

## MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #87, April 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010

1. Introductions / Approve Minutes/ Meetings– A meeting of the River Resources Forum (RRF) was held on April 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Tandenski Center, MN SE Technical College, Winona, MN. Following introductions, the Minutes from RRF #86 were approved with no changes. As of now Red Wing, MN will stay the location of the August Meeting as long as there is a project there to see otherwise the Minnesota River is also an option. Dates for the next meeting are 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> of August.

2. Agency Activities: (Only the agencies listed below had significant information to report.)

A. WDNR (Fischer): On February 9, 2010 Matt Frank, Secretary of the Wisconsin DNR testified before the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment on threats posed to the Great lakes by Asian Carp. Wisconsin is seeking action on several key measures to prevent asian carp from entering the Great lakes, including complete ecological separation. The testimony was provided as a result of a call by Governors Doyle (Wisconsin) and Granholm (Michigan) for a White House Summit on the topic.

Effective February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the DNR started regulating large oceangoing ships to prevent them from accidentally introducing harmful new invasive species to Wisconsin's Great Lakes waters. The DNR permit supplements the current federal general permit and requires oceangoing ships to meet numerical standards for live organisms left in ballast water after it's been treated. Proposed phosphorus rules have been approved by the natural resources board and are being reviewed by legislative committees and may be implemented this fall.

Shuffling of jobs no new hires or filling vacant jobs. No new news on Miss River supervisor position. Service Center in La Crosse only open on Monday. Fish kill in Pool 9 last week WI DNR responded. Yesterday permit for LD 3 Lower Embankment signed.

- B. MnDOT (Lambert): Bridge engineer is going to retire. Port development funding for eroding sheet pile in Duluth is being funded. Had to be a “retaining wall” not a “sea wall” may be good information for future requests. MnDOT would like to learn more about fish barriers used on the Illinois Waterway. Don Powell: Gene Fleming person in Chicago District Corps may be a good contact.
- C. US FWS (Foerster): Has been in Minnesota 3 weeks, Recovery Act funding is being used to construct the La Crosse District visitor complex at Bryce Prairie. (Frietsche): Brownsville overlook was dedicated this past fall.
- D. WDOT (Kieck): Harbor project in La Crosse by Brennen Marine is wrapped up. Harbors program in WI started at \$11.5 Million – applications totaled \$12 million all were approved so will need to tap next budget cycle. Hope to reprogram unused grants, if allowed will be accepting applications. Cat Island Chain is a large project in Green Bay \$34 Mil Fed / \$7 Mil WI.
- E. USCG (Zekus): MOU has been created with local Law Enforcement so regular duty Coast Guard can partner with LE for boat patrols starting in the Metro area, hope to extend to MDNR, WDNR in the future. Uninspected passenger vessels – able to operate without a license for now but requirement will go forward. Red Wing docks issue, Ingram and Alter allowing USCG to board and video tape tow boat going past the docks. Public meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup> with Red Wing marinas hope to have video ready and all marinas participating. (Machajewski) Trenton Marina just

proposed an extension, not sure going wider or longer. Suggest looking at it. E-mail received by Zekus from Tim Fell, not responded to yet.

- F. UMWA (Genz): Thanks to the Corps for fixing upper gates at Lock 1. Material in the system RM 305 closure 20 boats waiting. There has been quite a bit of disconnect between the Corps and industry on what areas have been dredged last year; once Freeborn was dredged industry was unaware. Southport will be ready for Upper River Services by the end of the year. Greg will check on who is new RIAC chair.
  - G. LMRWD (Schwalbe): Grant for access road to Cargill site plans are going forward. Grant for weed control going forward. Eden Prairie erosion: designs are out, two different groin systems, one total rip rap the bank waiting on the City of Eden Prairie to have a proposal. 1500' of shoreline has been looked at. The big concern is the \$1 Mil + estimated cost. In 30 days the next general water mgmt plan will be out for review.
  - H. US FWS (Delphey): FWS is working with the Coast Guard at the La Crosse RR Bridge, new pier will impact mussel bed. La Crosse visitor center ground breaking on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Eric Nelson Refuge Biologist going to retire August 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - I. MDNR (Wooden): Preliminary development of rules for MNRRA corridor has started – affect land use. Work Groups have started in Dayton, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Hastings. Dick Lambert, Dan Cottrell are involved. Rebecca has been asked to meet with Terry Birkenstock and Col. Christensen about an Asian carp plan from the MDNR. MDNR has gotten some questions about supporting fish passage at LD 3 yet against Asian carp progression. They are finalizing the MDNR position. Area of interest is Coon Rapids Dam to LD 3. Internal to MDNR; Waters is merging with Ecological Resources. There will be a Miss River Group. (Scot Johnson): Tim is leading a collation to prioritize issues on the river, put a package together for water level mgmt, island design, \$5 Mil package received \$1 Mil package.
  - K. MPCA (Mader): Agency is waiting out current session, eliminated all vacancies, no new hires 8 to 9 middle to upper management retiring. Three people will be moved, on the bright side current version of dredging permit is going forward Dan Krumholz is working on it for the Corps.
  - L. Izaak Walton League (Walker): The league has measured the economical viability of the Locks and Dams, they state they have a big price with little benefit.
  - M. TNC (Benjamin): The TNC went to DC to talk to legislature about NESP, EMP, LAWCON to acquire land related to them. Talked to Sen. Kohl's staff. Discussed fish passage at LD 3, Mississippi Basin money on the ground to do Root River work. TNC worked with MVD to survey people in the entire basin opinions of a sustainable river in the valley. Survey should be on the web this summer. Notice America's Intercoastal Conference will be held mid June.
  - N. COE (Tapp): Change of command this summer Col. Michael Price is coming in, he was a PM in Kansas City District at one point. RRF members are invited to attend the change of command RSVP by calling 651-290-5300. District Office is moving June 1<sup>st</sup>, they are moving next door address will change. LUAP is in final editing stage, refuge boundaries, closed areas marked on there? A few recent endorsements since the last meeting; St. Paul District Mitigation Policy was endorsed March 2<sup>nd</sup>, LD 3 Fishway feasibility study was endorsed February 8<sup>th</sup>.
3. Channel Maintenance Program Activities [Attachment 87-1]
- A. Discussed Dredging Schedule (Cottrell) for 2010 – not a lot of surveys in yet.
  - B. Placement Site Activities (Machajewski) – See Handout.
  - C. Pool 4 DMMP (Krumholz) – should have riverine placement and upland placement identified in Mid-May. Hydraulic modeling is going forward – upland areas have shown a good response from individuals.

- D. Fisher Island Unloading (Machajewski): 1 Million plus cy are there 650,000 cy to be removed.
- E. Pool 9 – Mooring buoy plans are in place to have the kevels changed.
- F. Onsite meeting related to bank swallows and other birds nesting at sites: plan is to discourage nesting where we can.
- G. Sediment sampling is scheduled for the cut 5 dredge cuts.
- H. LD 4 embankment vegetation plantings are going forward, (Scot Johnson) are the willows too dense for turtles and users? (Hendrickson) the need for that many willows is based on stabilizing the berm. (Otto) Other hardwoods are going in this year, contract has been let.
- I. Re-veg of Historic Placement sites (Otto): The plan is to put fines on these areas with a small scale dredge from Ft. McCoy but loaned to us by the Forest Service. EA is on the street right now.
- J. St. Croix river (Machajewski): A lot of concern from users about the USCG proposal to remove ATON's – the St. Croix is being surveyed for the Nav Charts and that information will be provided to the USCG when available.
- K. Corps Island Unloading (Machajewski): Project is moving forward. (Fischer) Is the unload road in wetlands? Corps needs to survey to make sure haul road is not left in the floodplain. Can we change the process to conform so we don't waste time and money next time? Corps contracting process is a concern, we prepared for hydraulic but awarded mechanical.
- L. Fisher Island (Machajewski): There will be a Public info mtg in May. (Scot Johnson) Issue with the sound levels of booster pumps. The booster should be no more than 70 db at 50 feet, the ones proposed put out 82 db at 50 feet. Boat ramp will be closed during the week, but only during set up.

#### 4. Navigation Work Group (Machajewski & Lambert)

- A. Bridges: Lowry Ave: Bridge is being constructed 392 feet horizontal clearance \$80-110 Million Cost. – St. Paul Park Bridge: City of Inver Grove Heights has assumed ownership of the right descending side, completion proposed to be done next year. Dick Lambert will check on schedule. – Hastings: Hwy 61 bridge is a MnDOT design Build contract \$225 – 265 Million. – Winona: Hwy 43 planning advisory stages 5 options for alignment. Traffic forecast dictates a four lane bridge. – LaCrescent: I-90 construction 2012 FHWA & MnDOT concerned about redundancy of accesses \$9 Million could be saved with reduced access. – LaCrosse R/R Bridge: Mussel surveys are started still not fully funded, preferred location to a middle span. – Lafayette: In St. Paul starting in October will take 3-4 years should be no impact on navigation. - MN River: Carver R/R Bridge, the railroad passed wood downstream with an excavator.
- B. Docks and Permits
  - 1. Upper Pool RM 854.3R above Hennepin Ave Bridge, Industry and US Coast Guard are commenting to Melissa Jenny from the Corps Regulatory Office, Greg Genz will talk to Ag. Industries about that area.
  - 2. Permit for a Red Bull Flutag at Harriet Island this summer. Contestants crash homemade crafts into the water.
  - 3. Barge Fleeting is being looked at through NESP. Trying to identify issue at Upper Approach to LD 4 and other critical areas.
- C. Greg Genz: Good work by Paul Machajewski for setting up a very useful meeting with the USCG and Industry Pilots to discuss buoy placement on the Upper Mississippi.

#### 5. FWWG (Reid)

- A. FWWG is involved with the Reach Planning effort with Jon Hendrickson and Dan Wilcox.

- B. Newsletter – there are sample layouts, articles from Paul Machajewski and Kevin Berg. Timeline is to have a newsletter out before August Meeting, will have drafts to review before it is posted on the web.
- C. FWWG is planning to discuss swallow concerns at their next meeting.
- D: Fischer: Water Level Mgmt Task Force is doing their own newsletter at this time. Powell: NESP newsletter “Our Mississippi” will look at what can be contributed.

6. RWG (Cottrell, Scot Johnson) [Attachment 87-2]

- A. (Zekus) suggests Kevin Berg or the RWG look in to local Coast Guard Auxiliary for IT support.
- B. UMRCC – Outreach, Recreation, Environmental Education and Interpretation (OREIT) is tied in to the RWG, OREIT has a water trail interest in all three Districts.

7. LD 3 Update (Saddoris) [Attachment 87-3]

- A. Purpose is to reinforce weak embankments and correct upstream out-draft navigation safety concern.
  - B. 60 – 100 K cy of material will be removed 60 – 100 K cy of rock and sand will be returned.
  - C. Possible access – Trenton Island, City of Red Wing.
- D. Preliminary DPR will be out in the next couple of weeks – 65% design 6 weeks after DPR comes out.
- E. (Bill Howe) Would like to see 5% - 10% of new vegetation be berry type plants.
- F. Mitigation: ½ acre of MN waters adjacent to RWWL – construct 46 tree groins with 37 K cy dredge material. Five thousand cubic yards fine material will be needed. (Howe) would like to see turtle habitat promoted in the mitigation.
- G. Fish Passage Feasibility- EMP authorities are appropriate, \$348 K ARRA funds used for the study.

8. Waterways Council, Inc (Paul Roahde) [Attachment 87-4]

- A. Texas Transportation Institute has done an updated comparison between tow boats, trains and trucks.
- B. Current cost to tow boat operators in fuel surcharge for St. Louis to St. Paul and back is about \$13,000 the current proposal would increase that to \$70,000 +
- C. Olmstead Lock & Dam is an example of project that has cost more because of the time it has taken to do the work.

9. US FWS Mussel Listing Update (Delphey)

- A. Two listing packages are going forward
  - 1. Snuff box is proposed, rule will be in the Federal Register June 2010
  - 2. Spectaclecase and Sheepnose are proposed for the Federal Register October 2010
- B. The Sheepnose is scattered throughout the Mississippi River others are primarily in the St. Croix.

10. FWWG – Reach Planning Subgroup (Hendrickson) [Attachment 87-5]

- A. Floodplain Reach LD 13 – Twin Cities
- B. Geomorphic Reaches are smaller areas within a floodplain reach.
- C. Discussion – concern raised about getting Draft Project Proposals in and getting four projects decided by May 18<sup>th</sup>. EMP has to come up with new projects, there is a better understanding of the river than earlier planning. Low level stress between partnership, need to work through that stress so that all groups can live with outcome. Forum would be ready to endorse a list of

projects (not rank projects). Process should be accelerated but set up right to identify the best projects.

#### 11. WLM Task Force (Schlagenhaft)

- A. Pool 6 drawdown – River flows, normal project, recreational boaters, have had discussions with marinas. Winona Marina – 3 inches below what was there last year.
  - 1. Plan to go forward with the drawdown see if there are problems others on the MN side, no public meeting planned, mussel monitoring will go on. (Tapp) Gravel Point a concern, Below Winona R/R bridge hope it scours out once drawdown starts.
  - 2. May 15<sup>th</sup> earliest start date, not later than June 15<sup>th</sup>. (DeZellar) Media blitz is ready.
  - 3. (Zekus) Recommends outreach with Industry, Line Boats through a BNM, Notice to Mariners.
  - 4. (Tapp) To confirm timeline June 14<sup>th</sup> to start drawdown, full drawdown by June 30<sup>th</sup>, raise starting September 13<sup>th</sup> fully raised by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- B. Science Panel has come out with a report on Water Level Management – this info can be received from Barry Johnson or Ken Barr. It will be looked at as part of the reach planning process.
- C. If a Pool 2 drawdown were proposed how would residents hear about it? Mississippi Makeover has talked about it a drawdown tool was endorsed by them.

#### 12. MN Deputy Attorney General Concerning Asian Carp (Stephen Gunn)

- A. Yesterday U.S. Supreme Court decided that it will not act on current federal lawsuit.
- B. MN Attorney General's Office has taken a MN position suggesting a fish barrier at LD 11, have contacted Senator Klobuchar and Representative Walz.
- C. Report of 2007 MDNR – preventing Asian Carp in Minnesota.
- D. Current finding of US Supreme Court leaves Michigan to start the process in Federal Court in Illinois.
- E. Congress has appropriated \$ Millions to impact Carp problem
- F. What the Attorney General's Office would like to see done
  - 1. MERLA with MPCA staff of environmental, natural resources.
  - 2. Put together a forum to bring stakeholders together to produce proposals on how to prevent Asian Carp in MN.
  - 3. Where are breeding populations? Do we know how to go forward?
- G. (Tapp) Has FWWG looked at this? We will look at minutes.
- H. (Fischer) UMRCC – Fisheries Tech Section has a report out as well, WDNR has some info on the web, Corps has some info on the Web.
- I. (Wooden) There is an invitation to the MVD inter-coastal meeting – An Attorney and Agency rep may want to attend. Rebecca will keep the Attorney's Office in the loop. FWWG will look at Asian Carp status at their next meeting.

#### 13. EMP Update (DeZellar) [Handout 87-6]

- A. EMP \$21.15 Million in FY 11 is proposed
- B. Stage 3A still going forward complete by September 2010, Stage 3B award planned May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010 ARRA would be for C8.
- C. February 11<sup>th</sup> Fish Passage study DPR planned to come out.
- D. No new starts prohibition was lifted in February 2010.
  - 1. Three new fact sheets approved
  - 2. Five additional fact sheets are on the horizon getting them back up to speed.
- E. EMP report to Congress Due December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

- F. Project Evaluation Reports – Steve Clark is actively working on those reports.
- G. Dave Potter is the new St. Paul District liaison with LTRMP.
- H. (Powell) Island naming project – US FWS is having a contest to name nine stage 2 islands, judges are getting together tomorrow. Have projects that total \$90 Mil in pipeline total.
- I. (Fischer) Would like to thank voting members for endorsement of the LD 3 Fishway Feasibility report.

#### 14. NESP (DeZellar)

- A. “Our Mississippi” Newsletter passed out for reference
- B. Pool 2 wing dams – ready to go
- C. Forest Mgmt Plan – out for comment for a couple of months. Draft by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Are trying to figure our public input process.
- D. Reno Bottoms – PIR being revised then will be sent out to partners. Hydro-Geologic Modeling (HGM) has helped the effort.
- E. HGMP- effort sharing IDNR put a lot into that, working on Mississippi River between the Chippewa and the Wisconsin.
- F. LD 8 embankment lowering – PDT is wrestling with how to go forward.
- G. Two active Floodplain restoration plans
  - 1. Root River – Kick off meeting was held February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 with MDNR
  - 2. Pierce County Islands – not as far along, need to determine ordinary high water mark (OHW) (Hendrickson) working to create a paper to help identify OHW. (Fischer) would like a copy of what Rock Island District views as OHW may be in more line with WDNR view.
- H. (Benjamin) related to NESP- TNC, ASA and General Antwerp are going to China this summer there may be an opportunity to influence the people that can promote NESP. Construction General funding gets help from a Chief’s report not sure it will happen due to the cost / benefit ratio. Letter supporting NESP was signed by 7 out of 435 Representatives.
- I. (Walker) Cost benefit ratio so poor that the ASA is not forwarding the report. Izaak Walton League is asking for NESP to be de-authorized asking to convert restoration projects to EMP.

#### 15. Hydroelectric Projects Update (Bishoff) [Attachment 87-7]

- A. Discussion: (Benjamin) Drawdowns could be impacted by demand from hydroplants. WLM needs to be at the table when these permits are granted. (Fischer) Can operating plans include drawdowns? (Delphay) US FWS provides comments through DOI channels. (Hendrickson) Water control just went through the process – we can look at this and will have info for the next meeting.

#### 16. Misc

- A. (Samples) RAMSAR (designation as wetland of International Importance) event October 14, 2010 need reps from State Agencies and partners on steering committee. Reps are coming from Switzerland, important to have a say at the table.
- B. 10/10/10 public event hope to have 10 events, pictures and a website related to wetlands.

Steve Tapp  
Co-Chairman, RRF