



**THE ARKANSAS WATERWAYS
COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE
CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT
OF THE
NAVIGATION SYSTEMS IN THE STATE OF
ARKANSAS**



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Approved by the Arkansas Waterways Commission

CY 2018 Strategic Plan

Arkansas Waterways Commission Policy Goals and Actions for Implementation

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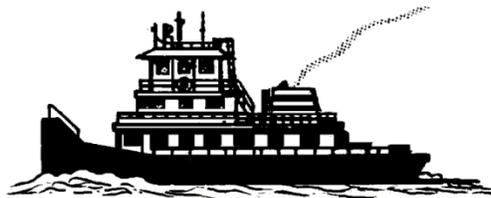
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**Mission Statement
of the
Arkansas Waterways Commission**

The mission of the Commission is to develop, promote, and protect the commercially navigable waterways of Arkansas for waterborne transportation and economic development to benefit the people of Arkansas.

The powers and duties of the Commission are concerned specifically with navigation activities, port development, and the use and protection of the navigable streams within or adjacent to the State.

The Arkansas Waterways Commission was established by Act 242 of 1967, and its powers and duties were amended by Act 414 of 1973.



INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan outlines the mission, policy goals and suggested guidelines for implementing those goals of the Arkansas Waterways Commission to help guide the development efforts of the navigable rivers for freight transportation in the State of Arkansas. As the waterway industry climate changes, the Strategic Plan will be updated accordingly.

Under the guidance of the seven-member Commission, responsibility for each goal will be the Arkansas Waterways Commission staff. The Commission will monitor progress of assigned work and will, with the assistance of staff, provide periodic progress reports to the Governor of Arkansas.

Overall responsibility for the planning program and its evaluation rests with the Arkansas Waterways Commission.



*Adopted by the
Arkansas Waterways Commission
on*

January 10, 2018

Paul Latture, Chairman

STRATEGIC PLAN

POLICY GOALS/ACTION TOPICS, PURPOSE, RATIONALE & GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A. WATERWAY PROMOTION / MARKETING / EDUCATION

Purpose:

The Arkansas Waterways Commission will educate the public, as well as state and federal legislators about the navigable rivers in Arkansas and market these rivers, namely the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS), Mississippi, Ouachita, White and Red Rivers for economic development purposes to entice industries to locate to the State of Arkansas and bring jobs connected with waterborne commerce.

Rationale:

There are five (5) rivers in Arkansas with the potential of transporting waterborne commerce. Currently, only three (3) of those five (5) are moving commodities; the Arkansas, Mississippi, and Ouachita Rivers. The White River has not been dredged or snagged since 2009 making it impossible to traverse a tow on this river system. This system must be marketed to potential users and industries to make them aware of its capabilities and have a commercial interest on the White River to incentivize Congress to appropriate the funds for the Corps of Engineers to snag and dredge the channel. The Red River is currently only navigable to Shreveport, LA. If the benefit/cost ratio of the regional economic impact study being conducted by GEC proves to be high enough to justify a construction project to reach Index, Arkansas, steps will be taken to move forward with the project.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Maintain a viable marketing program with other waterway entities to include the Arkansas-Oklahoma Port Operators Association (AOPOA), the Oklahoma Department of Transportation Waterways Branch, the Arkansas Waterways Association, the Ouachita River Valley Association, White River Valley Association, and Red River Valley Association.
2. Maintain AWC's website with links to ports on all of Arkansas' navigable rivers. Updated materials and activities of the Arkansas Waterways Commission will be posted and kept up-to-date.
3. Attend America's Break Bulk Conference annually as an exhibitor to market Arkansas' navigable rivers. Develop a brochure with maps to identify locations for development and interconnectivity of other modes of transportation for freight movement. Intermodal Authority information will also be highlighted.

4. Maintain distribution/ mailing lists for the dissemination of waterway-related information to be sent to state and federal legislators, custom house brokers, freight forwarders, barge lines, stevedores, and deep draft ports along the coast reminding them to view the AWC website and enclose any new marketing materials to keep them abreast of changes that have occurred on any of Arkansas' navigation channels.
5. Use various forms of social media to include Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, and/or any new forms of media to come on-line.
6. Work with industries located at the ports to identify needed skilled workers for available positions to maintain a workforce keeping these industries strong. Attend career fairs at the schools to distribute information about possible job opportunities at the industries that move waterborne commerce on Arkansas' navigable rivers.

B. OPERATION, MAINTENANCE & DEVELOPMENT OF ARKANSAS' NAVIGABLE RIVERS

Purpose:

The Arkansas Waterways Commission will help undertake those activities that will ensure the continued viability of the navigable rivers. These tasks will include, in part:

1. Strive to obtain the necessary Congressional appropriations for operation and maintenance of the navigable rivers in Arkansas.
2. Work to obtain the necessary authorizations to dredge the waterway to a consistent **navigation channel depth** of twelve feet on the MKARNS.
3. Work to obtain appropriations and cost share funds for the Three Rivers area permanent fix on the MKARNS at the confluence of the White, Mississippi, and Arkansas Rivers.
4. Develop a strategy to update tow-haulage equipment on the locks in Arkansas along the MKARNS.
5. Be pro-active on environmental issues adversely affecting the navigation channels and/or the waterways industry.
6. Help the Corps establish appropriate land leasing policies for federal lands along the waterway that will precipitate industrial growth and reflect waterway uses along the navigable river systems to identify suitable land for additional industrial port and terminal development.

Rationale:

Maintaining waterway viability is only possible through a multi-disciplinary approach.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Maintain a close working relationship with the USACE, Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, state and federal elected officials in Washington, DC, as well as other groups and agencies to optimize efficiency and further projects.
2. Work with the Arkansas Department of Transportation to maintain and improve needed transportation infrastructure to serve Arkansas' multi-modal ports and terminals.
3. Work with Intermodal Authorities in Arkansas to help facilitate waterborne commerce.
4. Work with USACE, MARAD, AASHTO, NWC, IRPT, and Congressional Delegates to find alternative funding for public/private partnerships in maintaining infrastructure along the navigation channels.

C. COORDINATION WITH OTHER WATERWAY ORGANIZATIONS

Purpose:

The Arkansas Waterways Commission will identify, monitor and actively participate and cooperate with those state and national waterways-related organizations that help ensure the viability of our nation's inland waterways system and disseminate pertinent information derived there from to the Governor, Commissioners, and other interested parties. Develop and maintain effective cooperation with city, county, state and federal groups or agencies to help provide a balanced legislative program for the benefit of *all* beneficiaries of Arkansas' navigation channels.

Rationale:

Every piece of legislation related to the environment, transportation, and water resources in general have the potential to affect the waterways industry in one way or another. AWC must ensure that all waterway groups adopt consistent, uniform policies/position statements directed towards such legislation.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Identify those waterway-related organizations/associations for membership in and/or active participation with to promote the development of Arkansas' navigable rivers, to create awareness of matters that affect navigation.

2. Assist the Arkansas-Oklahoma Port Operators Association (AOPOA), Arkansas Waterways Association (AWA), Red River Valley Association (RRVA), Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA), and White River Coalition with their waterway related activities.

D. LIAISON WITH USACE, DHS, and U.S. COAST GUARD

Purpose:

Maintain a working relationship with the Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard to cooperatively ensure that regulatory, security and related administrative processes lead to enhanced, dependable waterways shipping.

Rationale:

The Corps of Engineers and the Coast Guard are the federal entities that operate, maintain and ensure marking of the waterway and its navigation channel, and ensure that environmental safeguards are in place. The Department of Homeland Security ensures national security to the transportation freight systems in the USA.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Monitor permits issued by the Little Rock, Memphis, and Vicksburg Districts, US Army Corps of Engineers and Coast Guard, to take appropriate action if any are a detriment to navigation on Arkansas' navigable rivers. Look for any type of impact to the navigable rivers, i.e. real estate permits for possible new terminals, marinas, land purchases or leases, construction, and bridgework on system.
2. Encourage Coast Guard and ODOT to maintain channel markers and bridge lights.
3. Together with the USACE, DHS, and USCG, develop a plan for emergencies such as the I-40 bridge/barge accident, earthquakes, and other natural and manmade disasters.

DATA COLLECTION

Purpose:

The Arkansas Waterways Commission will familiarize itself with sources of navigation-related data to collect the appropriate information relating thereto in order to develop a cost-factor related to closures and partial closures, lockage numbers for levels of service, down days at locks caused by high/low water on the system, silt buildup and dredging needs, repairs to tow haulage equipment, pintle ball replacements, etc., to substantiate the need for waterway O&M rehabilitation projects.

Rationale:

Good data will make it easier to get help in the future to solve problems that may arise; to substantiate justifications regarding tonnage, lockages, low use navigation systems, etc., on the navigable rivers in Arkansas. Facts important in making greater impact rather than supposition.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Identify the types of statistical data and/or related information affecting the development of the navigation systems, such as tonnage statistics, rail/truck access routes, industrial assets and a system or strategy for keeping information current.
2. Work on jobs study and economic impact study – Jobs and economic development plan – i.e. how many jobs have been created at each of the ports.
3. Visit Arkansas’ ports and terminals on a regular basis and keep abreast of improvements, challenges and/or needs.

F. CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON

Purpose:

The Arkansas Waterways Commission will maintain a close working relationship with members of Congress and their staff members responsible for Energy and Water Appropriations to fund the Corps of Engineers Civil Works Programs.

Rationale:

The Ports and terminals are responsible for their own development and maintenance. Waterway operations and maintenance is accomplished through congressional appropriations to the Corps Civil Works Budget of the Corps of Engineers. It is therefore imperative that the close working relationships be maintained with Congress in order to educate them on the needs of the navigable rivers in Arkansas.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Create public awareness of critical waterway projects and keep elected officials informed of each one and their importance to the navigation channels.
2. Set up congressional staff waterway briefings and tours.

3. Conduct annual briefings with Arkansas' members of Congress and their appropriate staffers regarding funding for needs for the navigation systems' construction and operation and maintenance projects.
4. Encourage congressional support for a Capital Plan developed jointly by industry and the Corps of Engineers for funding opportunities on public/private partnerships.

G. ARKANSAS WATERWAYS COMMISSION – ARKANSAS PORT, INTERMODAL, AND WATERWAYS DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose:

The Arkansas Waterways Commission will make grant monies available to provide financial assistance to port authorities and intermodal authorities for the purpose of funding port development projects.

Rationale:

The goals of the program are to provide public funds to build land-side infrastructure and to dredge ports and waterways. Funding this infrastructure will provide jobs and competitive transportation costs for moving cargo, thereby minimizing highway congestion, improving safety, and reducing maintenance costs related to Arkansas' highways. This program will also allow Arkansas products to reach additional markets.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Guidelines, rules, and processes are spelled out in Act 1483 / Arkansas Code § 15-23-205 / Rule 095.00.17-001 pertaining to the Arkansas Port, Intermodal, and Waterways Development Program Rules.