

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #92, December 6-7, 2011

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #91 were approved
- Next Forum: April 17, Winona, MN

Agency Activities- USCG (John Nay)

- Received 111 reportable marine casualties
 - 72 were groundings, most of which were in Pool 2
 - 36 were bump and go, no assist vessel was needed
- Lock and Dam 2 allision
- Lacrosse Railroad Bridge allision
- High water played an influence on most problems

Agency Activities- Izaak Walton League (Olivia Dorothy)

- Olivia is new to the Izaak Walton League, she has been on the job for one month
- Currently working on a letter to Congress pertaining to EMP funding

Agency Activities- LMRWD (Terry Schwalbe)

- Carver tressel is primarily removed, small portion remains on the right descending bank
- BWSR approved 10 year plan
- Currently working on dredged material and site management plan

Agency Activities- MnDOT (Dick Lambert)

- Made a presentation to the governor addressing concerns with closing locks due to Asian Carp
- Awarded \$3 million for port developments in 2012
 - Can be allocated for infrastructure or dredging to a new dock- no maintenance dredging
 - Seawall repair in Southport, sheet pile rock in Red Wing, repair of an old dock in Winona are all potential uses of the funding

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- Some employees are still deployed in Minot in response to the flooding
- Previous master on the dredge, Arley Martin, recently passed away
- Bruce Boldon will be out until mid January, Kevin Baumgard will be acting throughout this time frame
- Leon Mucha is retiring from Locks and Dams on 12/30

- Lockmasters are shuffling between Lock and Dam 2 and the Upper St. Anthony Falls lock
- Currently looking at a reduction in hours at the upper three locks
 - Wouldn't be implemented until FY13
- An Army policy has been implemented in order to reduce travel expenses tied to conferences and meetings
 - An approval package has to be sent to Division and signed off on by senior staff members in order to incur travel expenses for meetings
- La Crescent office recently hired a site leader, Kelly Phillips, in Eau Galle
- Randy Urich is in the process of recruiting for a Forester position
- Dennis Anderson and Dan Wilcox officially retired on 9/30
- LUAP's are still available

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- A lot of time has been spent reviewing hydro-power applications
- Symbiotics and Free Flow Power both submitted an application for Lock and Dam 8
- Going through a two year trial as an enterprise agency- to provide flexibility in hiring
 - Has caused a flurry of hiring activities, a lot of positions have been filled by laterals
- Brenda Kelly has filled Mark Anderson's position as a Wildlife Biologist
- Jim Fischer has accepted the Water Quality Supervisor position
 - Currently trying to fill Jim's previous position
 - Will remain RRF co-chair and will remain on all other river teams for the time being

Agency Activities- MPCA (Judy Mader)

- Still trying to figure out funding sources for budget
- Moving forward toward a "one water" approach
 - Regional division is now called the watershed division

Agency Activities- USFWS (Sharonne Baylor)

- Working on Cap X 2020
- Spending time reviewing applications for hydro-power at Lock and Dam 8
- Organizing a summer paddling effort in 2012 to get more people out on the river

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Asian Carp issues have been consuming a lot of time
- Scot Johnson's position is still vacant, Bill Huber is POC
- Brad Parsons, regulatory supervisor, is likely to attend the RRF tomorrow
- In the initial phase of talking with FWS regarding Weaver Bottoms
- Working on Lower Mississippi River project proposal
 - Funds got zeroed out this year

- Possibility of implementing a barrier at the mouth of the St. Croix
- Hydropower reviews have consumed some time, been relying on WDNR and FWS
- \$300,000 has been approved for fisheries habitat on the Mississippi River
 - Able to use however they want as long as it's for a fisheries benefit

Agency Activities- UMWA (Greg Genz)

- Bad year in terms of tonnage- more empties went out of the city than barges with commodity
- COE budget is partially determined by tonnage, if we see this continue to go down it's going to be detrimental
- Rotten year in terms of: flooding, dredging, barge delivery, cost of empties going out of town

Agency Activities- WDOT (Sheri Walz)

- Sheri was appointed to Larry's previous position
- Grant application cycle starts in February
- \$4 million available for harbor and river way projects

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Channels & Harbors)

- Largest dredging season (terms of quantity) since 1974, without dredging the Chippewa Delta
 - 62% - government, 38% - contract; Dubuque and Government Mechanical had greater roles
- An emergency contract was completed to dredge the East Channel near Prairie Du Chien, WI – thanks to WDNR for working with us on such short notice
 - ~\$50 million was tied up in commodity within the East Channel
- Often dug to a lesser depth due to dredging needs throughout the District
- Dan Dieterman mentioned the need to re-visit both historic and new placement sites to analyze bank erosion
 - Also questioned how much of the dredging comes from the watershed as opposed to the riverbed or erosion of the shoreline
 - Jon Hendrickson stated that it's a good question to ask, but very difficult to answer- would require an extensive study and funding
 - Steve Tapp stated that Channels and Harbors goal is to continue stabilizing sites- funding is the main issue
 - It would be good to work up plans so that we're prepared to implement if we are able to get funding
- Expended St. Paul Small Boat Harbor funds that were earmarked from 2008
- Corps Island- 316,000 cubic yards of material was removed and paid for at \$7.85/cy, 410,000 total expected to be removed- the remainder will go to Lock and Dam 3
 - Local response after completion was very positive
- Cut 5- received evaluation from Jon Hendrickson- going to complete a cost analysis and then go forward

- Lower Pool 4- still evaluating the acquisition of land
- Lower Pool 2- need to identify alternatives
 - Scope is to make the navigation channel more efficient
 - Biggest public concern is access to the main navigation channel for recreational boating
 - Draft PAR expected to be completed between January and February, meeting with the partners in February
 - Expect to identify a preferred alternative by June
 - Plan to present to RRF for endorsement in December 2012
- Reads Landing
 - Contract was advertised full and open in August
 - A small business submitted a protest to the Government Accounting Office
 - After the protest, the Corps was pushed to find alternatives and the dredge Goetz was available- job was decided to be done by the Goetz
 - Goetz worked from 11/6-12/4
 - Railroad ties caused some problems, removal began on 12/7
 - There was a fuel spill off a booster barge on 11/17, created a 500' x 100' sheen, response was immediate and issue was resolved
 - Plan to resume operations in March
- There is potential to use dredged material for FRAC- more to come in the future
- Fisher Island- work performed from 7/2010-11/2011, 647,000 cubic yards of material was removed at \$5.63/cy
 - Seeding has been completed, a stockpile remains within the site for beneficial use

LD 3 Update (Tom Novak)

- Upper Embankment- 100% complete
- Navigation Improvements- 84% complete
 - Per Eric Johnson the last granular from Corps Island was placed last week
- Lower Embankment- 61% complete
- Mitigation- RWWL- to be completed by Portable Barge Service in February 2012
 - Dan Dieterman commented that the work in late February might not be well protected in the spring
 - Both Tom Novak and Dan Dieterman confirmed that they don't believe RWWL has a contract in place for the top-soil yet

Environmental Management Program (Tom Novak)

- Capoli Slough Stage 1 was awarded to Newt Marine- \$3.9 million
 - Starting the project spring 2012
- Capoli Slough Stage 2 is the next plans and specs project on the board
 - Will likely award a base bid with options
- Harpers Slough- feasibility review plan has been approved

- Preliminary draft DPR was completed September 2011
- Project evaluation reports- 4 reports were completed
- EMP 25th anniversary was September 2011
- MVP was awarded \$2.67 million for EMP
 - Funding plans to be allocated as follows
 - Pool 8 Phase III Stage 3A and 3B O&M manual
 - Capoli Slough Plans and Specs- by 30 May 2012
 - BCOE- April 2012
 - Harpers DPR
 - Fish Passage- complete DPR
 - New project initiation

Navigation Workgroup Activities (Paul Machajewski / Dick Lambert)

- Last official meeting was November 2009
- Mooring buoy- permanent cell planning to be completed in FY12
 - FY13-FY14 goal for construction pending funding and coordination
- Barge fleetings- no action due to lack of NESP funding
- Sedimentation at the head of Lake Pepin was addressed as a problem
- Paul Machajewski listed items to be discussed at next meeting
- Bridges:
 - Hastings- has been delayed one year, will possibly cause three day river closure next navigation season
 - Lafayette- greatly delayed due to high water
 - Plymouth- closed to vehicles, but open to pedestrians
 - Winona- 2012 construction proposed
 - Anticipated channel closures, but no road traffic closures
 - Potential for a temporary low-rise bridge during winter
 - Currently going through evaluation
 - I-90 at La Crescent- potential to use dredge material as fill
 - Trying to push the DOT in Duluth to go forward with this process
 - Dick Lambert stated that Minnesota's three week layoff really tampered with the progression of bridges
- Asian Carp issue may need to be addressed within the work group
- Red Wing dock at the Harbor Bar has been modified so the boat is out of the channel

Recreation Workgroup Activities (Kevin Berg)

- Haven't met since early last summer due to lack of time- everyone has been busy
 - Plan to meet this winter (likely mid-January) and re-visit items presented at the last meeting
- Agency water safety efforts have been time consuming

- Still need to determine how to share the recreational boating data
- Kevin Berg asked if anyone had interest in taking over as chair, or sharing the lead
- Pool 7 & 8 beach planning- potential to involve student surveys as FWS did
- Portages on embankments
 - Instead of using chinked rock, Jim Fischer recommended using an articulated concrete mat planted with grasses in the interstitial spaces
 - This would be more ideal for small animal passing- will be a RWG agenda item at the next meeting

Hydro-Power Permits (Nan Bischoff)

- Existing hydro-power in MVP
 - USAF, Crown Hydro has been fighting the Park Board for years
 - FERC threatened to rescind Crown's project due to lack of progress since 1999- there won't be progress made with Minneapolis Parks and Recreation in regards to the original design
 - LSAF, completed and ready to go into operations
 - LD1, been in operations since the 1910's
 - LD2, amended to include two hydro kinetic units as part of a pilot project
- Preliminary permits
 - Free Flow Power- concepts: A- traditional powerhouse; B- very low head turbines
 - LD3, LD4, LD6, LD7, LD9
 - Hydro Green- concept: lock frame, flow through auxiliary chambers
 - LD5, LD5A, LD9
 - Symbiotics- concept: low head concept in tainter gate area, now proposing use of roller gates
 - LD8
- Greg Genz commented that industry would be highly opposed to the use of the auxiliary chambers
- Jim Fischer mentioned that FERC needs to place a greater emphasis on the cumulative impacts of hydro-power- not individual project impacts

Water Level Management Task Force Activities (Dan Cottrell)

- 133 acres was exposed from the Pool 6 drawdown
- Ruth Nissen is providing a summary document on Pool 5, Pool 6, and Pool 8 drawdowns
- Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 1/25 in Winona, MN
- There aren't any proposed drawdowns for 2012
- There is potential for a Pool 3 drawdown in 2013
- The Corps and The Nature Conservancy have established a 10 year MOU
 - Gretchen Benjamin mentioned that the Sustainable Rivers Program was one of the best outcomes of this agreement

Update USFWS ESA- Mussel Listings (Phil Delphey)

- Snuffbox
 - November 10th they published a proposed rule to list as endangered species
 - Mussel is prevalent in the middle section of the District
 - Final rule has been delayed until January 25th, 2012
 - Likely to be added to the endangered species list by February 2012
- Spectaclecase
 - Final rule is expected to come out in April
 - Mussel is prevalent in the St. Croix River
- Sheepnose
 - Final rule is expected to come out in April
 - Mussel is scattered throughout the District within the Mississippi River
- By May 1st there should be three additional mussels listed as endangered
- Steve Tapp questioned whether this would affect historic dredging locations
 - Phil Delphey stated that the likelihood that the newly listed mussels are present in areas that require frequent dredging is probably no greater than for Higgins Eye
 - Ron Benjamin stated that there's more of a concern with Sheepnose near Winters Landing
- Need to initiate consultation for the operation and management of the 9 foot channel
 - Will require a biological assessment from the COE and a biological opinion from the FWS

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Elliott Stefanik)

- Haven't met since the last RRF meeting
- There aren't any immediate issues
- Dan Dieterman mentioned the threat of Asian Carp on native species as something worth having the FWWG look into, if it is the appropriate avenue
 - Also mentioned that it might be worthwhile to discuss FRAC sand operations
- UMESC is in the midst of completing a study pertaining to Asian Carp, FWWG may reach out to organization and ask for a presentation to see what the new research reveals
- Steve Tapp mentioned that it would be beneficial to have the FWWG look into streamlining the process for approval of habitat projects
 - Some streamlining is taking place through EMPCC, but we still could improve our processes
- Elliott Stefanik stated he will organize a teleconference and re-gather to discuss current issues/topics sometime in January
- Jim Fischer stated that the group should consider finalizing conceptual models for the reach plans
 - He also said it would be beneficial to develop a central repository as a reference of where to find data tied to specific projects within the District

- Topics for FWWG to address going forward:
 - Leg work for dredge material use tied to the Pool 2 Channel Management Study
 - Streamline permit processes
 - Abandoned USCG light stands
 - Central repository/database of information

GLMRIS- Great Lakes Mississippi River Inter-basin Study (Elliott Stefanik)

- 2 main pathways
 - Chicago canal system connecting Lake Michigan to the Illinois waterway
 - “Other pathway”
 - Looking into waterways connection points at other locations throughout the Midwest outside of Chicago
 - This pathway is on a more aggressive schedule than the Chicago pathway
 - Tentative schedule is to have draft reports completed by mid-January and a final report out by March 2012
- A feasibility study is underway analyzing risk involved with the transfer of invasive species between basins (Mississippi River and Great Lakes)
 - Looking into medium or high risk connections and completing a biological assessment to characterize the amount of risk
- Sites will be ranked and prioritized according to risk and used to identify where projects could be developed to reduce that risk
- Partners- WDNR, COE, MDNR, FWS, USGS, NRCS
- LRD has the overall lead for GLMRIS

Agency Update on Asian Carp (All)

- MDNR
 - Tim Schlagenhaft is the main representative of MDNR for issues pertaining to Asian Carp
 - Bighead Carp was caught in Lake St. Croix in April, 2010, which triggered local interest
 - Positive eDNA test at Lock and Dam 1
 - Upper Mississippi area hasn't been too active, but things will be accelerated this spring
 - Government wants a list of immediate actions that the State of Minnesota can implement
 - Asian Carp Forum will be held tomorrow
 - Discussion of a sound bubble barrier at the mouth of the St. Croix and at Lock and Dam 1
 - As a task force, took lock closure out of the Asian Carp Action Plan because we couldn't find concurrence across the board
 - Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts passed a resolution to lead off at Lock and Dam 19 to protect the entire state, not just the Brainerd Lakes area
- NPS
 - John Anfinson stated that an informal interagency task force was put together in January to answer two questions:

- Where are the Asian Carp and when will they get here
- Asian Carp Task Force has had six meetings total thus far addressing these two concerns
- John Anfinson stated the NGO believes the goal should be to stop the spread of Asian Carp in Minnesota- there are three main objectives
 - Stop the spread above Lock and Dam 1
 - Address Lock and Dam 19
 - Stop the spread into the St. Croix River
 - The Minnesota River hasn't been addressed much as there is no feasible barrier until Mankato, MN
- NPS encourages recreational boaters to stay in one pool
- Focus is on Lock and Dam 19 – Lock and Dam 1 control and mitigation- best chance of actually stopping the Carp is at Lock and Dam 1
- Industry
 - We need guidance from the COE
 - There's a lack of support by recreational interest
 - There's a lack of science on where Carp are producing
 - Industry opinion is:
 - We need real science to determine where the Carp actually are
 - Restrict recreational lockages to certain times of day
 - There are far more recreational lockages than commercial lockages
- COE
 - Need Congressional direction if closing the locks for Carp
 - Separate from Asian Carp, the Corps is looking at reducing Lock and Dam operations nationwide
 - 1,000 commercial lockages is the threshold for non 24/7 operations
 - Corps involvement with Carp prevention planning/implementation
 - COE can design/build/operate with federal or partial federal dollars
 - COE can't provide a lot of assistance with all non-federal dollars
- WDNR
 - Carp are the poster child now, but other invasive species are going to be a big problem in the future
 - Don't have time or funds to expend on efforts that might only have a 50% chance of helping
- MnDOT
 - Don't solve one problem and create another problem
 - Closing the upper locks will move tonnage to trucks which will be a big problem on the roadways
 - Verify before taking steps forward
 - Don't have a knee-jerk reaction
- Miscellaneous Comments

May 21st, 2012

RRF #92

- RRF to put together a letter to distribute regarding a joint position on Asian Carp
 - Jim and Steve will draft a statement and address the forum
 - One concern is that federal agencies can't lobby, will have to work with Office of Counsel to confirm the tone of the letter is approved
 - Statement needs to be distributed at multiple levels to insure that it gets in some of the right hands
- Invasive species are creating incredible impacts to the environment on a national scale
- We need to raise the issue to the national level
- Check with UMRBA to see what they have done and what their goal is

Other Issues or Topics (All)

- There was discussion of some attendance to RRF and other like meetings being virtual
- Mentioned the potential of having a Lower Minnesota River tour as part of RRF 84 in August

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF