

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #90, April 26, 2011

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #89 were approved
- Next Forum: August 23-24, location to be determined

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- Matt Maroney is the new deputy director, Scott Gunderson is now the executive assistant, Al Shea is in a newly created position in the secretary's office, and Pat Stevens is new to the DNR in the air and waste division
- Terry Dukershein will be retiring June 17th
- Gretchen Benjamin's position (Mississippi River Team Leader) is still vacant, this position will be combined with Terry's to fill one vacancy
- Six division administrators have been appointed
- The organizational structure has now changed, it is now straight-lined to Madison
- There is 20% vacancy department wide

Agency Activities- WDOT (Ron Adams and Larry Kieck)

- There is a new secretary, deputy director, and bureau director
- The Government's next bi-annual budget reveals an increase in funding for the WDOT
- Solicited three year plans on 4/1, \$70 million of needs were identified through 13 agencies

Agency Activities- MnDOT (Dick Lambert)

- Originally told there would be 450 retirements by June, 415 is the actual number
 - Believe there is a plan to fill vacancies
 - Providing two years of paid medical premiums as an incentive to retire
- Don't anticipate getting any funding for port development even though \$65 million of needs have been identified
- Could possibly be Dick's last year before retirement, going into his fourth year being rehired part time after initial retirement was reached (5 years is the maximum term)

Agency Activities- MPCA (Judy Mader)

- The governor appointed a new commissioner, Paul Aasen who comes to the Agency from MCEA

- Commissioner Aasen appointed a new deputy commissioner, John Linc Stine, and a new assistant commissioner, Michelle Beeman
- The previous deputy commissioner, Tim Scherkenbach, was then assigned to special projects until his retirement date of June 30
- Vacancies are currently being held open and nothing will be done on potential re-organization of the agency until after the legislative session
- 15 more buy-outs are anticipated by the end of June
- Determined the permitting process was too long- legislature passed a bill that said the time frame should be 150 days (one month shorter)

Agency Activities- USFWS (Phil Delphey and Rick Frietsche)

- Witnessing an increase in term positions due to fiscal reasons
- Hired an assistant field supervisor to work out of the office
- Working on a new utility (power) line crossing near La Crosse
- Working with the DOT on potential impacts of a new Winona Bridge
- Working on the I-90 bridge replacement project and potential impacts
- Wildlife biologist position at headquarters closes on Friday
- Rick's job is currently being advertised
- Kendra Niemik is the new District Manager working with Jim Nissen- she will be joining in June

Agency Activities- USCG (Brian Zekus)

- Captain Hudson will be leaving in July and will be replaced by Captain Byron Black
- In the process of moving their office from Fort Snelling to Bloomington
- Currently there are several deployments to the Red River and St. Louis
 - Red River will likely be wrapping up in the next week, uncertain about St. Louis
- Recreational boating safety video has been compiled- wasn't as professionally done as hoped and there are several USCG policies that still need to be implemented
 - Employee tasked with the video will continue working on it when they return from the Red River
- Mentioned the USGS gage being off, Jon Hendrickson confirmed the USGS and COE have been working on discharge measurements
 - Steve confirmed to follow up with Kevin Baumgard regarding the issue

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Brad Parsons is the new fisheries management supervisor out of St. Paul
- Scot Johnson has taken a two year mobility assignment in ground water
 - Dan has assumed his field responsibilities
- Asian Carp monitoring and action plan has been a high priority

- Commercial fisherman caught another Asian Carp at the mouth of the St. Croix

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- Terry Branstad is the new governor of Iowa
- Roger Landy has been confirmed as the new director for the IDNR- as of last week
 - Former director moved to the USFWS

Agency Activities- NPS (John Anfinson)

- May 4th Lake Pepin TMDL
- Last week was the Mississippi River Forum meeting- provided a report of a 30 year data analysis on several different pollutants
- Minnesota City council passed two resolutions pertaining to action on the Asian Carp dilemma

Agency Activities- UMWA (Greg Genz)

- Industry view on Asian Carp issues- using the Minneapolis locks to control carp
 - Not seen as a good idea through the eyes of industry
 - Lock and Dam 19 is thick with Carp, there is a need to use it as a barrier
 - Asian Carp is seen as a Federal problem, the states aren't able to solve it alone
- Navigation on the rivers
 - Record stages on the Mississippi near Memphis, there is talk of blowing the levees in that area
 - Locks 13-24 are all closed at the moment
 - MN River is most likely opening for loading on Friday 4/29

Agency Activities- LMRWD (Terry Schwalbe)

- Signed an agreement to work on an Eagle Creek restoration project with the MDNR
 - 3800' of restoration
- Signed an agreement with the City of Chaska to restore a seminary fen
- Hennepin County has 11 WMO's under the Watershed District's jurisdiction, would like to see consolidation of watersheds
- Stated the LMRWD was established for one reason, the COE Navigation Project, and this issue isn't being addressed in the consolidation

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- Flooding preparation- met with over 60 communities to provide technical assistance
 - Preparing for the worst, Locks and Dams did sandbagging in preparation
- Currently all the locks in MVP are open, upper three locks were closed for a while

- Navigation season started March 31, 2011
- There was a grounding in Pool 2, significantly outside the navigation channel
- Industry is highly concerned about Pool 2
- There is a request from the MDNR to dig a side channel downstream of Reads Landing
 - COE will look into this with the OSIT this year
- March 8th Colonel Price signed a restrictive firewood policy to prevent the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer
- Zach has been hired on as a permanent employee

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Dan Cottrell and Zach Kimmel)

- Hope to have two survey boats out next week completing condition surveys
- Anticipate the traditional areas in Pools 2 and 4 to have significant dredging needs
- The Warner's Landing OSIT is tentatively scheduled for 5/2 in Pool 8
- LSAF- an emergency contract will be required to dredge the lock chamber
 - Placement is a concern as there are limited sites, however the quantity is relatively small
- LS Marine has been awarded the Mechanical Dredging Contract, hope to start toward the end of May
- Refer to handout for additional notes

LD3 Progress Update (Tom Novak)

- Upper embankment- 93% complete, 4-5 weeks of work left
 - Guide wall portion has been completed
 - Cut and fill- flow restrictions put a hold on work
 - Contaminated material was found, took more borings and found more unsuitable material
 - Plan to leave bad material and take Corps Island material to fill area
- RWWL
 - Edward Kraemer and Sons contract modification was executed ~1 month ago to include RWWL work
 - Judy Mader and Scot Johnson approved
 - 401 was completed by MPCA with the RWWL for their portion of the work- fine material placement
 - Portable Barge Service will get to it in July after completing N2 in Pool 8
 - All the permits are covered
- Lower embankment
 - Mitigation lands now owned- 570 acres, 313 acres need to be reforested
 - New active eagle nest near the staging area

- Edward Kraemer and Sons was given construction release last November, work they could have accomplished was limited due to high water
- Fish passage- total project costs are ~\$26 million
 - \$20 million of the project is to do the channel, \$6 million to complete the channel by Trudale Slough
 - Original design was through the lock and dam embankments
 - Proposed design is through the auxiliary lock, a 1200' channel at a 6% grade
 - Schedule: look at auxiliary lock alternatives in May, alternative formulation briefing in June, public release in June, complete final report in August/September
- Greg Genz- stated pilots have experienced dead water on the wall- good news

FWWG (Elliott Stefanik)

- The workgroup hasn't met since the last forum in December
- Currently focused on Asian Carp
- Hydro-power public meetings
 - Tasked with reviewing concepts and identifying concerns and potential studies to determine impacts
 - Greg Genz- commented that the NWG should also look into this and develop concerns

Pool 8, Warner's Landing Hydraulic Findings (Jon Hendrickson)

- Good to be aware of channel impacts during EMP planning
- By 1991, the reach of river upstream of Warner's had really opened up due to island erosion, one of the purposes of Phase I of the Pool 8 Islands project was to replace the islands that were lost
- There is potential that the velocities picked up just enough to produce problems at Warner's even though changes were limited
- Steve Tapp- commented that even though there's material accumulation here, we may have gained efficiencies upriver near places such as Deadman's Slough
 - Jon Hendrickson concurred
- Jim Fisher- commented that WDNR would like to see the material used in the Pool 8 Islands assuming the P90 requirement is met and the material is classified <10% fines

EMP (Jeff DeZellar)

- FY11 EMP funds are good- ~\$4 million to expend
 - \$3 million set aside for Capoli construction work
- Pool 8 Islands Stage 3A and Stage 3B

- 3A is almost complete, Portable Barge Service to mobilize in a couple of weeks for completion
- 3B is scheduled to complete August 12th and is 25% complete to date
 - Plan to resume operations 5/2
- Capoli Slough has been the main effort- DPR was sent out a couple of months ago and a lot of good comments were received
 - Stage 1: hope to award option one by 9/30, 2nd option next year, and finish construction December 2012
 - Stage 2: hope to award the beginning of 2013 and complete by the end of 2013
- Any funds that haven't been obligated by the end of the FY are in jeopardy of being taken away
- Mike Griffin- commented that as soon as Capoli is put on the street there should be an email to endorse it in order to expedite the process if needed
 - Steve Tapp- confirmed this had been done in the past if the endorsement is an easy decision for the partners
- Pool 9, Harpers is next in the queue- Dennis Anderson will focus on the development of this project
 - Jeff DeZellar to pick up after Dennis retires
 - Draft DPR will be put out for agency review, 2013 is the anticipated construction
- Joe Schroetter is responsible for the start-up of Conway, Winnisheck, McGregor projects

WLMTF Activities (Mary Stefanski)

- News release to come out stating there won't be a Pool 6 drawdown this year
- Subgroups to look into Pool 3 and Pool 8 drawdown
 - Someone from each agency to represent
 - Next step for subgroups is to determine funding options and gather data
 - Things that need to be addressed to complete a drawdown in either pool:
 - Streamline the review process
 - List of monitoring data needed
- Photo stations will be set up in Pools 3, 5, 6, and 8
- Gretchen Benjamin submitted the Pool 8 ecological restoration for the international river prize (valued at \$350,000)
 - \$250,000 cash and \$100,000 for a twinning river project

NWG Activities (Dick Lambert)

- La Crosse railroad bridge- \$12.5 million is set aside, the USCG estimated the cost to be \$80 million
- NPS to have meetings pertaining to invasive species in three weeks- discussion on closing the locks to limit the spread of invasive species

- Dick commented that the impact to commerce would be significant
- Greg Genz- commented that pilots are requesting a piling above Lock 7, right now they're forced to nose into the bank

Forum- Conference Call in Discussion (All)

- Steve Tapp- commented that he would vote to disallow it for the sake of better discussion face-to-face and getting to know partners
 - Dick Lambert and Judy Mader concur for the sake of overlapping conversation from lagging and lack of clarity over the phone (people forgetting to address themselves, etc)
- Most partners placed value on getting to know one another and utilizing the few times per year we gather to foster relationships face-to-face
- No change from current status, agree to keep forum discussion as is

RWG Activities (Zach Kimmel)

- Recreation Boating site data storage
 - Still no concurrence on exactly how to provide the data
 - If data is shared through .pdf documents, the COE has agreed to provide data
 - Difficult to make sense of the 1,100 unlabeled pictures and provide to the public in a meaningful manner
 - Jim Fisher- commented that the point of emphasis has to be on providing the raw data to the public, not the means of doing so
 - RWG is to confirm whether or not the raw data is still available in non-.pdf format
- EA for Pool 9 and Pool 10 beach planning has been completed by Aaron McFarlane
 - Comments due back by 4/30
- Pool 7 and Pool 8 beach planning
 - Zach to reach out to UWL to determine whether or not it is feasible to have the students complete surveys as the FWS did
 - Most likely to be completed in 2012, but possibly late summer 2011
- Beach planning implementation
 - WDNR may have money to initiate the implementation
 - will try to involve Ruth Nissen in the beach planning
- Next meeting scheduled for 5/18

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF