

MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #88, August 24th & 25th, 2010

1. Introductions / Approve Minutes/ Meetings: A meeting of the River Resources Forum (RRF) was held on August 24th & 25th, 2010 at the Country Inn and Suites, Red Wing, MN. The meeting started with a bus ride and boat tour, the tour highlighted the Corps Island Unloading, upper embankment work at LD 3, navigation improvements at LD 3 and placement of material at the Red Wing Wildlife League. After lunch the meeting reconvened at the Country Inn and Suites.
Following introductions, the Minutes from RRF #87 were approved with no changes. The preferred location for the December meeting is Ft. Snelling State Park – if that is not available alternatives will be looked at. Dates for the next meeting are 7th & 8th of December.
2. Agency Activities: (Only the agencies listed below had significant information to report.)
 - A. WDNR (Fischer): Staff is doing zebra mussel sampling 7/7 and 8/11 are already complete, next round is 9/8. Lower dissolved oxygen is being found in sampling at LD 4 & LD 8, less than 4mg per liter. Chlorophyll samples on 7/7 were unusually low due to abundance of vegetation and zebra mussels.
Staff has been working on Pool 6 drawdown and Pool 8 islands. UMRBA: a hydropower ad-hoc group has been started and will be tracking hydropower projects on the UMR. Let Jim know if you would like to be on contact list.
Staff changes: Todd Aimes has left Bruce Baker will be taking over. Dan Bauman is the interim Deputy Water Division Administrator. DNR has approval to fill 144 positions state wide, most are federally funded.
 - B. WDOT (Kieck): No new applications for grants being accepted until August 1st, 2011. Brennen work is complete, grant has been closed out. Cassville: Ferry is about to go out for bid, run by FHWA only publicly run ferry in WI. Personnel: in 15 days Larry will be retirement eligible. No plans to leave yet.
 - C. MnDOT (Lambert): Bridges: Hastings has been awarded to Lunda, work will start this fall just short of \$120 Mil project. I-494 bridge is complete. St. Paul Park taking concrete out of center pier and right descending – CH should be contacted when done.
Current study is evaluating ability to take future pressure off of highways and railroads with container transport on barges. Currently 36 containers can fit on a standard barge. Not much container traffic north of Memphis at this time. With the Panama Canal getting larger Asian shipping will be more accessible.
 - D. MDNR (Wooden): Division of Waters transforming with merger will become Division of Ecological & Water Resources. UMRBA: Authorized a study for the Missouri River – MDNR is involved in scoping meeting 9/7 in Worthington. Dick Lambert will provide MN Tonnage to Rebecca. Upper States and lower states usually disagree MN supports navigation, hydropower, flood control and recreation. IA usually supports Recreation interests.
(Johnson) Mississippi Makeover covers 48,000 sq. mi. above Lake Pepin, need to create a site specific standard. A recent tour of Pool 3, Pool 5 and Spring Lake was held so group could compare and gather support of pool 2 – 4 studies and look at HREP projects in that area.

(Schwalbe) wants to make sure MN River folks are included in Upper Miss studies / planning. (Johnson) PCA is leading TMDL studies on the MN River and are working on TMDL for Pools 2-4. (Wilcox) MN River basin interagency study is going on right now – defining what actions can be taken. Terry Zien is the PM.

(Johnson) handed out MDNR Miss River boating guide 2010. (Machajewski) 8 ½ X 11” nav chart with aerials should be available spring 2011 copies should be available for all agencies. (Otto) LUAP online now, will be printed this fall.

- E. IDNR (Griffin): Bernie Hoyer has retired, Griffin is IDNR rep to the RRF. Richard Leopold has moved on to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Pat Boady who was UMRBA and EMPCC rep is now the acting director. A lot of openings 18 positions in wildlife now. Sustainable funding – on the ballot to get 3/8 of 1% the next time the legislature raises sales tax, still has to be passed. Both the RRF and RRCT river reaches have low dissolved oxygen levels this year. A lot of flooding throughout Iowa this year Maquokata river had a record flood 7 counties declared disaster area. IDNR is helping with vegetation monitoring on pools 5A and 10 for UMRCC, looking for candidates to help with that as well.
- F. UMWA (Genz): Ed Henleben still RIAC chair. Freeborn – Hydraulic study going forward. Freeborn needs to be easier to navigate; currently there are 3 boats waiting at LD 2. Need to have buoys removed at St. Paul Park Bridge.
- G. USCG (Zekus): USCG held meeting for recreation boaters at Red Wing – not a lot of turn out. Did a boat safety course as well, Coast Guard has put together an unofficial video to show what a pilot sees as they are navigating through Red Wing. They may do more videos in addition to Red Wing to get perspective. This year there were 30 commercial marine casualties in July. In 2009, there were 32 for the whole year – usually average 30 per year. There are 20 reservists out of St. Paul many have been going to New Orleans so they are losing their qualifications, means less presence on the water. No info readily available for the tow that was cross wise above Lansing – Brian will get back to the group.
- H. LMRWD (Schwalbe): Thanks to Dick Lambert and MnDOT the access road into Cargill East River placement site should be constructed by the end of the day. The Corps should have an updated design to prevent erosion and access the site from water by next year.
- I. MPCA (Mader): No filling of current positions, a proposal has passed that a retiree can get health coverage for two years if position is left open. Kimball has been replaced by Dan White there will be a lot of ripple down caused by that. The Commissioner plans on moving on with current Governor – so a new Commissioner will be appointed. Retirement date for Judy is November 1st, 2011 – she is hoping to find out who her replacement will be before that.
- K. Izaak Walton League (Walker): Letter sent from Izaak Walton League President to St. Paul District COE. (Col. Price) Stated the letter was received and Operations has the letter not sure when a response will be sent.
- L. FWS (Frietsche): Several employees were sent to the Gulf region to help with the oil spill. That is where Kevin Foerster is. Reminder of the RAMSAR October 14th.

- M. COE (Tapp): New commander started in July; Col. Price he is also attending today's RRF so if you haven't had an opportunity to visit with him please take the time to do so. The District Office move has taken place. Eau Galle had record setting rain recently – no structural damage but recreation areas impacted.
Working on regional dredging plan – all 6 districts on the Mississippi River are working together to assess what resources are available and how to use those resources to accomplish goals.

3. Channel Maintenance Program Activities

- A. Discussed Dredging Schedule (Cottrell): Pulled off some channel maintenance dredging due to high water conditions. CH has to evaluate effectiveness of dredging when flows are this high. Dredge Goetz is scheduled to be in Rock Island District by September 1st. Government Mechanical currently dredging at Boulanger Bend – special thanks to those on the OSIT that worked through the challenges to get us permission and changed process so we could access dredge there. Government Mechanical has been used for time contingent jobs – like placement site preparation. This is Newt Marine's last year on their contract – Dan will be working on a new contract in the fall that will go to bid in the winter.
MN River is up three feet as of yesterday 8/23. Both mechanical dredging contract plants are expected to stay busy up until November 1st.
Cannon River / RWWL – there are still issues with permits and real estate not able to do work there yet.
- B. Placement Site Activities and other items (Machajewski): Carter Slough structure to be capped with material. Dan K. is working on lower pool 4 study – looking at some land based areas to purchase approx. 350 acres. Pine Bend and Lower Boulanger placement sites reshaping and access dredging currently being done. Fisher Island unloading started July 20th there are approx. 688,000 cubic yds to unload. Red Wing commercial harbor site will be reconfigured in 2011. (Wilcox) The lower embankment material will be going there.
Mooring Buoy – new kevels have not been installed yet.

4. Reach Planning Update (Hendrickson / Reid)

- A. January 2010 the team selected thirty-five projects – a mix of EMP / NESP projects – that list was narrowed down to 15 by June 22nd. July 2010 FWWG reviewed the reach plan and projects for a new start. Reaches are defined as 1- Above Pepin, 2- Lake Pepin, 3- Pepin to Wisconsin River, 4 – Wisconsin River down. July 15th FWWG narrowed list to ten projects and four projects were chosen – listed in order of priority: 1- Upper Iowa River Delta, 2- Lower Pool 2, 3- Upper / Lower Zumbo River Delta, 4- Lower Pool 13.
Upper Iowa: Channelized with high sediment loads. Management actions would distribute channel restoration, land management changes and provide backwater dredging.
Lower Pool 2: Desired physical conditions were not met in the reach. Management action would include Spring Lake, Lower Impounded area, Baldwin Lake and Lake Rebecca.

5. Endorsements (Tapp / Hendrickson)

- A. (Tapp) The Pool 3 Stogdill Pit and Pool 5 Re-vegetation / Small Scale dredging proposals were endorsed via e-mail on July 29, 2010.
- B. Reach Plan / Upper impounded reach

1. In the Upper Impounded Reach Plan is a proposal to restore the rapids in Geomorphic Reach 1. This would include closing of commercial navigation from LD 1 though USAF Pool. The MDNR and Izaak Walton League are concerned about upriver migration of Asian Carp.
2. (Tapp): After meeting with Senior Leaders it is the Corps position to maintain a balanced approach within existing laws and mandates. Proposed language was passed around it said:

St. Paul District Position on Reach Plan Endorsement

Endorsement of a project or plan by the River Resources Forum (RRF) provides substantial credibility and a collective agency support for the activity as it proceeds through the final approval and implementation process. When endorsing an effort such as the Reach Plan, the RRF must consider the multiple resources and values that exist on the river. The RRF's Partnering Agreement and Operating Procedures are based on a balanced approach to river resource management that is in the best interest of the public at large. Recommendations must be within the framework of existing laws and legislative mandates. From that perspective, the RRF endorses the Reach Plan with the exception of the rapids restoration feasibility study in Geomorphic Reach 1.

3. Discussion of proposed language: (Frietsche): Where does endorsement go? To the NESP project mgmt team then to the NECC. The NECC could put the project back in. (Wilcox): In 2003 FWWG included rapids restoration in the pool plans; the RRF endorsed the plans without endorsing the Pool 1 rapids restoration. (Wooden): The MDNR has had significant internal discussion and disagreement regarding the rapids restoration project in Pool 1, and the discussion has been elevated to the Commissioner's office, which determined the project could be submitted after being redrafted as a feasibility study proposal. Since MDNR votes on behalf of the other agencies, if MDNR is for the proposal, MPCA is neutral, and MnDOT is opposed, MDNR will abstain. One of the issues with the proposal is that the NESP authorization in WRDA 2007 requires NESP projects to be consistent with the purposes of navigation. The Rapids Restoration project involves removal of LD1, which would end navigation above this point. (Fischer): What created MO River Feasibility Study? (DeZellar): Congress authorized NESP in WRDA, but required it to be consistent with navigation. (Genz): Could make a canal and restore rapids. (Lambert): NESP was created to increase efficiency of navigation then this directly opposes navigation, Upper and Lower locks would be useless. (Johnson): Talked to Tim Schlagenhaft and Dan Dieterman system plan should be created before reach plans, then adjusted to fit system plans. (Hendrickson): Chuck Spitzak has advised to do reach plans first then do system plan, learning as we go want Reach Plan endorsement, or with caveats so Upper Iowa Project can go forward.

4. *With the above language the RRF endorsed the Reach Plan for the Upper Impounded Reach. MDNR abstained from voting.*

C. Upper Iowa Delta Project

1. After a short discussion the RRF endorsed the FWWG recommendation to support the Upper Iowa River Delta Project in Pool 9 as a new start under NESP in Fiscal Year 2010 and the Lower Pool 2 Project as a back-up if problems develop getting the Upper Iowa project going.

Adjourn for day at 5:20 PM

6. EMP (DeZellar)

- A. Portable Barge is finishing up Stage 3A part of Pool 8 Islands, it is 80% complete as of now and scheduled to be finished by September. JF Brennen is working on Stage 3B, work timeframe is July 2010 to Sept 2011. Financed by ARRA should be done with Pool 8 work by Sept 2011. Public informational meeting was held 8/4 in Stoddard, WI 50 citizens attended. A lot of criticisms related to vegetation and other river issues. There is a public boat trip scheduled for next Monday 8/30 last year 300 people attended. Expect same volume this year if weather is good. Will be videotaped at Wildcat landing and posted on facebook.
- B. LD 3 fish passage feasibility study definite project report was funded under EMP ARRA funds. The public meeting for fishway project had 15 people in attendance. Dan Wilcox and Ron Benjamin were there and did a good job explaining the proposed project.
- C. Definite project report for Capoli Slough is coming on line. Cost engineering is taking longer because it has been farmed out to Walla Walla District. Estimated \$8-10 Mil cost 2-3 years of St. Paul District allotment. Hopefully we will start obligating in FY 11.
- D. Rock Island has had challenges on meeting schedules for the Odessa project.
- E. Harpers Sough is next with a similar magnitude to Capoli.
- F. Eight fact sheets down to Division for approval a decade of projects will be in the pipeline once factsheets are approved.
- G. FY 11 – President’s budget is \$21.15 Mil, House \$21.15 Mil, Senate \$19 Mil - \$3.4 Mil is St. Paul portion.
- H. FY11 Work Plan – Capoli slough DPR in by 12/10 work on specs, contract award by end of FY11. Harper slough review by spring of 2011
- I. Evaluation reports – The Guttenburg waterfowl Ponds Report is nearly done. We plan to complete seven more evaluation reports this FY, but District resources are competing with the big Fargo-Moorhead and Devils Lake projects. Thanks to all agencies that have helped with the six HREP completion reports done in 2004 and to those helping with the evaluation reports that we are currently working on.

7. NESP (DeZellar)

- A. For construction the budget is \$0 and has been for eight years. House has \$1 Mil in budget Senate has \$4 Mil.
- B. ASA CW Ms. Darcy – position on Chiefs report is it will not be forwarded to OMB – until that happens cannot be budgeted. Ecosystem part is not at conflict. Navigation side is what is holding it up. Cost / Benefit Ratio is below 1. Hoping to show an intermodal comparison – Inland Waterways Trust Fund has its lowest funding in recent years. (Benjamin) Water Resources Development Act – no wording to change Inland Waterways Trust Fund.
- C. (Walker) The Act calls for the removal of any obligation to the barge industry for dams, removal of anything under \$100 Mil for locks. If this proposal goes through the barge industry would not pay any money for use of the river between the Twin Cities and the Quad Cities.
- D. Forest Management plan is going through editor this week then will go to NECC after team review. Root River feasibility / cost share with MDNR. H&H has created a 2D model and peer review has occurred. Pool 2 wing dam project has been approved and is ready for construction, Elliott is PM. LD 8 embankment lowering project will be a challenge, Elliott is PM on this project as well.
- E. Public Info Front: “Our Mississippi” has been very popular 30K copies have been printed. ASA Darcy likes it and Secretary of the Army has a copy.
- F. Continuing Resolution effects: could possibly be all year = \$16.5 Mil EMP, \$6.2 Mil NESP, Division is hesitant if mark ups are showing \$0.

G. Root River: TNC & FWS funding a geomorphic study related to this area.

8. FWWG (Reid)

- A. Thanks to the Forum for endorsing Project yesterday.
- B. FWWG met July 15th, Dennis Anderson gave update of small scale dredging and placement. Slow progress due to steep learning curve with equipment continued to improve. Weaver concerns old planning should used.
- C. Elliott Stefanik is new chair of the FWWG – Elliott plans to work on Asian Carp issue.
- D. (Wooden) Rebecca and Terry Birkenstock had a meeting in June related to Asian Carp. A useful product would be a list of actions that could be taken, USGS should be involved. One page bullets list could be accomplished by FWWG. More of what could work here – bring it up to Fish Tech Section of UMRCC. Wisconsin / Minnesota concern for moving up the St. Croix River, Pool 9 has Big Head Carp, Pool 11 has Silver Carp. Griffin will get the topic on the UMRCC Fish Tech agenda. Elliott will coordinate an Info paper from FWWG for the December Forum meeting with possible action items.
(Lambert): Can the carp be slowed down with putting barriers at locks? There could be some value to apply for ARRA for funding.
(Kieck): Try acoustic bubble barrier at locks – currently being tried on the Illinois River.
- E. Small scale dredging – (Johnson) small scale dredging is showing slow progress. (Otto) \$176K allocated costs only \$5K a week is there another method to try? Mechanical would be more efficient if possible. A conference call is scheduled in September for Subgroup.
- F. Newsletter – Ruth Nissen has done draft, examples passed around there will be changes. Comments to Ruth, Lisa or Elliott
- G. Thanks to Lisa Reid for her time as Chair of the FWWG. Welcome to Elliott Stefanik as new Chair.

9. WLMTF (Stefanski)

- A. Drawdown (DD) hit 1' drop by July 1st – went up August 9th back down to DD by the 20th.
- B. Initial estimate of acreage exposed was 500 – 1000 acres lower portion is showing about 180 acres.
- C. A lot of challenges to overcome special thanks to Mark Anderson, Dick Otto, Paul Machajewski, Kevin Ressie, Bryan Peterson, Scot Johnson, Tim Schlagenhaft, Terry Jessesky, Kevin Kenow, Teresa Newton, Dan Kelner, Mike Davis, Brian Lubinski, Jeff DeZellar and Scott Jutila. Along with all the supervisors that are supporting this will people and the behind the scenes co-workers. It has been a huge team effort.
- D. Approximately \$26K has been spent by the US FWS that wasn't anticipated on two projects to make sure DD could continue forward.
- E. On the weekly WLMTF conference call it was discussed whether to end the drawdown early – a consensus could not be reached so it has been brought to the forum for a decision.
 - 1. (Otto) Recommended to end the drawdown soon, there is a lot of vegetation riverwide, Sunset Bay Marina is basically closed to navigation. 400 tons of vegetation has been removed, the owner has paid \$1.2K for chemical treatment and another \$6K for harvester, the dock spud poles are crooked; she states it will be 3 weeks of work for 3 people to straighten them. Since Monday Dick has talked to internal Corps folks and the proposal is to start a ½ foot raise soon and raise it another ½ foot by Friday before Labor Day. Understanding with current flow conditions the DD may be over by that Friday anyway.

2. (Fischer) Jim has talked to Mark Anderson and WDNR is seeing high vegetation state wide, Scott Provost is seeing it in lakes. Docks problems may or may not be related to the drawdown his concern is an early end may be an admission of guilt and open up the Corps to liability.
3. (Mader) other DDs have not made it this far so would like to see whether or not there is a noticeable difference. (Johnson) Agrees that it may admit guilt if quit early. (Stefanski) Likely not to get a drawdown next year so longer would be better.
4. (Otto) Raising water back up shouldn't be seen as an admission of guilt more of a good will offering. Corps looks at the river as a multi-use resource and recreation is one of those resources.
5. (DeZellar) Jeff has checked with Damon Roberts for Corps office of Counsel and he doesn't think a claim is likely and wouldn't be successful if someone filed one.
6. (Lambert) Could some of the issues be addressed without stopping drawdown? For example removing logs and resetting docks. (Johnson) Were spud poles crooked before DD? (Otto) no.
7. (Otto) Would still like to reduce DD by ½ foot of water for a week pending no rain.
8. (Benjamin) none of the DDs have reached 90 days there is value to try and continue and go up a ½ foot if needed.

F. After a brief recess Status of Discussion by voting members:

MDNR, MnDOT, MPCA (Wooden): Maintain DD for as long as possible

WDNR (Fischer): Maintain as long as possible

FWS (Frietsche): Maintain as long as possible

IDNR (Griffin): Would go with ending early

Corps (Otto): Came to the forum to try and get consensus and were unable to do so, the Corps will discuss internally and make a decision based on regulations and responsibilities.

FWS (Frietsche): Reiterated the decision should be made with the partnership in mind.

Corps (Col. Price): Has been briefed on Otto suggestion and that is the way he would go.

9. Modifying Corps Operating Plans (Tapp)

A. No work has been done researching that, he will follow up on it.

B. (Fischer) There is some urgency based on current hydroplant interest. (Mader) Freeflow Power is hosting a meeting in the Twin Cities and in September there is a meeting in Illinois, there is a conference call in ability if unable to attend.

10. RWG (Berg)

A. There is a meeting this Friday with Barry Drazkowski – St. Mary's University in reference to the 2007 Rec Boating study website they will not be hosting it any longer.

B. Recreation Beach Management Plans – See Handout, Beach planning article in River Connections. Hope to complete plans for 4, 5, 5A, 6, 9 and 10 this winter and endorse at April RRF meeting.

C. Boating studies were done 1989 to early 2000's, maybe should be done on a 5 year cycle? Or we could repeat the mail back surveys from 2003 that could be a more cost effective route.

D. In the beach management plans there is the recommendation to increase habitat not just develop more beaches. (Otto) recommends writing in environmental features rather than just recreation.

E. For the next RRF meeting the forum would like the RWG to come back with a cost and priorities of Beach planning and Rec boating studies. (Otto) Said adding the environmental features helps identify funding since it is very clear for Corps funding what is environmental – recreation is lot hazier and harder to obtain.

F. (Tapp) Going forward we need to implement beach plans not just shelve them.

G. (Johnson) OREIT of the UMRCC is meeting 25th – 26th of October at Back Home State Park in IA.

H. (Stefanski) Winona State University has approached the FWS about conducting a survey 200+ sociology students are available.

10. Open Discussion

Steve Tapp
Co-Chairman, RRF