

Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Newsletter

P.O. Box 178, Valencia, PA 16059
Phone: 724-355-4101 Fax: 724-201-3243
Email: cheryll.cranmer@wapgh.org

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www.wapgh.org

April Highlights

The April Membership Luncheon was cancelled due to the Coronavirus Pandemic "stay in place" order from Governor Tom Wolf. All the reports have been submitted electronically and are included in this newsletter.

Navigation Committee Report

David Podurgiel provided the following report:

- Braddock Lock 2 Monongahela River started its Auxiliary Chamber outage on Monday, 3/9 through May 1st. Use of the Primary Chamber for moving equipment, supplies and to assist with repair work will occur up to 12 times with 4 to 8-hour closures. There have been five 10 to 12-hour closures of the Primary Chamber since 3/13, project is still on schedule to finish May 1st.
- We have had multiple high-water days in the past month, a few going into Action Stage. The weekend of March 27 had a prediction of Action Stage at Grays Landing, Allegheny River and Ohio. Much preparation went into preparing for the rise and about 18 hours after prediction models came out, they dropped significantly on the Mon. This can be costly to vessel operators and fleet managers as they plan personnel changes.
- A WAP COVID-19 Task Force was developed to work with the USACE to keep lines of communication open for any foreseeable issues at the locks. I, Captain Michael Graham and MaryAnn Bucci have been on two calls with Kathy Griffin and John Dilla. The USACE is asking what Industry projections are in the Pittsburgh District in the coming weeks. I reached out to over 25 companies asking if their work is Steady, Increase or Decrease, regrettably I have only heard back from 4, this after multiple attempts. The Corp is looking at worst case scenarios where decisions could be made to alter shifts at area locks like was done at AR 2/3 going from 24/7 to 12 hours per day, 0800-2000. We can ill afford any restrictions on the Mon or Ohio, nor might I add the Allegheny River. The USACE is concerned about staffing issues; our concern is zero interruptions to freight movements on area river just like road/rail. One of the suggestions made by Kathy is moving people from low use Locks, i.e. AR 4/5, Mon Morgantown and have them fill in at Charleroi if they had COVID-19 case or other locks. This discussion continues but we need active participation from WAP members. Each company has its challenges during this pandemic, and we are working through them, the same needs to be expected from Gov't agencies.

No official report was submitted for inclusion in the newsletter.

Legislative Report

Dean Marlin provided the following report:

The House is out indefinitely, and the Senate is currently scheduled to return April 20.

COVID-19: LEGISLATIVE PHASES I, II, III - NOW IN PLAY

- Phase I enacted March 6 provides \$8.3 billion in emergency funds to Federal Agencies for ensuring vaccine development, small business access to SBA disaster loans and enabling Medicare access to providers by telephone or teleconference.
- Phase II assists individuals with sick leave, Covid-19 testing, additional food and unemployment benefits.
- Phase III is the \$2 Trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) providing individual taxpayer relief, more unemployment benefits, relief self-employed, and business loans. Embedded are 2 provision effecting the US Army Corps of Engineers:
 - \$70 million in funding to support their effort to expand hospital capacity.
 - An exemption for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund that makes it easier for Congress to give out money for harbor dredging by lifting the historic \$1.9 billion discretionary spending cap. Championed by Richard Shelby (R-AL) and supported by DeFazio (the Democrat House T & I Chair), this was included to assist in long term recovery and for attaining full utilization of national port capacity.

COVID-19: PHASE IV PENDING

- Around March 4 the congressional thinking on Infrastructure began moving from the ongoing stalemate to the introduction a 4th economic stimulus package - like FDR's "New Deal".
- There has been significant bi-partisan interest and bill writers in both chambers have been working on this during recess. Early indications are that the bill may be addressing the nation's drinking water issues, electric grid, internet access, and resolution of other weaknesses now being highlighted by the pandemic.
- However, it appears that over this past weekend the traditional disagreement on how to fund this \$2 trillion program, once again, threatens to stop this bill.

WRDA 2020:

- The Water Resources and Development Act is in the process for its bi-annual adoption. The USACE is currently recommending 17 flood control, dredging, river locks and ecosystem restoration projects totally \$9 billion - but the list could be longer. The WCI is asking that the Inland Waterways Trust Fund contribution mix be changed from the historic 50% government/50% IWTF mix - to 75%/25% mix in 2020.
- The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee have been working though the bill - but it is likely that final discussions and execution are delayed due to Covid-19 priorities

- Of particular note, A "Dear Colleague" letter advocating for a permanent change in the Waterways Trust Fund contribution mix was recently co - authored by our Representative Connor Lamb (D-PA) and Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX) and sent to numerous House offices for signatures of support.

THE COMMITTEE FOR SAVING AND REVIVING LOW USE RIVERS

- We continue to develop the LinkedIn Site and will be populating content later this week. In the meantime the LinkedIn address for "Inland Marine Transportation System Advocates (Guardians) is ... <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8916192/>. If you are not a member of LinkedIn, there are several relevant industry folks and groups worthy of your interest. Membership is free.
- The Allegheny River Development Corporation has met with the USACE regarding this season's recreational locking schedule. The ARDC is also forging ahead with fundraisers, grant applications, a possible national low-use river campaign and additional efforts regarding further recreational use of AR locks 4 through 9.

Coast Guard News

The **attached** report was provided.

Army Corp of Engineers

The **attached** report was provided.

National Weather Service

The **attached** report was provided.

Education Committee Report

DATE CHANGE: The Barge Breakaway Seminar has been rescheduled for Thursday, October 15th at the Floreffe Fire Hall. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

May Membership Meeting

The **next** membership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at Chartiers Country Club. Registration will begin at 11:45 a.m. with lunch served promptly at noon. Cost of the luncheon will be **\$30**. Please call, email or fax the response form below by Friday, May 8, 2020 if you plan on attending the luncheon meeting.

**Waterways Association of Pittsburgh
Meeting Response Form**

Chartiers Country Club
May 13, 2020

Menu:

Tossed Baby Greens Salad w/balsamic Vinaigrette dressing
House Made Lasagna w/Ricotta Cheese and fresh basil
Fresh Green Beans sautéed with fresh herbs
Chocolate Parfait
Coffee, Decaf Coffee, Tea and Iced Tea

Cost: ***\$30/per member***

_____ YES, I will be attending

_____ No, I will not be attending

****Special Dietary Requirements:** _____

NAME: _____
(Please print)

COMPANY: _____

Please respond **by Friday, May 8, 2020** to:

Cheryll Cranmer
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Fax: (724) 201-3243
Email: cheryll.cranmer@wapgh.org