years could shift billions of dollars in costs to the general taxpayer.

In the absence of agreement between the IWUB and the Administration, TRVA encourages a dialogue that will resolve differences and result in sufficient funding for the IWTF, thereby insuring a reliable program for the completion of ongoing projects and future waterway improvements.



## TRVA Visits Washington ...Continued from page 1



**TRVA Delegation Participates in an Award of Appreciation Presentation to US Senator Jeff Sessions**

cutting and are unwilling to authorize new federal projects.

Conversations related to defining “earmarks” vary depending on who you talk to. Any spending not included in the President’s budget is considered an earmark, according to the staff of the House E&W Subcommittee on Appropriations. U.S. Senator Bob Corker indicated to TRVA a cautious interest in a plan offered by U.S. Senators McCain & Inhofe that would allow home-state projects if first authorized by Senate committees.

Meetings with Freshman House Members and staffs in Alabama and Tennessee were very productive. Tennessee Representatives Desjarlais, Fleischmann and Fincher in addition to Alabama’s Rep. Brooks met personally with the TRVA delegation, expressing an appreciation for, and a willingness to better understand our region’s overall water resource infrastructure.

During a meeting with the Office of Management and Budget, Gary Waxman noted when questioned that the Administration response to the IWUB Capitol Development Plan included no mention of lockage fees that had been proposed previously by the Bush and Obama Administrations.

Waxman also acknowledged the “special need” that exists in the Chickamauga Lock Replacement project that makes it a high priority for our nation.

Given the constrained budgets for

IWTF projects, funding decisions are necessarily based on overall benefits to the nation’s waterway system as a whole considering the tonnage and value of commodities dependent on those projects.

In discussions related to prioritization, Waxman stated that the Olmstead project is, and will remain the highest priority for IWTF funding. Lock and dam replacement on the Lower Monongahela River in western Pennsylvania remains a high national priority. If not for the critical need related to that project, the Kentucky Lock Addition, important to the Tennessee River, would be more attractive in future IWTF funding prioritization.

TRVA visits to Washington are, and will become more important as the needs of our region’s aging water resource infrastructure increase while federal budgets will likely continue to be constrained.



**CAWA Members Jerry Sailors, Judith Adams, Billy Houston, Larry Merrihew, Cline Jones**

### TRVA is Needed Now More Than Ever!!!

Since 1967, the Tennessee River Valley Association has served as the only unbiased non-partisan unified voice for overall common sense water resource policies in the Tennessee and Cumberland Valleys.

Economies depend on our region’s river systems for low-cost power generation, municipal & industrial water supply, efficient waterborne transportation, recreation, tourism, environmental preservation and jobs.

Threatened by constrained federal budgets, an insolvent trust fund resulting in the suspension of ongoing vital infrastructure projects, and increasing demand for critical water resources from outside our river basins, the need for strong unified voices and nominal financial support of TRVA Programs is essential to our region’s economic future. Full Memberships are available for less than \$21 per month. (\*6)

**Join TRVA Today!!!**

**Tennessee River Valley Association  
Tennessee-Cumberland Waterways Council**

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**Footnoted Links:**

- \*1 TRVA Position on IWUB Recommendations: <http://www.trva-tcwc.org/trva-tcwc-board-of-directors-unanimously-endorse-users-boardcorps-recommendations/>
- \*2 TRVA Paper on Earmark Definition: <http://www.trva-tcwc.org/why-water-projects-should-not-be-included-in-the-earmark-moratorium/>
- \*3 Recent Chattanooga Times Free Press Article: <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2011/feb/24/georgia-water-plan-focuses-on-tennessee/>
- \*4 Text of Administration Response to IWUB Recommendations: <http://www.trva-tcwc.org/administration-responds-to-iwub-recommendations/>
- \*5 NWC, WCI, & AWO Declaration and list of Supporters: <http://www.waterwayscouncil.org/index/capitalplansupport.pdf>
- \*6 TRVA Membership Application: <http://www.trva-tcwc.org/join-trva/>