

## Collins, Kelly A.

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**From:** Gene Higginbotham <Gene.Higginbotham@arkansas.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 21, 2014 9:38 AM  
**To:** Collins, Kelly A.  
**Cc:** Edward Swaim; Randy Young  
**Subject:** Arkansas State Water Plan comments

**Importance:** High

I am extremely disappointed with the omission of a section on Navigation in the executive summary of the Arkansas State Water Plan.

Navigation and the pools for navigation on both the Ouachita and the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS) play a critical part in providing much needed water resources to the State of Arkansas. In fact, three of the four projects that were featured in the executive summary- Plum Bayou, the Bayou Meto Water Management Project and the Ouachita River Alternative Supply Project could not exist without navigation, as the projects all are supplied water from navigation pools. The fourth project, the Grand Prairie Demonstration Project also exists on a navigable waterway.

In addition to the aquifer recovery that the navigation pool assists with near El Dorado, navigation pools on the MKARNS also assist with aquifer recovery in critical groundwater areas of the state southeast of Pine Bluff. The Bouef-Tensas Irrigation Project, a newly proposed irrigation project in Southeast Arkansas will also depend on a navigation pool on the MKARNS to provide their water supply. These navigation systems also provide hydropower, recreation, environmental, and additional agricultural benefits to our state.

While Arkansas has benefitted greatly from water resources the Federal investment in navigation systems has provided; we must keep an eye toward the future. Currently both the Ouachita and MKARNS have a maintenance backlog that could threaten the benefits that the state receives. Each year the Federal Government continues to cut the budget of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and this, in turn, affects the ability of the USACE to adequately provide operations and maintenance of locks and dams in Arkansas. It is quite possible that in the future, the Federal Government will require assistance from State Governments or the private sector to provide the necessary maintenance required to receive the water resource benefits that we currently have. This is another reason that omission of navigation from the State Water plan is simply unacceptable.

I am hopeful that you will consider adding a section to the executive summary on Navigation. Without it, we are simply not giving a true picture of the water resources in our state.

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