

GNOPSC Harbor Safety Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held Wednesday, July 9, 2025

The following representatives were in attendance:

Attendee	Affiliation	Attendee	Affiliation
Sonny Businelle	ACBL	Tony Odak	Marine Energy Consult
Louis Claverie	Associated Mooring	Jake Stahl	Marine Expertise
Jason Mott	Bar Pilots	Pat Stant	McDonough Marine
Sean Duffy	Big River Coalition	Brett Bourgeois	New Orleans Board of Trade
Rob Harris	Bisso Towboat	K. Michael Price	New Orleans Terminal
Ruben Dupre III	Bisso Towboat	Earl Hersch	No More Carbon USA
Ryan Gaubert	Boh Bros.	Toby Wattigney	NOBRA Pilots
Cherrie Felder	Channel Shipyard	Amy Dawson	Port NOLA
Stephen Babin	Chem Carriers	Ed Lee	Port of Greater Baton Rouge
Robert Socha	Conrad Shipyard	Lester Millet III	Port SL/Infragard
Jacob Naquin	Conrad Shipyard	Geoff Davis	Seamens Church Institute
Michael Bopp	Crescent River Port Pilots	Mariangel Zarraga	Seaport Hub Agencies
James Rousse	Crescent Towing	Tim Reid	Shell
Joel Richard	Crescent Towing	Jeff Kindl	Steiner Construction
Michael Leblanc	E.N. Bisso	Bobby Landry	The Water Institute
Hank Webster	Federal Pilots	Laura Lewis	TowWorks
Paul Dittman	GICA	Mario Munoz	Turn Services
Philip Vandercook	Global Maritime Ministries	Robby Swayze	USACE
Stephen McKinney	Global Maritime Ministries	Ben Adrien	USCG
Brandi Trosclair	Green Marine	Chris Booth	USCG
Todd Clower	Harbor Towing	Kelley Edwards	USCG
Jerry Clower	Harbor Towing	Gregory Callaghan	USCG
Michael Nation	Harbor Towing	Xiaobin Tuo	USCG
Leo Falgout	Kirby	Dan Velez	USCG
Gwen Casey	L&O Marine	Jake Gamble	USCG
Vaughn McDaniel	LeBeouf Bros. Towing	Courtney Keith	USCG
Christine Titus	Louisiana Maritime Assoc.	Geoff Lockamy	USCG
Ron Branch	Louisiana Maritime Assoc.	Jeff Putnam	USCG
Brian Hill	MARAD	Joseph Hale	USCG
Ian Burnette	Marathon Petroleum	Tim Long	Valero

The following reports were given:

Harbor Safety Committee Chairman, Mario Munoz

Mario called the meeting to order, led the Pledge of Allegiance and made general announcements. Big thanks to everyone that sponsored our Marine Industry Day conference, and to all that attended and participated. And thank you to Tony Odak for providing coffee and donuts for today's meeting. The next national HSC Conference will be held March 25-26, 2026, in Seattle, Washington.

USCG Sector New Orleans, CAPT Gregory Callaghan

Captain Callaghan provided updates for Sector New Orleans and highlighted recent events. Thanks to everyone that participated in the recent WAP review. As a result, some projected plan updates include further aligning towboat horsepower restrictions in the New Orleans area with those upriver in the Baton Rouge area for consistency, standardizing definitions for warping and transfers, and increased spacing at anchorages. If you were unable to attend and/or have additional input to provide, please engage with the Waterways staff at sector. We are still in high water, and CAPT Callaghan expressed recognition and appreciation for everyone being mindful of safety and adhering to safety measures in place. As we are deep into hurricane season, please continue to review plans and stay prepared for possible storms. If we are at some point expecting/preparing for our waterways to be shut down due to weather, please communicate questions and concerns with Sector staff; do not assume that someone else is sharing your concerns. We have a small vessel safety issue downriver and recent boating events on Lake Pontchartrain have highlighted the need to reevaluate small vessel outreach.

USCG Sector New Orleans, CDR Xiaobin Tuo

CDR Tuo will be leaving Sector and her replacement is LCDR Jacob Gamble. The WWM phone number (504) 269-7251 has been transferred to LCDR Gamble.

USACE – Robbie Swayze

Currently there are daytime closures at the IHNC Lock that should be completed tomorrow 7/10. Algiers Lock construction work will resume 7/21 resulting in daytime closures Monday-Saturday, and hopefully those will be completed in 3-4 weeks. Once completed they should be able to lift the tow restrictions currently in place there. Calcasieu Lock repairs (daytime closures) should be completed on Friday 7/11. Leland Bowman repair operations (daytime closures) are ongoing until the end of the month. There will be dredging at 20 Grand Point in the next 6-8 weeks as well as dredging at Port Allen Lock – there will likely be lock closures due to dredging and subsequent intermittent closures towards the middle or end of August for valve repair works.

Bar Pilots – Captain Jason Mott

The channel is in good shape. There are ongoing issues with ATON repair and replacement.

Crescent Pilots – Captain Michael Bopp

The Corps of Engineers is currently dredging at the Nashville and Napoleon Ave. terminals which has resulted in docking challenges. There is a two-pilot requirement for vessels 950ft length or greater and/or 140ft beam or greater that are transiting from Point Celeste going north to the Huey P. Long Bridge; one of the reasons for this is that some ships are now using torque limiters (different from engine power limiters). We need to address traffic issues in Algiers forebay, primarily during high river. There is silting at Neptune Pass that seem to have become an increasing safety concern.

NOBRA Pilots – Captain Toby Wattigney

Due to the fluctuation of the Carrollton Gauge at and near 12ft which is the trigger point for some high water safety restrictions on the NOBRA route, they have recently asked the state pilot commission for input, and they were given a waiver with very specific parameters. When NOAA gets the expected velocity gauges installed (date currently TBD), the high water restrictions will take velocity into account and the safety measures and trigger points will be evaluated accordingly.

Federal Pilots – Captain Hank Webster

Nothing to report, all is well.

GICA – Paul Dittman

There is quite a bit of work going on, all of which should be completed before the height of hurricane season and result in increased resiliency of the structures and locks. The Claiborne Ave. bridge has been having alignment issues and currently having a full marine opening between 2300 and 0500 daily. The Florida Ave. bridge is having motor problems and the bridge is opening and closing very slowly right now – they Port is only opening the bridge to 90ft at this time but it can be opened to the 156ft maximum on request. Demolition of the old Hwy 23 bridge in Belle Chasse should be complete in October. The GICA seminar will be held August 5-8 at the Westin in New Orleans.

AWO – Jill Bessetti

Thanks to everyone that attended the Southern Region Roundtable. The AWO summer safety committee will be held in Chicago on August 13&14. If you have any questions or issues you can reach out to Jill directly at jbessetti@americanwaterways.com.

CAMO – Lester Millet III

Nothing to report. If you'd like to be included on the monthly CAMO call list, please reach out to Ed Landgraf, Lester Millet, or Jake Stahl.

Cybersecurity Subcommittee – Lester Millet III

Lester provided an update on cybersecurity concerns, recent events, and upcoming opportunities for involvement. You can find that [here](#).

Waterways & Navigation Subcommittee

We are starting a working group to address small vessel safety issues. If you would like to participate, please call or email Christine or Mario.

Announcements

The Propeller Club's Maritime Person of the Year is Governor Jeff Landry.

Port Safety Council Chairman Mario Munoz adjourned the meeting. The next meeting of the GNOPSC Harbor Safety Committee is currently scheduled for September 3, 2025.