

Waterways

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River system's future is a 'national question'

[KARE-11](#) TV continues to be one media outlet that is aware of the river industry in Minnesota and Wisconsin and how important it is to the area. December 12, the station dug into the recent tonnage figures from the Army Corps of Engineers and told viewers that, "the Corps says commercial tows carried more than 821,000 tons of commodities through the (Upper St. Anthony Falls) locks. It says close to 32,000 large semi trucks would have been needed to haul the same tonnage."

Six million tons

Further downriver the figures are equally impressive – Lock and Dam 3 near Red Wing recorded more than 4,000 lockages this past season, which included both recreational and commercial craft. Those towboats and barges moved 6,218, 324 tons down river.

The river system's

ability to efficiently handle bulk cargoes in an environmentally friendly way will become more important in the future according to In-



forma Economics, Inc., a world leader in domestic and international agricultural and commodity/product market research, analysis and evaluation and consulting.

Speaking earlier this month to the Export Transportation Summit sponsored by the Illinois Soybean Association, Informa

CEO [Bruce Scherr](#) said this country has the capacity to meet global demand for agricultural products, but perhaps not the political will.

A 'national question'

"It's not a Midwest question. It's a national question. It's a sustainability question that relates to our geopolitical powers, our economic power and our ability to grow this economy moving forward."

However the consensus seems to be that at this point the U.S. will wait awhile before moving forward with something as basic as a water resources bill. [The WRDA/WRRDA – House/Senate Conference committee](#) has continued to meet behind closed doors, but all indications are that finished bill will not likely come before the end of this session of Congress, but will be taken up again in

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From the Executive Director...

An Open Statement to WRDA2013 Conferees

This document is in response to a paper sent to WRDA Conferees on December 5, 2013 by the Stop Asian Carp Coalition entitled STOP ASIAN CARP; the Coalition is comprised of environmental advocacy, angler and conservation NGOs in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest.

The Upper Mississippi Waterway Association (UMWA) is an association of waterway operators, shippers and other waterway interests, working together to promote the economic and environmental benefits of waterway transportation in the Upper Midwest.

Stop Asian Carp:

“On behalf of the undersigned organizations, and our hundreds of thousands of members and supporters in Minnesota and nationwide, we wish to express our support for the inclusion of two provisions in the final Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)” as it is being considered by members of this Committee.

(Those provisions are listed below.)

*“...Each barge
on the river
removes 70
trucks that
would otherwise
add to gridlock
and air
pollution...”*

UMWA Response:

The Upper Mississippi Waterway Association represents members and waterway interests, and their customers located on the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

UMWA members include local, regional, national and international businesses, their customers and vendors of those customers. Direct users of the river include barge companies, anglers, canoe and kayak groups, packet boat operators, municipal water supply and wastewater processors, along with hydroelectric facilities, shippers of grain, aggregates, salt and recycled metals, to name the obvious. Beneficiaries of the commercial navigation channel include air and water quality, environmental enhancement efforts, municipal governments, farmers, ethanol producers, cement companies, metal recycling efforts, as well as daily commuters who, unknowingly benefit from the fact that each barge on the river removes 70 trucks that would otherwise add to gridlock and air pollution. In total, all of the above beneficiaries would equal or exceed representatives of the Stop Carp Coalition.

However, the number of beneficiaries represented by the Stop Carp Coalition and UMWA is secondary to the quality of arguments they represent; both represent thousands of jobs and multi-billion dollar industries throughout the region.

SAC:

Lock Closure. Both bills contain a provision that would close the lock at Upper St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis, Minnesota . . . as it will form the most effective barrier . . . thereby helping protect thousands of miles of the Mississippi River and its tributaries upstream from invasion.”

MWA Response:

It is not our intent here to comment on either the Senate or House version of WRDA 2013, even as some have criticized it for not doing enough. For the record, the waterway industry supports successful passage of a WRDA 2013 bill in order to provide authorization and funding for critical projects as well as alternative proposals to replenish the faltering Inland Waterways Trust Fund. That said, there is nevertheless concern within the waterway industry that the matrix of 1.5 million tons of freight handled through the lock at Upper Saint Anthony Falls annually be restricted to that lock alone, and not used as a measurement or argument to close other low-volume locks throughout the system.

We would be remiss if we did not remind Conferees that looming closure of the lock at Upper Saint Anthony Falls will leave some of our members and their customers scrambling to find adequate truck transport to handle the more than 26,000 truckload equivalent of commodities that currently move through that lock via barge. And, as expected, members of our organization are experiencing the business-version of postpartum depression at the thought of losing the lock at the headwaters of commercial navigation on the Mississippi River.

(Exec. Dir to 4)

*“For the record,
the waterway
industry
supports
successful
passage of a
WRDA 2013
bill...”*

Other river related items:

- CF Industries knows how efficient and effective water transportation can be. So naturally CF will use [Missouri River navigation](#) to move heavy machinery to their new plant being built near Sioux City, Iowa.
- Discovery Travel and Discovery Channels have joined the search for “Pepie” the monster that some residents say lives in Lake Pepin. The [search documentary](#) will first be shown on a show called Monster Destination. Locals hope it will help tourism.
- The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) are out with their 2013 [infrastructure report card](#). ASCE gives the inland waterways a D— even though ASCE says they, “Are the hidden backbone of our freight network,” and “Carry the equivalent of 51 million truck trips a year.

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SAC:
Federal Multi-Agency
Task Force

UMWA Response:
Our association is supportive of this measure in which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is lead agency along with the Chief of Engineers, the Director of the National Park Service and Director of the U.S. Geological Survey to slow the spread of Asian Carp.

Thank you for your consideration.

a way to speed up much needed work on the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.

U.S. Senators Dick Durbin and Mark Kirk along with Representatives John Shimkus, Bill Enyart and Mike Quigley from Illinois have joined Iowa Representatives Braley and Dave Loebsack of Iowa in calling for the water conferees to keep public-private partnerships as part of the Water Infrastructure Now Public-Private Partnership Act, while they hammer out WRDA 2013.

Durbin said again that, "The locks and dams of the Mississippi River are old, falling apart, and threaten the economy of the Midwest and the na-

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2014.

It's believed that one of the big issues that negotiators are struggling with is whether or not some of the proposed projects in

the bill will violate the ban on earmarks. If they get a bill out next year, it will be the first one since 2007.

Meanwhile, [several river state lawmakers](#) are pushing for a bill that would allow public-private partnerships as

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