

Proposed Deepening of AR River McClellan-Kerr Navigation Channel Unjustified and Will Lead to Barge Safety Issues

- Congress authorized the Corps to deepen 445 miles of the AR River navigation system within AR and OK from the originally developed 9' system of locks and channel training structures to a 12' system without modifying lock facilities to protect barge safety.
- Through a hired lobbyist the largest barge shipper on the river secured congressional authorization of only the 12' channel alternative midway of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement development or Record of Decision, a flawed process where the Corps developed a cost/benefit/Feasibility Study to justify decisions already made.
- The Presidents Budget Office reviewed the economic analysis and concluded the benefit/return ratio was inaccurate and dropped it to \$1.06 for each \$1 cost, and recommended lowest priority of funding for the \$166 million project.
- The cost of the project is notably understated while the benefits are overstated. In addition, Corps flawed analysis is based on "if barge usage improves" speculation, a clear violation of accounting accuracy of the Corps own Planning Guidelines.
- One half of System barge tonnage is a low value aggregate and total traffic is flat or declining.
- Instead of a mandated fish and wildlife mitigation plan, the Corps plan is to have no plan and instead substitute some unknown plan at some unknown future date.
- Jobs produced by the project will be at a minimum, given that it is an equipment/dredging project and not labor intensive.
- This project is highly controversial. The Corps has a massive backlog of unfunded AR River maintenance needs, and can not maintain recreation facilities or other authorized portions of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System.
- Squeezing 12' type barges through locks designed for 9' trades off safety and stream protection from spills from barge accidents.

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