

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #89, December 7 & 8, 2010

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- Navigation- final walk through of the lower embankment work in October
- Water quality- John Sullivan has finalized annual light monitoring
 - This has been in process since 1988 (locks 8 and 9)
 - Light penetration has been very good the past two years and might be a reason for the high amounts of floating vegetation in 2010
- Fish and Wildlife Work Group (FWWG) Restoration newsletter being worked on by Ruth Nissen- copies have been printed and the document is in final draft

Agency Activities- USFWS (Tony Sullins)

- In the final phase of biological opinion pertaining to the La Crosse Railroad Bridge replacement
- Working on the Dresbach Bridge highway project
- Pete Fasbender is joining Tony Sullins' team (workforce)
- Bill Thrune is retiring from the La Crosse District

Agency Activities- MDNR (Scot Johnson / Rebecca Wooden)

- Rebecca Wooden is transitioning into the Trails and Parks Division
- MDNR is awaiting the outcome of election, as a new commissioner will be selected
- Scot Johnson spoke of Lake Pepin TMDL, which has experienced 32 mg/L parts per million with a target of 21% frequency
 - A standard is to be developed pertaining to TMDL of Lake Pepin

Agency Activities- MPCA (Judy Mader)

- Agency is offering early retirement proposals, 21 individuals took the buyout option
 - Part of the buyout agreement is to leave the position open for 2-3 years
- Both Judy's section manager and the Agency's deputy director are taking the early retirement option at the end of June (2011)

Agency Activities- MnDOT (Dick Lambert)

- Sent out notes for early buyouts

- 450 (9%) of MnDOT employees will be retiring in the next 6-8 months
- Planning for backfill is uncertain

Agency Activities- LMRWD (Terry Schwalbe)

- Still working on resolution to combine project authorizations for the Minnesota River and Mississippi River into one authorization, which would reduce funding issues on the Minnesota River
- Experiencing a significant decrease in district funding
 - Budget was approved at last LMRWD meeting
- Didn't receive response from certain agencies regarding the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District's 3rd Generation Watershed Management Plan
 - Corresponded with those agencies to gain feedback
 - Deadline for comments has passed, but they will still be accepted if received soon

Agency Activities- UMWA (Greg Genz)

- Experienced somewhat of a rotten year- too much high water caused a loss of 2.5 weeks in September
 - In crosscurrents the Colonel addressed that normal isn't normal anymore
- All Tows refused to navigate Pool 2 in the dark toward the end of the season due to difficulty/risk
- Revealed UMWA interest pertaining to the status of the by-pass study

Agency Activities- USCG (Brian Zekus)

- 80% increase in casualties (groundings and/or allisions) this year- increased from a 3 year average of ~30% (doesn't include bump and go's)
- There were a total of 54 casualties this year
 - 26% casualties occurred in Pool 2
- Stressed the fact that tows are required to contact the USCG for all bridge allisions; and all other allisions if the damage is more than \$25,000
 - Lisa Lund stated that Lock and Dam allisions are not currently being forwarded to the USCG, going forward Lisa will compare the Lock and Dam allision list to the USCG allision list

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- Jerry Stalder has retired as Operations Manager of Locks and Dams
- Dick Otto is retiring in the near future and was presented with a letter from the RRF recognizing his many contributions to the forum

- LTC Kendall Bergmann has been named as the new Deputy Commander for the St. Paul District
- LUAP is almost finalized
 - The document will be printed by the end of December, an email will be sent out to verify the quantity of copies needed
- Lock and Dam 10 dewatering is underway, lock will be closed until 3/15/2011

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Paul Machajewski and Dan Cottrell)

- Boulanger Slough- draft problem and appraisal report to be finalized in April 2011
- Corps Island- contractor is still hauling as of today and will be roughly 50% complete by the end of the week
 - Moving ~18,000 cy of material per week
 - LS Marine will resume work on 4/25/11
- Red Wing Wildlife League- the bank stabilization and shoreline reclamation mitigation is going to be offered to the Lock and Dam 3 contractor
 - The mitigation will be included in the contract and will likely be offered within the next few weeks
- Cut 5- still in the “evaluation stage” within the Corps
 - The EA is almost complete
- Fisher Island Excavation- a berm was maintained along the outside of the placement site to separate the site from US Navigable Waters
 - This is a USCG requirement for a foreign company, as the contractor (Graham Construction) is a Canadian organization
 - Graham Construction is currently done for the season, equipment is stored both on Fisher Island and at the West Newton Chute site
 - To date, 114,000 cy of material has been removed and overall production has been poor
- Paper Navigation Charts- draft expected to be concluded in February with an industry review, distribution anticipated in the spring
- Shallow Draft Dredging Team- Steve Tapp has participated in a lot of the planning (Memphis district is heading the operation)
 - Planning for regionalization of dredging operations to increase efficiencies

Lock and Dam 3 Update (Dan Wilcox-COE)

- Lower Embankment:
 - In October there was an interagency meeting, a decision was made to reduce the footprint- agencies were pleased
 - The trees in the spillway have yet to be cleared
 - Delayed due to high water

- Bald Eagle surveys will be done in the spring with the MDNR
- Building landing sites at Red Wing and the lower spillway
- (Greg Genz) “the contractor will not be doing any work on the lower embankment this winter, there have been two allisions on the new lock wall (both northbound)”
- Upper Embankment:
 - Delayed due to high water
 - Resumed operations on 8 November
 - Completed sheet pile driving
 - In the process of excavation, bedding, and riprap
 - August 2011 completion anticipated
- Navigation Improvements:
 - Pipe pile driving is almost complete
 - Started placing pre-cast concrete on pilings
 - Channel modifications (dredging and rock fill) have been delayed, resumed 12/7/2010
 - Working on extending flow restriction to 25,000 cfs
 - Red Wing Wildlife League- agreements are in place, will modify contract to perform this work rather than M&R / Mechanical Contractor dredging
- Fish Passage Feasibility Study:
 - Planning under authority of EMP HREP study
 - PAR was completed in June/July
 - Anticipate DPR to send out the draft feasibility report EA for agency and public review in January and hope to have a final report in February

Draft TMDL (Norm Senjem-MPCA)

- TMDL Components: WLA + LA + MOS + RC
 - Waste load allocation, load allocation, margin of safety, reserve capacity
- Covering Lock and Dam 1-4 (largest watershed that’s been covered in a study within the District)
 - LD1 and LD4 are below standard, LD2 and LD3 are well above standard
- 32 mg/L is the seasonal average at Lock and Dam 2 & 3
- Mississippi Makeover- reduce total suspended solids (TSS) re-suspension through projects such as island development
 - Phase 1 plan is a 25% reduction
- The preliminary draft was released on 10/28/2010, revised draft to be provided on 1/3/2011, the final draft is anticipated in May 2011
- The study is funded by a federal and non-federal cost sharing program

NESP (Jeff DeZellar-COE)

- There aren't any NESP dollars in the President's budget
 - The house markup is \$1 million, and the senate markup is \$4 million
 - These are the lowest levels witnessed thus far
- The system forestry plan is out for public review
- The Reno forestry pilot study will be out September 2011
- There is a lack of political support in regards to NESP- experiencing program obstacles
- NESP has been removed from the RRF 90 agenda unless there is a significant change

EMP (Jeff DeZellar- COE)

- Pool 8 Islands:
 - Stage 3A Islands are substantially complete
 - Stage 3B Islands will take one more year of construction
 - Project is currently shut down for the winter
- Capoli Slough:
 - Major ongoing efforts
 - Draft definite project report was sent out a couple weeks ago
 - Dennis Anderson is the Project Manager
 - Final definite project report to be completed by March 2011
 - \$3 million has been set aside for construction
 - Contract award is anticipated before September 2011
- Harpers Slough:
 - Wisconsin / Iowa project
 - The draft DPR is anticipated to be out before the end of FY11
 - Hope to award a contract in FY12
 - Construction may begin during Capoli construction, or after the completion of Capoli, depending on funding
- Lock and Dam 3 Fish Passage:
 - Refer to previous section under "LD3 Update"
- Four new projects being initiated in FY11, with \$20,000 per project as the forecasted allocation to begin planning:
 - North and Sturgeon Lakes (Pool 3)- Jeff DeZellar will be the Project Manager
 - McGregor Lake (Pool 10)
 - Lake Winneshiek (Pool 9)
 - Conway Lake (Pool 9)
- New review requirements, in response to Katrina:
 - District QC internal review once the draft is out
 - Agency Technical Review to be completed up to four times by external PDT; ATR takes the place of Independent Technical Review (ITR)

WLMTF (Mary Stefanski- FWS)

- November 9th Meeting:
 - Most agencies agreed that there shouldn't be a Pool 6 drawdown in 2011
 - The task force will put together sub-committees for Pool 3 and Pool 8 drawdowns (most likely to be conducted in 2013)
 - Dan Kelner and Teresa Newton will continue reporting on mussel studies throughout the winter, Kevin Kenow will compile a vegetation report
- Pool 6 drawdown:
 - 2003- 1st attempt
 - 2004- concerns over recreational access were reviewed
 - 2010- river conditions finally cooperated, which took a summer of record rainfall
 - 6/18- the drawdown began
 - 8/25- decision was made at RRF 88 to end the drawdown by Labor Day
 - 9/3- reached normal pool levels
 - 180 acres were exposed in the lower pool
 - 500 copies of informative brochures pertaining to the Pool 6 drawdown were printed and distributed
 - Sunset Bay Marina: Trempealeau, WI
 - Dredging was completed in the marina in June by Newt Marine- material was placed at Homer
 - Buoys were realigned within the marina on July 2nd
 - On August 6th, high-school students were hired to rake vegetation out of the marina- unsuccessful process
 - On August 20th a harvester was hired to remove the vegetation
 - Tim Schlagenhaft and Scot Johnson completed Pool 6 Photo Stations to portray the results of the drawdown
 - Kevin Kenow began monitoring the vegetation in Pool 6 on August 13th
 - Mussel Study Results:
 - Estimated mortality during the drawdown ranged from 25% (unrestricted movement) to 60% (restricted movement)
 - Estimates of natural mortality within the control areas was 5%
- Corps Proposal on Water Level Management
 - Corps addressed the impacts of advanced maintenance to the Channel Maintenance program- funding and long term site planning
 - Pool regulation and regional policies also need to be considered
 - Tim Schlagenhaft questioned whether or not we could find a middle ground, if there was a possibility to experiment by managing water at lower depths for a certain number of years and complete studies
 - Concerned there won't be a programmatic effort to manage pools with more frequent drawdowns

- The Corps responded stating their commitment to working with the WLM team in order to find a way to move forward, future drawdowns will be determined on a case-by-case basis
- Steve Tapp commented that we would look into it and rely on Jon Hendrickson's expertise considering budget constraints
- Jon Hendrickson stated that there has been a 10% increase in dredging throughout Pool 8 and a 80% increase in dredging throughout Pool 5 over a three year period
- Bruce Boldon stated that prohibitions make it difficult to reallocate funds for things such as drawdowns
- Jeff DeZellar felt that alternatives in finding a way forward need to be broader than the COE budget
- Tim Schlagenhaft responded, stating that if funding is available, he feels there is a need to move forward with more frequent drawdowns- possibly through the use of EMP funds for supplemental dredging
 - Don Powell responded by stating that we had put together a draft fact sheet that was tabled for NESP taking over the WLM program
 - Jeff DeZellar commented that if WLM came out as an EMP program it would most likely be 20 years down the road, or displacement of other projects would have to occur
 - Tim Schlagenhaft stated that agencies need to better portray the vast ecological benefits provided

USFWS ESA- Mussel Listings (Phil Delphey- FWS)

- Snuffbox- 11/2/2010 proposed a rule to list as endangered, will likely be on the list by November, 2011
 - Throughout the St. Paul District, found in the St. Croix River only
- Spectaclecase- January 2011, will propose a rule to list as endangered
 - Throughout the St. Paul District, found in the St. Croix River only
- Sheepnose- January 2011, will propose a rule to list as endangered
 - Throughout the St. Paul District, found in the St. Croix River near Prescott, some areas of the Mississippi River, and the Chippewa River
- Section 7 consultation- Corps needs to complete pertaining to the Operations and Maintenance of the 9' Channel Project

Navigation Work Group (Paul Machajewski- COE)

- A local marina in Red Wing, MN would like to extend their dock 30 feet into the channel
 - WDNR denied the permit to extend the dock, marina is fighting the denial which will go to the courts for a decision

- There has been a request for formal comments to be sent to Ed Henleben (RIACC) by Brian Zekus (USCG)- UMWA initiated the response
- NESP has funding this year to continue looking at barge fleeting areas, the team has been using the template developed by the NWG
 - O&M funds are available in FY11 to look at a permanent cell design for lock waiting
- MN / WI are alternating bridge costs to provide equitable means of bridge modifications
- MnDOT is looking at bridge construction in Stillwater, MN, that has been tabled by the NPS
 - John Anfinson stated that the NPS tabled the construction under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
 - In order to continue construction, Congress would have to approve a nation-wide change within the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
- NWG has a need to identify beaches and inform industry to affirm they are aware

FWWG (Elliott Stefanik- COE)

- Asian Carp:
 - The wet year that we have experienced is suitable for the movement of fish
 - However, there have been very few additional sightings of Carp (Silver or Bighead) within the St. Paul District in 2010
 - Limited construction of barriers, concentrating on education
 - FWWG spoke with the MDNR on using USAF and LSAF as a fish barrier
 - USGS in La Crosse has been involved in biocide research
 - The FWS has been focused primarily on the Illinois River
 - John Anfinson commented that Stanley Consultants is compiling a report on the feasibility of using the Coon Rapids Dam as a barrier to Asian Carp
- Work Group Newsletter- River Connections:
 - The FWWG agreed that there was value and need for an informative newsletter
 - The FWWG, WLMTF, NWG, RWG, and OSIT summaries will all be included within the content of the newsletter
 - The letter will be specific to the St. Paul District- produced twice annually
 - The letter will target the general public and be produced by the WDNR (Ruth Nissen is the lead)- distribution anticipated this winter
- The FWWG also prioritized the EMP new starts for FY11

RWG (Kevin Berg- COE)

- Pool 3- the town of Diamond Bluff requested more material for Sea Wing
 - Possible that this is done in conjunction with the Corps Island excavation- likely OSIT late winter

- Greg Genz referenced a comment at RRF88 about keeping boaters off the St. Croix, and was curious as to why Pool 2 beach planning isn't a higher priority
 - Kevin Berg responded that the point Greg made is good and similar circumstances are prevalent throughout the District, the RWG will need to evaluate implementation strategies in Pool 2 and other pools
 - Scot Johnson stated that one significant difference in Pool 2 relative to others is the lack of public land
- Don Powell commented on the benefits of providing information to the public on beach planning efforts
- Kevin Berg stated that the RWG needs to discuss implementation of informing the public, whether having local interest groups, etc. Don presented the option of using "River Connections" or "Our Mississippi"
- The RWG plans to meet in early January to determine a timetable for the completion of priority items
- Kevin Berg mentioned revisiting the Recreation Boating Study information and developing an implementation plan based on a five year timeframe
 - Greg Genz stated that it might be good to include a broad timeframe, as five years, to include exogenous variables such as significant economic downturns (2008), where recreational boating significantly declined

UMRCC Update (Scot Johnson- MDNR)

- Increased outreach of education, recreation, and environmental interpretation
- Currently have a plan to put a work group together to provide a web page/PowerPoint
- Work group item pertaining to boating information and location of beaches has been put together
- Canoe/kayak trails are offered under the outreach, recreation, environmental education, and interpretation technical (OREIT) section of the UMRCC website

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF