



# An Industrial Organization Study of the Inland Waterway Transportation System

**Start Date:** Apr 2004

**POC:**

**Projected  
End Date:** Mar 2005

[POC](#)

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**Problem Addressed:**

The nation's inland waterway system consists of three primary components: a federally-funded and operated navigation system, quasi-private sector ports, and private sector barge/towing firms (known as the waterway carrier industry). Over the years a great deal of information has been accumulated about the first two components of the system, but comparatively little data is available on the waterway carrier industry. Given the crucial role that the inland waterway system plays in the nation's economy it is important to better understand the waterway carrier industry, including such issues as pricing behavior, profitability, concentration, etc.

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**Objective:**

The goal of this project is to develop a basic understanding of the organization of the waterway carrier industry in terms of its structure, conduct and performance. The study will use secondary data sources including annual reports, business data banks, etc. Data will be collected for a minimum of 10 years.

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**Benefits:**

A more in-depth understanding of the waterway carrier industry will help the Corps develop better models for forecasting future use of the inland waterway system and the impact of changes to the system. Traditionally, Corps models have assumed largely constant returns to scale and competitive pricing on the waterways. This research will allow for more refined assessments of such issues.

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**Status:**

Completed.

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**Contract Data:**

IWR 2004

**Progress:**

**Products (Bookshelf/Toolbox):**

[Report by Kim Vachal, Jill Hough, Gene Griffin, March 15, 2005 \(10.0 MB, pdf\)](#)

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**Related Links:**

[Navigation Economic Technologies](#)

[Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute](#)



