

CEMVP-CO-MR

15 July 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #53, 02 December 1998

1. Introductions/Approve Minutes – A meeting of the River Resources Forum (RRF) was held on 02 December 1998 at the Sheraton Inn in Bloomington, MN. An attendance list is attached. *Introductions were made and the minutes of the 15-16 September 1998 RRF meeting were approved with the following changes: Added the following sentence to the end of Section 5 – “The Long Meadow Lake project was discussed at great length and an agreement was made that the status will remain unchanged and the project would go forward.” Changed the 1st sentence of the 2nd paragraph of section 10 – “The RWG will proceed with the 1999 Recreation Boating Study and may complete a mini-study in 2000.”*

2. Agency Activities -

IDNR – Kevin Szcodronski reported that Iowa has a new Governor.

COE – Dean Peterson reported that there will be a retirement luncheon for Dave Haumersen on 30 December at Tinucci’s. Contact Dennis Cin for details. Ben Wopat is the Acting Assistant Chief of Con-Ops. New Con-Ops Administration may be in-place next summer; long process performed by COE HQ. The new Project Management Implementation has been complete; no significant impacts.

WDNR - Terry Moe reported that there is a shortfall in the fish & wildlife segregated account; budget initiative to support current staff.

MPCA – Judy Mader gave a brief status of their reorganization and move; still in flux. Judy is working for the Detroit Lakes region but will still be working on the river from Red Wing down.

NPS – JoAnn Kyril reported that the Science Museum work continues; searching for funding; possibly cost sharing. MNRRA commission is de-commissioned.

COE (MVD) – Louis Logue and Steve Jones are in town to sit-in on RRF and attend Regional Dredging Team Meeting being held on 03 December. Louis reported that St. Mary’s University in Winona is considering adding some Navigation courses; focus on economic, hydraulic, and environmental aspects.

MDNR – Steve Johnson reported that the MDNR will be meeting with Governor-elect Jesse Ventura on Thursday, 03 December.

Upper River Services – Lee Nelson reported that the river is closed. He also reported (per river pilots) that the river is a 12-barge river (vs. 15) from St. Paul to Winona, especially Pool 2; see paragraph 8. below.

3. Upper Miss. Historical Presentation - John Anfinson (COE) gave an extensive presentation on the status of the Corps Cultural Resources and Historic work that his office has been conducting on the Upper Miss. River (UMR). The three major initiatives are the Miss. Nat. River and Rec. Area, cultural resources, and John's book on the history of the Upper Miss. River. Please contact John if you have any questions about his presentation.
4. Fish Passage – Dan Wilcox (COE) gave an extensive presentation on a fish passage study that was conducted and funded as part of the EMP Long Term Resource Monitoring Program. The report is presently under review, and should be published early next year. Terry Moe recommended that the report be reviewed by river biologist prior to final distribution. Also would like to keep Fish Passage on future RRF agendas. Contact Dan Wilcox if you have questions about this presentation.
5. L/D 3 Embankment – Leon Mucha (COE) briefed the RRF on the interagency coordination meeting held by Capt. John Weidner (COE Project Manager) in November. The reason for the project is because the Wisconsin side lake dikes are vulnerable to failure (100% possibility in 18 years). COE has just received funding to fix the intermediate dike, however there will be less impact to fix the lower dikes but this is a bigger project. There was a lengthy discussion on the wetland/environmental impacts of the lower dike project. 40 acres of bottomland forest wetland lost plus 12 acres of riverine wetland for a total of 52 acres. Agencies are questioning “if the project is needed.” COE is moving on with project because funding is available at this time. A public meeting regarding the project will be held in January. COE will discuss issues raised today.
6. L/D 3 Outdraft – Dennis Cin (COE) gave an update on the project. Looking at extending the I-wall 1300 feet. Earliest construction could start is 2002 – 2003.
7. Environmental Management Program – Don Powell (COE). The EMP received \$18.9 Million funding in FY99. A Status of Habitat Projects in the St. Paul District handout (dated November 24, 1998) was distributed and a brief update was given on each of the projects. Specifically, the Long Meadow Lake project cost column needs to be adjusted; however the project features are accurate. Keith Beseke mentioned that there is a bent control structure at Finger Lakes and that there is erosion occurring at Peterson Lake. The EMP plate is full, so there is no need at this time to select more work from the list.
8. Channel Maintenance Program - Dan Krumholz (COE). Dan distributed a handout summarizing this year's Dredging work, Placement Site Activities, and Channel Modifications.

Dredging: 1,253,589 Cubic yards, 47 locations, and 6 dredges. WDNR was concerned with the increased Pool 3 quantities. COE responded that the earlier estimates did not include advance maintenance, which was done under this contract to take advantage of the fact that material was being removed from the floodplain. Dredging dimensions were coordinated with the COE Hydraulics and dredging notices were

distributed. Lee Nelson (Upper River Services) expressed the industries concerns over the river only being a 12-barge river (vs. 15-barge) above Winona (specifically Pool 2). The perception exists that a lack of dredging is causing problems. This may be caused by the lack of placement sites in this stretch of the river. The condition seemed to worsen after 1993. Some long-term placement plans have not yet been implemented so channel maintenance has been limited in some reaches. Dan Krumholz stated that the COE is committed to providing a safe, reliable navigation channel while taking into consideration environmental concerns.

Placement Sites. Diamond Bluff: WDNR expressed concern that there is some erosion occurring at the Diamond Bluff pit. The COE will follow-up. **Grand Encampment/Wabasha Prairie site:** Special recognition was mentioned for Bob Drieslein and his work to complete the work at Grand Encampment/Wabasha Prairie site; Nice job Bob! A field trip is tentatively planned for the August 1999 RRF to visit the site. **Lower Pool 2:** COE is acquiring the transfer site islands and use of the Shiely pit. Ground water monitoring is being addressed. Questions were raised on the long-term solution to placement site needs/capacities in Lower Pool 2.

Site Planning. Minnesota River DMMP: Lengthy discussion on concerns over dredging in area by both COE and Non-COE, specifically where to place the material.

Channel Modifications. Gary Palesh (COE) distributed a handout discussing Pools 3, Upper 4, 5, and 8.

9. Weaver Bottoms Final Report – Special recognition and congratulations goes out to the members of the Weaver Bottoms Task Force for their work on this project. Keith Beseke (FWS) distributed an Executive Summary handout. Discussions ensued regarding implementation of the recommendations. Scot Johnson (MDNR) asked if these recommendations could be added to the DPR for the Pool 5 Channel Management Study. This was deferred until the 15 December Pool 5 Island Construction meeting. The Task Force was tasked with coming up with some implementation recommendations 2 – 3 weeks prior to the Aug 1999 RRF. CP rail expressed some concerns over problems from the Weaver Bottoms project. The Corps will be meeting with railroad officials.

10. Fish & Wildlife Work Group – August 1999 there will be a workshop held for river personnel on biology for non-biologists.

11. Water Level Management Task Force – A lengthy discussion ensued on the Pool 8 Drawdown. (Below I listed each agencies concerns. Below that I have each agencies recommendation.)

Concerns: COE – 2' drawdown at L/D 8, 6" drawdown at La Crosse gage. WDNR – 18" maximum drawdown. Fish & mussel concerns. Public perception better with 18" (possibly have a longer drawdown at 18" vs. 2'). 18" is a conservative approach for future drawdowns. Lower costs to all agencies at 18". Current vegetation in Pool 8 is improving. MDNR – O.K. with 2' drawdown. Upper River Services – Concerned with maneuverability with increased velocities of a 2' drawdown (and water depth), especially at Brownsville. Information from study should address these concerns; Dan and Gary

will get information to Lee. IDNR – Willing to support a 2' drawdown but would settle for 1.5' (18").

Recommendations: 630.5 at La Crosse gage; 1.5' (18") maximum drawdown at L/D #8 is the preliminary endorsement for the public meeting (all depending on funds). COE – Will not have an official Corporate Board endorsement until the final report is reviewed. MDNR – Supports up to a 3' drawdown. FWS – Supports up to a 2' drawdown. WDNR – Supports up to a 1.5' (18") drawdown. IDNR – Supports up to a 2' drawdown. Upper River Services – Supports a 1.5' (18") drawdown.

Year 2 drawdown will be based on year 1 results.

12. Navigation Work Group – Mooring Cells: St. Louis District still testing and making modifications. St. Paul District will follow-up with St. Louis District and update at the next RRF. Navigation Charts: It will be at least another year before they will be done; the charts will have cross-references with railroad miles.

13. Recreation Work Group – WDNR recommended to change site 22 to add material and reshape. Report is being printed & environmental review is ongoing. *MDNR moved to endorse the Pool 3/Upper Pool 4 Recreational Beach Maintenance Plan. WDNR seconded the motion. It was endorsed by consensus.* Draft Pool 2 Beach Plan: The draft will be out in early January to RWG for review. Pool 7 & 8 Beach Plans: The plans were revisited. Notes are being compiled and will start on report. There will be public involvement on this report. Recreation Boating Study: The 1999 study will proceed. Film went from \$35 to \$49 per roll; that will be approximately \$2500.00 over budget. Should be ready to go by April RRF. Park Service on St. Croix may come up with funding. St. Mary's is working on an Arcview program on historic data; should be distributed next week. They are also looking at was to improve the study; adequate job at this point. Photo documentation of Lake Pepin has problems due to size and no landmarks. The best way is to fly and physically count the boats.

14. Other Business – Regional Dredging Team: Louis Logue explained concept started 20 years ago with national team. Four elements; 1. Fast track process for decision making, 2. Outreach to share information, 3. Beneficial use of dredge material, and 4. Cost Sharing.

15. 1999 RRF Meetings
20 – 21 April 1999 La Crosse, WI.
24 – 25 August 1999 Wabasha, MN.
30 November – 01 December 1999 Bloomington, MN.

Dean Peterson
Co-Chairman, RRF