

Waterways Association of Pittsburgh Newsletter

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www.wapgh.org

May Highlights

The May 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:

- ⌚ WAP COVID-19 Tasks Force update: Captain Graham, Mary Ann Bucci and I along with John Dilla have been conducting bi-weekly calls discussing any impacts that COVID-19 has had on lock operations, Port and industry. We have seen a slight decrease in tonnage which could also be attributed to a weak energy market due to a mild winter and the country wide shut down. All within the Port of Pittsburgh have not had any COVID related cases that affected operations.
- ⌚ We continue to have high water events since last meeting and this pattern is projected to continue through May. Communication from the National Weather Service has been timely; the One Call system was activated twice. After the last call multiple individuals have requested to be removed, I also deleted from the roll non WAP members.
- ⌚ A planned outage for Maxwell Lock which would address roller repairs has now morphed into work in the chambers. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Pittsburgh District will be performing underwater diving work on the upper guide walls in the primary and auxiliary lock chambers at Maxwell Locks and Dam. Recurrent closures of both lock chambers will be necessary to complete this work. This work was waiting on funding for the last two years; delays will not affect industry too bad. Both chambers will be closed to navigation from 8:00am until 4:00pm on the following dates and times:
Monday 18 May through Friday 22 May
Monday 25 May through Friday 29 May
Monday 01 June through Friday 05 June
Each of the chambers may be closed alternately to navigation intermittently on the following dates: Monday 18 May through Friday 19 June.
- ⌚ Emsworth Back Channel has 3 out of 4 gates out of service, this is forcing all the water down the front channel which has increased to flow velocity above and below the lock. The USACE is looking into a way to resolve the issue, it has to do with the hydraulic arms. We are awaiting the Corp to give us an idea how much this redirection of water affects the gate openings on front channel.

- ⌚ Pike Island Lock has developed a crack in the River Wall that will need anchored and grouted similar to Montgomery, Navigation Committee is currently reviewing the outage proposal which would take place next April/May consisting of 26- 8 hour closures and one 48 hour closure. The Auxiliary Chamber will be available for doubles using self-help or tow-haulage system.

Port of Pittsburgh Commission

No official report was submitted for inclusion in the newsletter.

Legislative Report

Dean Marlin provided the following report:

COVID-19 (CARES ACT) and INFRASTRUCTURE:

- ⌚ President Trump, Congressman Peter DeFazio (D) and Sen. John Barrasso (R) have discussed merging both the highway and water infrastructure bills into one large package. Candidate Joe Biden has also voiced agreement that the next round of coronavirus response should include investments in "trillion-dollar infrastructure program that can be implemented really rapidly. However, Mitch McConnell disagrees that infrastructure should be part of the Coronavirus response stating, "We need to keep the White house in the box", and "The Democrats and the White house both need to get the message".
- ⌚ There is concern that support for a waterways-inclusive infrastructure bill is diminishing and that WRDA may be one of the few bills to pass this year.

WRDA 2020:

- ⌚ The Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee unanimously passed the America Waterway Infrastructure Act of 2020 - which includes WRDA. Most importantly, the cost-share allocation to be changed from the present 50%:50% (Inland Waterways Trust fund; General Revenues) to a 35%:65% split, which will further waterways infrastructure construction funding by \$1 billion on the next ten years.
 - ⌚ A full senate vote on the committee's action will likely not be scheduled for several weeks
- ⌚ The House's corresponding Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hopes to release its version by the end of May with a markup in June.
 - ⌚ Of note, a "dear colleague" letter (co-sponsored by Connor Lamb) recommending a 25%:75% cost share has received 78 signatures of endorsement.

THE COMMITTEE FOR SAVING AND REVIVING LOW USE RIVER

- ⌚ On April 22 the Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals Association hosted a one-hour webinar - "Level of Service Regulation" which involved presentations by your Waterways Association and the Port of Pittsburgh. Approximately 90 people from around the nation were in attendance. The seminar is available for view on the IRPT website.
- ⌚ We continue to build momentum with the linked-in "IMTS Advocates-Guardians" group.

- ⌚ On May 4, we participated in a meeting hosted by US Congressman GT Thompson focused eliminating obstacles to the commercial and recreational well-being of the upper Allegheny River. Attendance included the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the offices of State Senator Joe Pittman, the Armstrong County Office of Economic Development, the Allegheny River Development Corporation. The discussion involved the potential for removal of certain aquatic species historically (1980's) classified as endangered - and to further an understanding of other barriers to restoring recreational and commercial usage to the river
 - o There was a general agreement to organize further investigation, to report back to Congressman Thompson and to reconvene in the foreseeable future.

OF INTEREST

- ⌚ COVID and Gas Tax ... Discussions on funding highway infrastructure improvements with gas tax via the Highway Trust Fund have suddenly hit a "roadblock" as highway traffic has suddenly and substantially reduced.
- ⌚ Bridges ... the American Road and Transportation Builders Association presented new data to the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee that approximately 1/3 of all US bridges need major repair work - or replacement. They too are requesting this problem be addressed as part of a coronavirus recovery infrastructure stimulus.

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.

June Membership Meeting

The **next** membership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 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, June 5, 2020 if you plan on attending the luncheon meeting.

**Waterways Association of Pittsburgh
Meeting Response Form**

Chartiers Country Club
June 10, 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, June 5, 2020** to:

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