

# Lake Carriers' Association



## MINUTES OF THE 33rd ANNUAL CAPTAINS COMMITTEE MEETING

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DATE: February 11, 2016

Start: 0805

PLACE: DoubleTree Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio

End: 1510

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### AGENDA AND ATTENDEES

The agenda is on page 5. The list of attendees is on pages 6 and 7.

### MINUTES

#### Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Glen Nekvasil, Vice President of Lake Carriers' Association, welcomed the meeting attendees and introduced RDML June Ryan, Commander – Ninth Coast Guard District. She stressed that her philosophy during her command of D9 will be to Honor the Member, Honor the Mariner and Honor the Memory.

When asked about upgrading the Coast Guard's aging helicopters on the Lakes, RDML Ryan announced that all-weather, long-range helicopters will be returning to Great Lakes air stations. In 2014 LCA and Great Lakes Maritime Task Force petitioned the Coast Guard to return Jayhawk helicopters in 2014 and much appreciate their return.

#### U.S. Coast Guard Agenda Items

**Icebreaking Update:** CDR Tony Maffia reported that the 2015-2016 ice season has been mild compared to the two previous ice seasons and an average Great Lakes ice season. At present, the ice coverage is less than five percent for the entire system. CDR Maffia also announced there will be a full-time (civilian) ice officer stationed at Sector Detroit starting this summer.

**Service Life Extension Program (SLEP):** The MORRO BAY was the first of the 140s to undergo Service Life Extension Program (SLEP) and the work did take longer than anticipated. The BRISTOL BAY is currently in the Baltimore yard and due to be completed in October 2016. The NEAH BAY will depart for the Coast Guard yard in May 2016 and is scheduled to return in the summer of 2017. The current time frame for SLEP is 13 months with an additional 60 days at dock after the vessel returns from Baltimore, but the hope is that with each icebreaker the repair time will decrease as the yard gains experience. Nonetheless, based on the current schedule, the Lakes will be down one 140' WTGB icebreaking tug every ice season until 2020.

When asked whether it would be possible for the 140s to be serviced on the Lakes instead of being sent to the Coast Guard yard, CDR Maffia said D9 would prefer that too. However, since this was a no bid contract, he cautioned that opening competitive bidding could mean the work could be awarded to a yard even farther away than Baltimore. However, CAPT John Little reported that D9 has asked that Great Lakes shipyards be considered for future contracts.

CAPT Little also reported that District 1 has only two 140s and one is in the yard for its SLEP, so the East Coast cannot send another 140 to the Lakes.

**New Heavy Icebreaker:** When the topic of a new heavy icebreaker was brought up, the Coast Guard said they have enough assets for a normal ice season. It's when there is a severe ice season that their assets aren't adequate. Glen Nekvasil noted that while a new icebreaker has been authorized, it still needs an appropriation before design and construction can begin.

**Ice Condition (ICECON) Scale:** CDR Maffia discussed the Ice Condition Scale the Coast Guard is developing in conjunction with the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab. Drones on cutters will be used to estimate ice thickness, and validate the ICECON scale with actual conditions. The ICECON scale is designed to be another tool industry can use to assist them determine whether a trip is a go or a no go.

**Laker Trips:** To gain a better understanding of how lakers operate, RDML Ryan said Commanding Officers and Executive Officers for all D9 cutters are now required to take a ride on a laker and the Commandant is expected to ride a laker in June or July. She also encouraged LCA members to ride an icebreaker.

**AIS ATON:** CDR John Stone presented on the eATON system. He outlined how the Coast Guard is improving service delivery by incorporating eATON into system design, modernizing delivery of marine safety information, modernizing the physical ATON system, improving public notification of ATON changes and proposals and gaining a better understanding of current user requirements for U.S. Aids to Navigation System (USATONS). He went on to explain what eATON is and the three types of messages: virtual, synthetic and physical. He solicited information from the captains regarding the usefulness and positioning of ATONS.

**Captains' Items for USCG:** CAPT Ray Sheldon, Captains Committee Chairman, provided information regarding bridge delays at Calumet Harbor and Indiana Harbor. Glen Nekvasil later passed these along to D9's bridge branch. Bridge Branch discussed the issue with Norfolk Southern and the railroad acknowledged they run more AMTRAK and UPS trains over the crossing in November and December, but frankly, the financial incentives to meet delivery times may outweigh the civil penalties the Coast Guard can recommend.

Kayakers in Cleveland, Buffalo and the Chicago River continue to be an issue for the captains. CAPT Paul Arnett took note of this.

Other USCG issues of importance to the Captains Committee are as follows:

- AIS ATONS – displaying name, number, etc. clutters display screens, especially in the St. Marys River. In short, AIS is displaying too much information. The Coast Guard should go back to IMO and address this. D9 agreed.
- One addition to AIS that would be welcome is channel boundaries. Nonetheless, the most important screen is still “the window.”
- Aids that could be virtual include Porte Des Morts, Duluth Harbor Safe Water Buoy, Round Island and Lime Island T/B. Restore virtual aids at Rock Island, Buffalo Harbor and Toledo Harbor T/B).
- USCG radio watchstanders protocol requires the person receiving the call for assistance to ask a number of questions and the Captains expressed concern this could delay rescues. RDML Ryan said that is not the case, but the Captains feel initiating a response must be priority once the most pertinent information has been collected.
- Captains identified needing a camera looking towards Buoys 1 & 2 Lake Huron Cut. Tom Anderson, Algoma Central Corporation, passed along that Sarnia Traffic already has a camera looking this direction and provided Glen Nekvasil a link to the camera the next day. He forwarded the link to LCA's Operations Committee.

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Agenda Items**

**Dredging Update:** Dave Wright reviewed the \$142.8 million Great Lakes Navigation Operations and Maintenance budget for 2016. This is the highest level of funding in recent memory. Breakwater maintenance is included for FY16.

For FY17, the President's proposed budget of \$102.8 million is a less than FY16, but it's still a healthy budget compared to previous years. LCA will work with the Great Lakes delegation to increase FY17 funding.

**Soo Locks:** Kevin Sprague presented a video showing issues and work done on the Soo Locks over the past year including the following: the 2015 MacArthur Lock outage, the risk summary for the Poe Lock miter gates and embedded anchorages, the interim risk reduction measures, and the long term/permanent repairs.

**Soo Locks Asset Renewal:** Asset renewal includes the MacArthur Lock controls replacement, Soo Locks complex waterline replacement, and the Davis dewatering well repairs.

**Rock Cut:** The West Neebish Island Rock Cut stabilization work was reviewed.

**New Poe-Sized Lock:** An economic reevaluation is being conducted. It began in November 2015 and is expected to take 24 months to complete. The Corps later confirmed a December 2017 release date.

Captain's items for Corp:

- New surveys of Grays Reef and Milwaukee Harbor were requested.
- A survey of Simmons Reef was requested, as there appears to be a high spot about 5-7 miles north/northeast of Lansing Shoal. The Corps replied that is not part of the federal navigation channel, so it will pass the request along to NOAA.
- Water level gauges were requested at Johnson Point (upbound side) and the southern end of Lake Michigan.
- The water level gauge in the Middle Neebish is not sending data and the Captains asked that it be available on demand from Soo Traffic or the lockmaster.
- The Captains asked about washback of debris when departing a lock. The Corps replied it varies from vessel to vessel.
- Concern was expressed that updated surveys are not available soon enough after completion of dredging. The Corps replied that surveys are generally available within two weeks after strike removal.
- The Captains asked that the Corps provide some kind of shelter for crewmembers waiting for a vessel at the Soo. This is somewhat problematic, but the Corps asked that LCA make a formal request and they will see what can be done.
- The Captains also requested that the Corps reconsider its policy of locking vessels in the order in which they called as a way of reducing lock cycles and thus wear and tear. The Corps agreed to consider a request from LCA.
- The Corps was advised that a parking lot is slipping into the Old River Bed in the Cuyahoga River.

### **National Weather Service Agenda Items**

**NOAA Great Lakes Ocean Services:** Richard Edwing, Director of the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS), provided an overview of services available in the Great Lakes. He discussed the water level stations network and the interagency agreement between NOAA and USACE to support the planning for future infrastructure modernization of water level stations. He also explained three reasons to update the International Great Lakes Datum. They include changes to the water levels over time, vertical movement of the crust, and new technologies that have come along. This will be a 7-year project.

CO-OPS and Lake Carriers' Association are in the process of establishing a system to fund the current meter in the Cuyahoga River to keep it operational. Concerns about future of the Toledo current meter were raised by the Lakes Pilots Association.

Tom Loeper from the Nautical Publications Branch of the Office of Coast Survey presented information on the changes they have made in how they deliver their charts and data as well as how they are working to improve the content of their products. In response to a concern about maintaining paper charts, he assured the attendees that they will continue to maintain them.

Dick Wagenmaker reviewed the 2015 season updates including the experimental Great Lakes forecast format and the Great Lakes Modeling Initiatives which use the Finite Volume Coastal Model (FVCOM) to utilize unstructured grids to better fit irregular shorelines and create higher resolution and more accurate forecasts. Brian Hirsch continued the discussion with information regarding the updates made to the Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS) page, changes made to the Digital Marine Weather Dissemination System site and changes to the Great Lakes web portal.

**Great Lakes VOS Program:** Ron Williams presented information about the VOS system. If any members would like to have the system installed on a vessel, they can contact Ron at [ronald.williams@noaa.gov](mailto:ronald.williams@noaa.gov).

**Past and Future Efforts:** Mike Bardou reviewed feedback NOAA has received regarding forecasts as well as NOAA's interpretation of this feedback, concerns with it and possible solutions. What the marine forecast (MAFOR) represents and its many different interpretations was discussed. He explained that today it is created to represent a radius surrounding the buoys, but it could be possible to provide more MAFOR points beyond just the buoys.

Brian Hirsch announced they are producing a YouTube video on how to use the weather page.

Captains requests for NOAA and NWS:

- Survey St. Marys River to expand on area above and below Chart 14887.
- Removal of weather buoys, especially on Lake Superior, should be delayed as much as possible.
- A wind station is needed in the north end of Lake Michigan in the general vicinity of Gull Island and Lansing Shoal. Another is needed in the area of Caribou Island in northeast Lake Superior.
- NOAA should consider partnering with the U.S. Geological Survey to install more current meters. Meters are needed in Green Bay and the River Rouge.

### **Cuyahoga River BrewBoat CLE**

Freddie Coffey, founder of BrewCleveland, presented on the "BrewBoat CLE." It is a 31 foot pedal-powered paddlewheel pontoon boat where riders will take two hour tours of the Cuyahoga River and Cleveland Harbor with the harbor being the preferred route. They are permitted to bring 36 ounces of beer or 18 ounces of wine per individual to consume aboard the vessel. They are hoping to start service Memorial Day weekend 2016. Freddie reported that they will have a radio on board to communicate as well as a tablet to monitor the positions of various vessels. The vessel is equipped with an engine that enables it to get by a freighter in approximately 45 seconds if necessary. Tom Anderson of American Steamship Company offered that BrewBoat captains can ride a freighter as part of their training.

### **Lake Carriers' Association Updates**

**USCG Heavy Icebreaker:** Although a new heavy icebreaker has been authorized, the effort to get it funded will take a number of years, as the vessel will cost approximately \$200 million in 2016 dollars. The Great Lakes delegation is engaged on the issue, but this is a long-term effort.

**Dredging Crisis:** Funding for the Lakes has risen significantly. During the period 1995-2012, the Lakes' dredging allocation in the President's budget grew only 5 percent. Since then it has grown by 40 percent. LCA's next goal is to have a provision in the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 that allocates 10 percent of Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund expenditures be committed to the Lakes.

**Second Poe-Sized Lock:** The Department of Homeland Security has identified the Poe Lock as a single point of failure. The Corps has begun the Economic Reevaluation Report (ERR) for the new lock that will recalculate the benefit-cost ratio. Both the Michigan Senate and House passed resolutions urging the Corps to move forward with the ERR on the Poe and the Ohio House unanimously passed a resolution urging the Corps to move forward with building the new lock.

**Ballast Water Treatment:** The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has begun the effort to writing the Vessel General Permit (VGP) that, among other things, regulates the discharge of ballast water. This will be the third of the 5-year permits. VGP 2.0 was challenged in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Court in New York by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). The Court ruled in favor of NWF and required U.S. EPA to reexamine many of their findings and determinations. This did not require U.S. EPA to change any of the mandates but rather to better justify them. To address the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Court decision, U.S. EPA is starting data collection. They anticipate that VGP 3.0 will be finalized by December 2018.

**Vessel Incident Discharge Act (VIDA):** VIDA excludes Great Lakes vessels, those vessels that limit their voyages exclusively to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway, from having a Coast Guard-approved ballast water treatment system on board. VIDA does require that these vessels follow Best Management Practices (BMP). It does mandate that in addition to the salt-water exchange BMP currently in place, all salties will have to also install, maintain, and use a Coast Guard-approved ballast water treatment system for treating all discharged ballast water. That bill is currently stuck in committee in the Senate but looking for an appropriate bill to be attached to. VIDA was pulled from the Coast Guard Authorization Act and also the Energy Bill. Senate staff noted there are a number of other appropriate bills to attach it to with the hopes of having it passed during this legislative year.

**National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS):** There is one existing NMS in the Great Lakes; the Thunder Bay NMS in Lake Huron. This NMS covers over 4,300 square miles of the lake and until a legislative fix was enacted, prevented some normal operations to a vessel from occurring including ballasting and anchoring within its boundaries. A second NMS is being proposed in Lake Michigan off the coast of Wisconsin between Two Rivers and Sheboygan. It will cover approximately 875 square miles and like Thunder Bay be establish to protect shipwrecks. LCA worked with a large coalition including LCA members, the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force, Manitowoc business owners, State of Wisconsin legislators, as well as the Wisconsin federal delegation to submit letters of support for this NMS as long as current operations normal and necessary for safe transit of the waters continue as before after the NMS is established. The next process is NOAA will begin writing the draft NMS management plan and environmental impact statement; a process expected to take one to two years. LCA will remain engaged throughout the process.

**Suggestions for Future Meetings:** Attendees would like to see a presentation on the Jones Act by K&L Gates or American Maritime Partnership.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1510.

Minutes Submitted By  
Glen G. Nekvasil  
Vice President

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## Lake Carriers' Association

### 33rd Annual Captains Committee Meeting - February 11, 2016

**DoubleTree Hotel – Cleveland Downtown/Lakeside**

1111 Lakeside Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44114 • 216-241-5100 • Guest Fax: 216-241-7437

#### AGENDA

0730 - 0800 ..... **Continental Breakfast** ..... **Lakeside Ballroom**

0800 - 0815 ..... Greetings from Glen Nekvasil, Vice President, LCA  
RDML June Ryan, Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District

0815 - 0945 ..... **Ninth Coast Guard District**

- Recap of icebreaking operations December 2015/January 2016 – CDR Maffia
- Update on Service Life Extension Program (SLEP) for 140s – CDR Maffia
- Update on AIS ATON – CDR John Stone

0945 - 1000 ..... **Captains' Comments/Questions for USCG**

1000 - 1015 ..... **Break**

1015 - 1115 ..... **USACE, Detroit District (David Wright, Kevin Sprague, Tim Calappi)**

- Recap of FY15 Dredging Program
- Preview of FY16 Dredging Program
- Preview Plant/Contract Structure Repairs in FY16
- Overview of Soo Locks Winter Work Completed in FY15, Planned or Ongoing in FY16
- Overview of Soo Locks Asset Renewal Projects completed in FY15, Planned for FY16
- Poe Lock Embedded Anchorage Issues/Status
- Status of Rock Cut Wall Stabilization
- Status of Second Poe-Sized Lock
- Lake Level Forecasts, SMR Flow Forecasts and H&H Tools/Products

1115 - 1130 ..... **Captains' Comments/Questions for USACE**

1130 - 1200 ..... **NOAA**

- Great Lakes Ocean Services Updates – Richard Edwing
- VOS Updates – Ron Williams

1200 - 1300 ..... **Lunch – Ontario Ballroom**

1315 - 1345 ..... **NOAA (Continued)**

- Web and Tabular Product Updates – Brian Hirsch
- Q & A and Future Efforts for 2016 – Mike Bardou

1345 - 1400 ..... **Captains' Comments/Questions for NOAA**

1400 - 1430 ..... **Paddlewheel Cycleboat on Cuyahoga River – Freddie Coffey**

1430 - 1515 ..... **LCA Updates (Glen Nekvasil and Tom Rayburn)**

- Dredging – Funding Sought in FY17 Budget
- Second Poe-sized Lock
- Second USCG Heavy Icebreaker and Modernization of 140s
- Status of Federal and State Initiatives on Ballast Water
- Marine Sanctuaries
- Update on Minnesota Vessel General Permit

1515 - 1600 ..... **Additional Comments from Captains**

1600..... **Adjourn**

## ATTENDEES

### LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

(LCA Captains Committee Members – Bold)

Tom	Anderson	American Steamship Company
Kevin	McMonagle	American Steamship Company
<b>Capt. Bill</b>	<b>Millar</b>	<b>American Steamship Company</b>
Mark	Pietrocarlo	American Steamship Company
Craig	Samuda	American Steamship Company
<b>Capt. Chris</b>	<b>Berkey</b>	<b>Andrie Inc. / Inland Lakes Management, Inc.</b>
Jeff	Musselman	Andrie Inc. / Inland Lakes Management, Inc.
Aaron	Bensinger	Central Marine Logistics, Inc.
<b>Capt. Ray</b>	<b>Sheldon (Chairman)</b>	<b>Central Marine Logistics, Inc.</b>
Tom	Wiater	Central Marine Logistics, Inc.
Mike	Farrell	Grand River Navigation Company, Inc.
<b>Capt. Pat</b>	<b>Hart</b>	Grand River Navigation Company, Inc.
Paul	Joaquin	Grand River Navigation Company, Inc.
<b>Capt. Mark</b>	<b>Blatnik (Vice Chairman)</b>	<b>Great Lakes Fleet</b>
<b>Capt. Abe</b>	<b>Grogan</b>	<b>Great Lakes Fleet</b>
<b>Capt. Thomas</b>	<b>Wickersham</b>	<b>Great Lakes Fleet</b>
Dave	Deltano	Great Lakes Fleet
Ken	Gerasimos	Great Lakes Fleet
John	Thibodeau	Great Lakes Fleet
Mark	Mather	Lake Michigan Carferry / Pere Marquette Shipping
Ed	Hogan	Port City Marine Services / Port City Steamship
Ed	Wiltse	Port City Marine Services / Port City Steamship
<b>Capt. Paul</b>	<b>Berger</b>	<b>The Interlake Steamship Company</b>
<b>Capt. Brad</b>	<b>Newland</b>	<b>The Interlake Steamship Company</b>
Jayson	Toth	The Interlake Steamship Company
<b>Capt. Josh</b>	<b>Throop</b>	<b>VanEnkevort Tug &amp; Barge</b>
Dave	Groh	VanEnkevort Tug & Barge

### LAKE CARRIERS' ASSOCIATION

Katie	Gumeny	Lake Carriers' Association
Glen	Nekvasil	Lake Carriers' Association
Tom	Rayburn	Lake Carriers' Association

### CANADIAN SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION AND MEMBERS

Tom	Anderson	Algoma Central Corporation
Scott	Porter	Canada Steamship Lines

## ATTENDEES – CONTINUED

### FEDERAL AGENCIES

RDML June	Ryan	Ninth Coast Guard District
CAPT John	Little	Ninth Coast Guard District
CAPT Paul	Arnett	Ninth Coast Guard District
CDR Tony	Maffia	Ninth Coast Guard District
CDR Chris	Tantillo	Ninth Coast Guard District
LCDR Rob	Reinhart	Ninth Coast Guard District
LT Steven	Melvin	Ninth Coast Guard District
LT Mike	Collet	Ninth Coast Guard District
CAPT Scott	Smith	USCG HQ
CDR John	Stone	USCG HQ

Mike	Bardou	NOAA / National Weather Service
Richard	Edwing	NOAA / National Ocean Service
Brian	Hirsch	NOAA / National Weather Service
Thomas	Loeper	NOAA / National Ocean Service
Dr. Greg	Mann	NOAA/ National Weather Service
Dick	Wagenmaker	NOAA/ National Weather Service
Ron	Williams	NOAA / National Weather Service
Darren	Wright	NOAA / National Ocean Service

Tim	Calappi	USACE
Josh	Feldmann	USACE
Allan	Frappier	USACE
Steve	Hungness	USACE
Kevin	Sprague	USACE
David	Wright	USACE

### INVITED GUESTS

George	Haynes	Lakes Pilots Association, Inc.
Freddie	Coffey	Brew Cleveland (BrewBoat CLE)