

MISSISSIPPI LEVEE BOARD

impact

NEWSLETTER

"Where People Come First"

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Yazoo Backwater Project Final Report Released

Project will Protect the South Delta

The Mississippi Levee Board proudly endorses the Yazoo Backwater Project recommended by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in its recently released Yazoo Backwater Project Final Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

"We are excited that the project is moving forward," said Fred Ballard, president of the Mississippi Levee Board. "The South Delta has been waiting 60 years for flood relief. The Corps' recommended project will reduce the threat of flooding in the South Delta, improving citizens' quality of life while also restoring wildlife habitat in the area."

Peter Nimrod, the Mississippi Levee Board's Chief Engineer, adds, "The Yazoo Backwater Project is flood control for the

21st century, combining an effective pumping station with vast acres of environmental enhancements and conservation measures in the lower flood prone areas. This project reflects a community compromise."

According to Nimrod, the Corps of Engineers will buy permanent easements and reforest 55,600 acres of cleared agricultural land in the one- and two-year flood zone. It will construct a pumping station to operate when South Delta flood waters trapped behind the closed Steele Bayou structure exceed 87 feet above sea level. The project will lower the 100-year flood plain by 4 to 4.5 feet, and reduce the duration and height of floods.

Public officials, including Sen. Thad Cochran, Sen. Trent Lott and Rep. Bennie Thompson, are on record in support of the project. In addition, resolutions of support have been approved by local governments in the impacted area, and several South Delta hunting and fishing clubs.

Many local residents are



Steele Bayou Structure

hopeful the final report's release will finally allow the project to move forward. "We need our pump and it is about time we got it," said Ruby Johnson, South Delta Flood Control Committee co-chair. "We know it's just a matter of time before we have another flood. We need the pump in place before that happens."

The Yazoo Backwater Levee and the Steele Bayou Structure currently help protect citizens from direct Mississippi River flooding. However, water from

all or part of 10 Mississippi counties drains into the South Delta. When the Steele Bayou gates are closed during those times the Mississippi River's water level is high, the South Delta floods.

Since 1941, Congress has recognized the need for a solution. After decades of study, the Yazoo Backwater Pump Project promises flood relief. The project will remove flood water and reforest vast acres of bottomland hardwood forests. Pumping flood water from behind levees is a

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Yazoo Backwater Project Public Meeting Held in Mayersville

Meeting gave public a chance to voice support or opposition



Col. Michael Wehr

The long awaited Final Report for the Yazoo Backwater Project was released on November 16, 2007. Colonel Michael C. Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District Corps of Engineers, conducted a public meeting for the project in Mayersville, Mississippi on November 29, 2007.

The meeting, held at the Issaquena County Courthouse, was attended by approximately 200 people. Following Col. Wehr's opening remarks and a video detailing the Yazoo Backwater Project, Kent Parrish, the Senior Project Manager, made a presentation highlighting the evolution of the



project since the release of the Draft Report in 2000.

Col. Wehr then opened the meeting for public comments which were heavily in favor of the project. Of the 41 speakers, 31 were in support and 10 were opposed. Among the supporters were Jo Ann Clark, field representative for U.S. Senator Thad Cochran and Mississippi Legislators Buck



Kent Parrish

Clarke and Alex Monsour. Numerous county supervisors, officials and engineers from around the Delta made statements in full support of the project. Numerous hunting clubs and private citizens also made statements in support of the project. Peter Nimrod, Chief Engineer for the Mississippi

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Willie Bunton

Critics Closing Mind to Pump Compromise

The Greenwood Commonwealth
Editorial by Tim Kalich - Editor
December 8, 2007

THE GREENWOOD Commonwealth

It's awfully easy, sitting here in the upper half of the Mississippi Delta, to get a little complacent about flood control.

Thanks to a host of projects, from dredging river bottoms to erecting levees to installing pumps, Greenwood theoretically is protected from all but a cataclysmic flood.

Folks aren't quite so fortunate in the southern part of the Delta. Since the flood of 1973, considered the last of the granddaddy floods, the South Delta has endured at least eight more significant floods. Because that area is thinly populated and its residents predominantly poor, the South Delta doesn't have a whole lot of clout, other than from farmers who aren't too crazy about seeing their cropland regularly go under water.

For more than four decades, a project designed to bring that area some relief from high water has resulted in a pitched battle between competing interest groups -- South Delta landowners and residents on one side, and environmental and conservation groups on the other.

The fight, which had been in

a state of truce for the last few years, is heating up again. Recently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released its report recommending that the installation of the Yazoo Backwater Project move forward. The massive pumping station has the endorsement of longtime backers, such as the Delta Council and the Mississippi Levee Board, but it has met with howls of protests from the environmentalists who think preserving wetlands is a whole lot more important than keeping water out of people's homes and off their cropland. Also in the opposition's corner is the state's largest newspaper.

The *Clarion-Ledger*, whose editors are all for compromise between environmental and flooding concerns when it comes to the capital city, are completely uncompromising when it comes to the Yazoo pump. Recently, the newspaper likened the project to Frankenstein and asked, "Won't



Tim Kalich

someone drive a stake through this monster's heart?"

It's a catchy line, but it leaves me wondering whether the editors bothered to study exactly what's being proposed in the reformulated plan.

I'll admit I'm a little over my head when it comes to doing a cost-benefit analysis of a \$220 million public works project. It certainly seems, however, that the Corps of Engineers and the project's backers have made an honest effort to balance their desires for drainage with the wishes of outdoorsmen and environmentalists to not upset the normally occurring wildlife and plant habitat.

The Corps has scaled back the capacity of the pump by almost half from what was proposed when the project was last drawn up in 1982. The pump won't come on until there are about 214,000 acres under water, and those acres will stay under water while the pump is running. Thus, the impact on wetlands should

be negligible. In fact, the wildlife habit could be enhanced, since the Corps will reforest more than 55,000 acres of cropland, presuming landowners agree, for likely conversion into hunting land.

The design is not everything the flood-control advocates wanted, but they had to make concessions to keep the project alive. The opposition, at least initially, doesn't appear as if it's ready to give an inch.

It may be tough to convince other parts of the country or even other parts of Mississippi why the project should go forward. Those of us who live in the northern half of the Delta, however, should recognize a moral obligation to support it.

In 1941, Congress authorized a comprehensive plan to reduce Delta flooding, mostly by assisting the water in its natural flow southward toward the Gulf of Mexico. All or parts of 10 Delta counties, including the western half of Leflore, funnel their water toward Sharkey and Issaquena counties. It's not right, during times of high water, just to let it bottleneck there while we stay dry to the north.

If there's a better, more economical way to get that water off those people, let's hear it. But if not, the project should proceed. ■

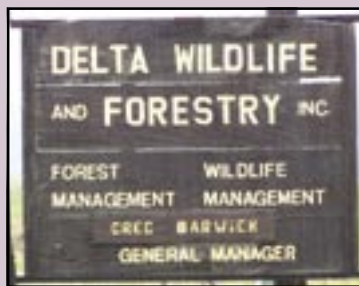
Yazoo Backwater Pump Project Makes Sense for Sportsmen, Conservationists

by Jim Lockett, Letter to the Editor, *The Clarion Ledger*, January 6, 2008

There are more than 40 million hunters and anglers in the United States, many here in Mississippi, and I'm proud to count myself among their number. I consider sportsmen as the original conservationists. After all, if our forests, waterways, and marshlands are taken from us, then we can't enjoy sports that have become a passion for many of us.

As an avid hunter, I like to think that we are responsible for providing habitat for the game we hunt, and for the ecosystems that support game and other wildlife. It is one of the oldest forms of environmental advocacy in North America, owing its existence to men like President Theodore Roosevelt, who in 1902 visited the Mississippi Delta on his famous bear hunt, giving birth to the "Teddy Bear."

According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, hunters and anglers currently



contribute about \$5 million a day from the sale of state hunting and fishing licenses and other activities and contributions to environmental conservation and protection. Hunting and fishing help to foster a relationship to the land that is crucial to future conservation efforts.

While sporting and conservation groups don't always see eye-to-eye on every issue, they often turn to one another as partners because of a common understanding that healthy ecosystems mean healthy habitats for game

animals. Our differing groups come to the table for different reasons and at times with different motivations, but with one important objective -- conserving habitat.

It is for this great shared value that sportsmen, conservationists and others interested in environmental preservation should now show a united front in support of the Yazoo Backwater Pump Project. Much has been said and written about this project since its inception many years ago. But as proposed now, this is modern-day flood control, combining structures that will protect the people, homes and businesses of the South Delta while also enhancing the natural environment of the region.

The project will place 55,600 acres of agricultural land under permanent conservation easements. This land currently offers few natural resource values, but

when replanted as bottomland hardwood forest -- as proposed by the Backwater Pump Project -- it will provide additional wildlife habitat, water quality benefits and significant environmental improvements.

The result will be 19.3 percent increase in wetlands resources in the region, an 11.2 percent increase in terrestrial resources and a 34.5 percent increase in aquatic resources. In addition, this reforestation will improve water quality by reducing sediments. Water quality will be further improved by reducing the duration of flooding on the forestland thus reducing the mercury content in the water.

A reforestation initiative of this size will vastly improve the habitat for all wildlife,

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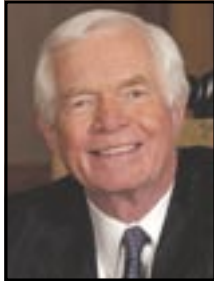
Jim Lockett

Elected Officials Support the Yazoo Backwater Project

Officials Send in Letters of Support

The public comment period for the Final Report for the Yazoo Backwater Project officially ended January 22, 2008. Numerous letters of support for the Recommended Plan for the Yazoo Backwater Project were sent by elected officials to the Corps of Engineers.

Mississippi Senior U.S. Senator **Thad Cochran** wrote, "The 1927 flood led to the passage of the Flood Control Act of 1928 which created the flood control system still in operation today, and cemented the role of the federal government and understanding that flooding is a national issue rather than a state or local one. The Yazoo Backwater Area, which was authorized in the Flood Control Act of 1928, would complete the implementation of the flood control plan for Mississippi." Senator Cochran further states, "The United States Army Corps of Engineers has addressed all the concerns related to this project in the Recommended Plan."



Senator
Thad Cochran

Newly appointed U.S. Senator **Roger Wicker** wrote, "The Recommended Plan, released on November 16, 2007, includes a 14,000 cubic feet per second pumping plant and reforestation of up to 55,600 acres of low-lying agricultural land. The completion of the pumping station as authorized by Congress reduces the 100-year flood plain by 4 to 4 1/2 feet throughout the project area. This will protect homes, land and wildlife on more than 600,000 acres in six Mississippi Delta counties. The Recommended Plan provides a good balance of economic and environmental features for the South Delta."



Senator
Roger Wicker

Mississippi Governor **Haley Barbour** wrote, "This much-needed flood damage reduction project has obviously been thoroughly studied and designed to address, as best as possible, the concerns and needs of all stakeholders in the region. I commend the Corps for the deliberate effort put forth towards this project." Governor Barbour further states, "I urge you to continue taking the necessary steps



Governor
Haley Barbour

towards completion of this project for the safety and advancement of the lower Mississippi Delta."

Mississippi State Senator **Buck Clarke** wrote, "As a lifelong resident of Hollandale, I have experienced flooding in our area that this project will alleviate. As a homeowner and business owner, I will be comforted with the protection this project will provide. As a state senator, I view this project as an effort to show the rest of the state that we are, indeed, open for business."



State Senator
Buck Clarke

Mississippi State Senator **Lydia Chassaniol** wrote, "I strongly feel that we need proper management of our natural resources and I believe the planned project will enhance both economic development and environmental resources in one of the most impoverished areas of our country."



State Senator
Lydia Chassaniol

Mississippi State Representative **Willie Bailey** wrote, "The Recommended Plan for the Yazoo Backwater Project will help provide better economic development and educational opportunities, in addition to a safer environment for the citizens who live in one of the most impoverished areas of our country. The large scale reforestation feature also will enhance every environmental resource in the area."



State Representative
Willie Bailey

The **Washington County Board of Supervisors** wrote, "Please proceed in completing this much-needed and long-overdue flood control project for the Mississippi South Delta." The **Bolivar County Board of Supervisors** wrote, "The Board truly realizes the critical situation to the Mississippi Delta Region caused by trapped floodwaters behind the closed outlets on Steele Bayou and the Sunflower River. We, too, feel this condition will not be alleviated until the South Delta Region has a pumping station in place to remove these floodwaters adequately in periods of heavy rainfall." The **Yazoo County Board of Supervisors** wrote, "we fully realize the vital importance of this project to the people of Yazoo County, Mississippi, as well as to the entire Mississippi Delta counties."

The **Sharkey County Board of Supervisors** wrote that flooding causes "the disruption of basic services to the citizens such as the inability of ambulances or school buses to access the region affected by flooding."

rot in the roots and eventually the main stem of the tree."

In fact, nine (9) counties in the Mississippi Delta passed resolutions of support for the Recommended Plan for the Yazoo Backwater Project. These counties include: **Sharkey, Issaquena, Washington, Yazoo, Humphreys, Bolivar, Sunflower, Coahoma and Leflore.** **Washington County Sheriff Milton Gaston, Sr.** and **Humphreys County Sheriff J.D. Roseman** both sent in letters supporting the Recommended Plan for the Yazoo Backwater Project.

Mark Hooker, who serves as County Engineer for Issaquena, Sharkey and Washington Counties, wrote, "I have seen the devastating effects of high water and flooding on county roads throughout these counties. Repair of roads after a flood event can wipe out our county budgets." Hooker continued, "Any engineer knows you do not start a drainage project from anywhere, but the downstream end. However, this project has been so politicalized to try to appease so many people that work has not only been started, but has been completed on the upstream end of the project resulting in enormous benefits to the people living in that area at the expense of the people, infrastructure, flora and fauna in the lower part of the drainage basin. I wholeheartedly recommend that the project be implemented immediately."

Anguilla Mayor Merlin Richardson wrote, "As a citizen of the area, I feel that protection afforded by the project is necessary, deserved, and past due in coming." **Mayersville Mayor Linda Short** wrote, "I am a life-long resident of the Town of Mayersville, and currently serving as Mayor, and feel this project is very important because of the protection for not only the residents of Mayerville, but for the entire Issaquena County and surrounding areas."

South Delta School District Superintendent **Katherine Tankson** wrote, "It has been said that it is not a question as to if there will be another major flood, but when." Superintendent Tankson continued, "When we have excessive rain and the gates are closed, this prevents the water from flowing out into the Mississippi River through Steele Bayou and

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Board Meeting Recaps

October, 2007

The Board took the following action at the October 1, 2007 regular board meeting: authority was given to advertise for worker's compensation insurance; concurred with permits issued to Twin County Electric Power Association for an electrical line crossing servicing Harlow's Casino and to the City of Greenville for major reconstruction work along the railroad spur serving the Industrial Park along Lake Ferguson; November 2, 2007 set as date for annual levee inspection trip; accepted proposal by Wildlife Technical Services to manage timber along the Brunswick Extension Levee (BEL); received and approved audit by Joel B. Cunningham for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007; re-assigned International Paper conservation easement along the BEL to Belle Island Properties, LLC; and received report from the Chief Engineer on all ongoing projects in the Mississippi Levee District.

January, 2008

The Board of Mississippi Levee Commissioners held their regular board meeting on January 14, 2008. The Levee Board took the following action during its January meeting: received and approved minutes of the Levee Maintenance Contract and Procedures Committee meeting; reviewed bids and awarded workman's compensation insurance to SouthGroup Insurance; authorized advertisement of bids for Business Auto/ Public Officials & Employees/Liability/ Contractors Equipment Insurance, chemicals and vehicles; concurred with permits issued to Belle Island Properties, LLC for a gate on the riverside of the BEL, to Bailey Salvage for a 60 day lease of the Mat Casting Field, to the Tallula Hunting Club for a cabin on the landside r.o.w., and to Producers Rice for a waterline crossing; authorized a delegation to the MVFCA Congressional



Col. Wehr presents the 49th consecutive award to the Mississippi Levee Board.

Meetings March 29 - April 2 in Washington, D.C. to discuss FY 2009 Appropriations for Corps projects in the Mississippi Delta; and received status reports on all the ongoing projects in the Mississippi Levee District and meetings attended. Col. Michael C. Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, presented the Mississippi Levee Board the 2007 Certificate of Merit for the Operation and Maintenance of Flood Control Projects. ■



In Memoriam: Charles S. "Chick" Tindall, Jr. Levee Board Attorney - 1948-1981

Charles S. "Chick" Tindall, Jr. died January 5, 2008 at his home. Mr. Tindall served as Attorney for the Mississippi Levee Board from 1948 to 1981. Tindall was born in Winona on January 11, 1912 and graduated as valedictorian of Indianola High School. He graduated with honors from the University of Mississippi School of Law where he served as editor of the Mississippi Law Journal. He received a master's degree in law from Yale University. He was an active member of First Presbyterian Church. He served as president of the Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Greenville Industrial Foundation and the Kiwanis Club. He practiced law in Greenville since 1938 and served Of Counsel to Lake Tindall LLP until his death. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Mary Louise

Castlen Tindall, sons Charles S. Tindall, III (Rebecca) and Edwin W. Tindall (Jane), four grandchildren and a great-grandson. ■

MISSISSIPPI LEVEE BOARD OFFICERS & STAFF

Commissioners

Fred A. Ballard, Jr., President, Washington County
Kenneth Rodgers, Vice-President, Humphreys County
Johnny Robinson, Washington County
James W. House, Jr., Bolivar County
Nott Wheeler, Jr., Bolivar County
Roy Nichols, Issaquena County
Laurance Carter, Sharkey County

Staff

Peter Nimrod, Chief Engineer
Robert M. Thompson, Assistant Engineer
Charles S. Tindall, III, Attorney
Judy B. Ross, Treasurer
Ginger Morlino, Secretary
Patrick Bolls, Maintenance Superintendent
Rick Boyd, Engineering Technician



Staff Profile Ronald Gray Foreman

Ronald "Happy" Gray is the Maintenance Crew Foreman for the Mississippi Levee Board. Happy, a native of Winterville, has worked at the Levee Board for 5 1/2 years.

As Foreman he is directly responsible for the daily activities of the maintenance crew. Happy is a hands-on foreman and depending on the time of year he might be clipping grass with a tractor and bushhog, clearing right-of-way with a bulldozer or grading the gravel on top of the levee. He enjoys his job because he likes being outdoors and he likes operating heavy equipment.

He acquired his nickname because of his genial disposition and friendly smile. He is the father of one son and four daughters and the grandfather of four. Happy likes to cook, hunt and fish in his spare time. He and his wife, Berma, reside in Greenville. ■

Public Meeting in Mayersville ...continued from page 1...

Levee Board stated after the meeting, "We were delighted to have our elected officials on hand to show their support along with the tremendous number of private citizens who came and made statements in support of this project."

When asked about the opponents comments, Nimrod continued, "Unfortunately, the same misinformation that has been circulated about this project in the past has resurfaced and have some people confused and misguided. We hope the opponents will make a real effort to read and understand the Final Report and be as encouraged as we are about the positive environmental benefits of this project." ■

2007 Gravel Supply Contract

Each year the Corps of Engineers allocates funding for maintenance gravel for the various levee boards within the Vicksburg District. This year, \$553,438 was allocated to the Mississippi Levee District. A gravel supply contract is awarded to a contractor who delivers the gravel to the levee where Mississippi Levee Board personnel and equipment spread the gravel on top of the levee. The gravel supply contract was awarded to Truckla Services. Crushed stone was placed on 7.3 miles of the Mainline Mississippi River Levee in Bolivar County. Three stretches were surfaced with Sandstone: Stations 1915 to 2090 near Lobdell, MS, Stations 2398 to 2479 near Bolivar, MS, and Stations 3170 to 3300 near Good Grief, MS. The placement began September 26 and finished October 31, 2007. ■



Gravel being spread by Levee Board crew.



2007 Helicopter Application

In 1950, the Mississippi Legislature authorized the two (2) Mississippi Delta levee boards to participate as local sponsors of Corps of Engineers projects within the Yazoo Basin. The Corps of Engineers began work on the Big Sunflower River & Tributaries Project in 1947. This project included channel improvements to over 700 miles of interior streams located within the Mississippi Delta. These streams provide the outlet for flood water in the Delta. The Mississippi Levee Board is responsible for minor maintenance for 350 miles of interior streams within the Mississippi Levee District.

To perform this much needed maintenance, the Mississippi Levee Board contracts with a helicopter applicator to spray a por-

tion of the interior streams each year. A mixture of aquatic herbicides is sprayed on the underbrush and privet that is encroaching into the required clear width of the channel. This required clear width must be maintained to ensure the streams have adequate flood storage and passage capacity.

This year the Mississippi Levee Board treated 133.6 miles of its interior streams. This included 800 acres of interior streams located primarily in the northern half of the Mississippi Levee Dis-

trict. Helicopter Applicators sub-contracted with Custom Air and they sprayed on October 11-21, 2007. Streams treated this year included parts of the Big Sunflower River, Bogue Hasty, Bogue Phalia, Clear Creek, Hushpuckena River, and Snake Creek. ■



Fueling and loading chemical.



Spraying the underbrush and privet.

Levee Enlargement Project Update

Completed Work
23.2 miles - Items 477L, 496L & 502L

On-Going Construction
Item 488L - 8.8 miles - 97% Complete

Advertised Work
Item 474L - 3.4 miles - bid opening - February

Future Work Remaining
33.6 miles



Borrow Excavation



Ramp Construction



Topping Out Levee

Steele Bayou Sedimentation Reduction Project Update

Completed Work: Phase I - 11 sites

On-Going Construction: Phase II - 14 sites - 10% Complete



Phase II Construction - Installation of riser pipe.

U.S. Sen. Trent Lott Resigns

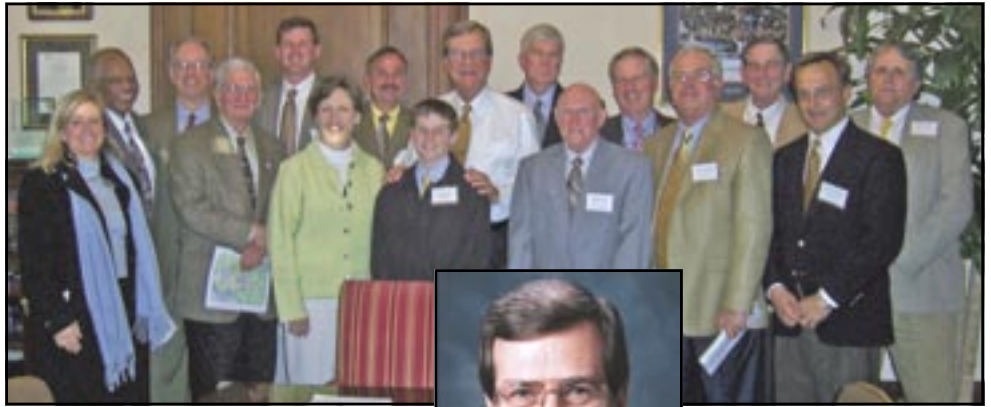
Lott Ends 35-Year Political Career

Mississippi Republican Trent Lott officially resigned from the U.S. Senate on December 18, 2007, ending a 35-year career in politics.

Sen. Lott, a native of Pascagoula, graduated from the University of Mississippi, and got a law degree there in 1967. Lott served as administrative assistant to Rep. William Colmer from 1968-1972. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1972 and served until 1989. He was the House Republican Whip from 1981-1989. He was elected to serve as a U.S. Senator in 1989, taking over for Sen. John Stennis who had served for 41 years. He has served as Senate Republican Whip from 1994-1996 and again in 2007. He served as Senate Majority Leader from 1996-2002. Lott and his wife, Patricia, have two children and three grandchildren.

Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-GA, said Lott is "the epitome of the genteel Southern gentleman."

Mississippi's senior U.S. Senator, Republican Thad Cochran, recalled how he



Senator Trent Lott with Levee Board in 2006.

and Lott were both elected to the U.S. House in 1972; each was the first Republican elected from his district since Reconstruction. Cochran moved to the Senate in 1978. "I have come to respect him and appreciate his legislative skills and his great capacity for hard work," Cochran said. "He is a tireless and resolute advocate for causes and issues which he decides to support. In a word, he is a winner. He gets things done."



Fred Ballard, President of the Mississippi Levee Board, said "the Mississippi Levee Board has enjoyed its working relationship with Sen. Lott over the past 35 years. The Board will truly miss his friendship and support. The Board wishes Sen. Lott a long, healthy and happy retirement from politics and wishes him good luck with his future opportunities." ■

Roger Wicker Gets Senate Appointment

Wicker Appointed to Replace Senator Trent Lott

Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour announced on December 31, 2007 that U.S. Representative Roger Wicker, a conservative Mississippi Republican, has been selected to replace former Sen. Trent Lott. Sen. Lott officially resigned from the U.S. Senate on December 18, 2007, ending a 35-year career in politics.

Gov. Barbour said the selection process had been a serious undertaking and that it had been important to select a person with Lott's "conservative values" and who would be able to work with fellow Sen. Thad Cochran, R-MS. Wicker, 56, will serve until a special election is held on November 4, 2008.

Wicker, a native of Pontotoc, graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1973 and got a law degree there in 1975. Wicker and his wife, Gayle, have three children.



Senator Wicker with Levee Board in 2006.

Wicker served on active duty in the Air Force and then served in the Air Force Reserve. He retired from the Reserve in 2004 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. At the conclusion of his active duty, he became counsel to then-U.S. Rep. Trent Lott on the House Rules Committee in 1980. Wicker served in the Mississippi State Senate from 1987-1994. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1994 to succeed the late Rep. Jamie Whitten.



Senator Roger Wicker appointed by Governor Haley Barbour.

Fred Ballard, President of the Mississippi Levee Board, said "the Mississippi Levee Board is pleased to have Roger Wicker appointed to the U.S. Senate. The Board has enjoyed its working relationship with Sen. Wicker over the past 13 years as a U.S. Representative. Sen. Wicker understands the Mississippi Delta and flood control issues. The Board looks forward to continuing to work with Sen. Wicker in his new position." ■



2007 Annual Levee Inspection

On November 2, 2007, the Mississippi Levee Board hosted its Annual Levee Inspection. This year's trip started on the south end of the Mississippi Levee District at Highway 61 and the Yazoo Backwater Levee and proceeded upstream to Mayersville.

The inspection included the proposed Yazoo Backwater Pump site, the Brunswick Extension Levee and some of the levee enlargement work along the Mainline Mississippi River Levee in Issaquena County. Lunch was served at the Onward Store in Onward, MS. ■

Members of the 2007 Annual Levee Inspection take a photo in front of the Onward Store.



Federal Legislative Issues WRDA, Appropriations and FEMA

WRDA 2007

The last Water Resources Development Act was passed in 2000. For seven years, Congress has been trying to pass a new WRDA Bill. WRDA 2007



became law on November 8, 2007. WRDA authorizes \$23B worth of projects. Both the House and Senate had to override President Bush's veto of WRDA. Language in WRDA allows the Corps to once again reprogram project funds and use continuing contracts! The continuing contract clause will allow the Corps advertise a multi-year construction project without having to have all the money in place up front before a project can be awarded. The Corps has used continuing contracts since 1922. Reprogramming authority will allow the Corps to move money around from projects that are behind schedule to projects that are ahead of schedule. WRDA also authorizes independent peer review for projects costing over \$45M.

APPROPRIATIONS

The House and Senate have both passed the Omnibus Bill for the FY 2008 Budget. The President's FY08 Budget had \$260M for the Mississippi River & Tributaries Project (MR&T). The Omnibus Bill was passed on December 18, 2007 and set funding for the MR&T Project at \$387.4M! Unfortunately, even though restrictions on

reprogramming authorities and continuing contracts were repealed in WRDA 2007, the appropriations act kept these restrictions, which were first imposed in the FY 2006 appropriations measure. The Mississippi Levee Board is pleased with our Mississippi Congressional Delegation on both the Senate and House sides with the adds to the MR&T Project appropriation. Sen. Thad Cochran (MS) is the ranking Republican member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.



Senator Thad Cochran

FEMA MAP MODERNIZATION PROGRAM - PROPOSED FIRM MAP "WARNING"

U.S. Representative Marion Berry (Arkansas) introduced an amendment to the U.S. House Flood Insurance Reform Bill (HB 3121) which passed on September 28, 2007. This Bill re-words the potentially

detrimental "Warning" on the updated FIRM Maps to a more acceptable "Note". The amended language reads: "Note: This area is shown as being protected from at least the 1-percent-annual-chance flood hazard by levee, dike, or other structure. Overtopping or failure of any flood control structure is possible. Property owners are encouraged to evaluate their flood risk, based on full and accurate information, and to consider flood insurance coverage as appropriate." This amendment also provides that the

Director may add a note designating areas protected from the 500-year flood (MR&T Project). It also adds that this note "shall not be considered a requirement of participation in the national flood insurance program." The Senate is currently working on passing a Flood Insurance Reform Bill with similar language. ■



Yazoo Backwater Pump Project Final Report ...continued from page 1...

recognized solution. There are currently 22 pumps evacuating water from behind levees within a 200-mile radius of the proposed location of the Yazoo Backwater Pump. The Yazoo Backwater Project provides the added feature of significant reforestation, which will both reduce flood damage and enhance environmental resources.

The project - which represents the fulfillment of a 60-year-old promise by the federal government - is estimated to cost \$220 million. Economists agree it will return \$1.50 in benefits for every \$1 spent. Economists with Louisiana State University and Mississippi State University have reviewed and confirmed this economic benefit analysis.



More than one-third of the project's cost is for the acquisition of perpetual easements and implementation of the reforestation and conservation measures on 55,600 acres of land. This reforested acreage will be equivalent in size to the Delta National Forest. ■



Reforestation

Yazoo Backwater Pump Project ...continued from page 2...

fish and waterfowl in the South Delta. It'll also provide additional habitat for endangered species like the pondberry plant and Teddy Roosevelt's beloved Louisiana black bear.

No project on the scale of the Yazoo Backwater Pump Project is ever perfect, and nothing of this magnitude can be undertaken without some impact on the environment. But this project has been exhaustively reviewed for many years now, with significant improvements being made to the original plan, especially in terms of environmental protection and conservation.

The net environmental impacts of this project are beneficial, as illustrated in a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and other detailed reports from technical experts. We've waited long enough - it is time to provide flood protection for the people who live and work in the South Delta and for the habitat which is degraded by flooding. I strongly urge my fellow hunters, fishermen and conservationists to support the Yazoo Backwater Pump Project. This should be an issue on which we all can agree. ■

Elected Officials Support Yazoo Backwater ...continued from page 3...

the following are results thereof: Wildlife leaves its habitat to move to higher ground and sometimes never return; We have 8,106 acres in timber, and with these trees standing in water, the roots will rot which will cause the tree to become hollow and lower the grade and the sale value of the trees; The backwater can prevent the harvesting of the district's timber in the spring...lowering the price of the district's timber." Tankson stated, "This project has been tossed back and forth long enough, and now is the time for action. The only way to evacuate flood water is by pumping."

The Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation wrote, "The Yazoo Backwater Project is essential to protecting not only farming in the South Delta, but farm families who earn a living providing food and fiber for all of us. Agriculture is the major economic contributor in the South Delta, and will remain so until structural flood control is in place, enticing other economic opportunities to locate in the area."

The Mississippi Levee Board would like to thank each and every private individual, elected official, and elected Boards who went on record in support for the Yazoo Backwater Project. Your continued support and dedication is greatly appreciated! ■

Back In Time: 35 YEARS AGO - THE 1973 FLOOD

You cannot ignore the past! Another backwater flood is coming! We must be prepared! Support the completion of the Yazoo Backwater Project! The Yazoo Backwater Project will lower the 100-year flood plain by 4 to 4.5' as well as increase every environmental resource in the South Delta. We must act now and complete this long-overdue and much-needed flood control project before we are faced again with another 1973 Flood! ■



Catfish Ponds

Buddy Newman looking at flooded homes.



Flooded Gas Station



Hwy. 16 at Little Sunflower River

Mud Box Around Home



Sandbag Levee



Rolling Fork, MS



Sandbag Levee



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