

CEMVP-CO-MR

30 November 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #55, 26 August 1999

1. On 25 August, members of the River Resources Forum (RRF) met at Lock and Dam #5 for a tour and presentation from Dean Peterson (COE) on the Major Maintenance/Major Rehabilitation program. Following Dean's presentation, Dan Wilcox (COE) gave a presentation on Fish Passage. From Lock and Dam #5 the group took a bus trip to Wabasha, MN to inspect the Grand Encampment/Wabasha Prairie dredged material placement project. Enroute, the group stopped next to Pool 5 and Gary Palesh (COE) gave a briefing on the Pool 5 Channel Management Study/DPR.

2. Introductions / Approve Minutes – A meeting of the RRF was held on 26 August 1999 at Winona State University (Kryzsko Commons & College Center, Purple Room 104) in Winona, MN. Attached is an attendance list. *Following introductions, the Forum approved Minutes from Meeting #54 with no changes.*

3. Agency Activities

FWS – Gary Wege. Russ Peterson, new Field Supervisor will be the new RRF Rep; should be at the December meeting.

MDOT – Dick Lambert. Working on the Railroad Bridge/Hazard to Navigation Study with the USGS. No status at this time; waiting on a priority list.

IDNR – Mike Griffin. Thanks for having 40 IDNR employees on the M/V Miss.

MPCA – Judy Mader. Judy's been reassigned to Rochester and will be responsible for all Corps projects from L/D #3 down to Brownsville, MN. She will also have all hydropower responsibilities in that reach. She may have channel maintenance responsibilities above L/D #3.

WDOT – Ellen Fisher. Ellen reported that Joe Olson (District Director of the Mississippi River District 5) will also be available for WDOT issues.

MWBAC – Jim Harrison. Thanks to COE and other agencies for the tour of Pool 5 on 22 July. The MWBAC budget was added to Minnesota's, but not to Wisconsin's budget, however there is bipartisan support. Another thanks to the COE for opportunity to testify on the M/V Mississippi. The MWBAC will be holding its next meeting in the Red Wing area on 29 September.

WDNR – Terry Moe. Currently working on the Nav. Study, Water Level Mgmt., and the St. Croix Mgmt. Plan update. Thanks to COE and RRF for their efforts. Would like to have Weaver Bottoms and hydropower added to the next RRF agenda.

MDNR – Steve Johnson. The COE permit to place dredged material in Minnesota below the ordinary high water mark expires at the end of the year. The process for the next permit *should* be much faster. Draft Lower St. Croix Mgmt. Plan is on the WEB, should be mailed out in early September. Public comments due back by 30 November.

NPS – JoAnn Kyril. Still seeking funding for the Science Museum which is scheduled to open 01 December 1999. Hoping to have an interactive kiosk at the museum.

COE – Dean Peterson. Thanks to all agencies who presented testimony on the M/V Mississippi. Your testimony helps us to get the RRF message to MVD (i.e. L/D 3, Fish Passage...etc). New Chief of Con-Ops is Ken Buck; he's scheduled to attend the December RRF. NOTE: Ken Buck replaced Dave Haumersen and Ben Wopat replaced Harold Taggatz.

COE – Dennis Cin. Minnegasco is proposing to put rock groins along the gas line crossing on the Minnesota River at River Mile 10. On Tuesday, 31 August 1999 a tow boat ride is scheduled with the industry through that reach.

4. Zebra Mussels – WDNR - John Sullivan. John gave a brief, but thorough presentation on the status of the Zebra Mussel on the Mississippi River. Contact John for more information.

5. L/D 3 Embankment - COE – Gary Palesh. Gary distributed a handout (RRF #55-1) on the status of the project. Many comments received from agencies on the validity of the project.

Mussel surveys conducted in July found a significant mussel population including three threatened and one endangered species. No significant zebra mussels found.

Archeological survey found nothing significant.

On 10 August, a meeting was held to discuss possible ways to avoid/minimize effects on the mussel resource; suggest moving the dike back from the current alignment. Also suggested was the guidewall project being factored into the costs for the embankment project; with the guidewall factored in, less could be spent on the embankment because of less chance of barges going into the gates. However, Gary stated that moving away from the existing dike would actually increase costs significantly. Finally, the environmental agencies would like the COE to build a less “Corps-like” project.

Tom Novak (COE – St. Paul) is assisting Gary on this project. On 30 August, there will be an internal COE meeting on the project.

Fish Passage was discussed again. The COE position is that if a permanent embankment is constructed, fish passage will be addressed. However, if the project stays as is (build up existing dike), fish passage may not be added.

6. Navigation Work Group (NWG) – USCG – Scott Bates. Scott introduced Lt. Dave Pleasants who attended the forum with Scott. Also in attendance was Neil Frost, Railroad Safety Inspector with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

The NWG has met twice since the last forum. 1st we met with members of the railroad and towing industry and discussed bank stabilization practices. Members of the COE hydraulics staff presented to the group. From that meeting, we decided to meet at one of the critical locations on the list, specifically the upper approach to L/D #8. At this 2nd meeting, we investigated the location from both land and water and discussed possible solutions. Waiting for specific suggestions from the COE.

Another solution or part of the solution is to sign the critical areas (i.e. No Wheel Wash) and/or installing mooring buoys or cells. These options are being investigated. The placement of the mooring cells/buoys should be decided with towboat pilot input. Dave Hanifl (BNSF) showed the forum some photos of past accidents and expressed his desire to have mooring cells/buoys placed above and below the locks. We will also look into having these "areas" identified on the new nav. charts along with railroad miles. Gary Wege (FWS) suggested that we implement some regulations "with teeth" which could be enforced in these areas.

Funding: Jim Harrison (MWBAC) suggested that WRDA 99, section 458 may be a possible funding source; Dan Krumholz (COE) will follow up. Ellen Fisher (WDOT) looked into WDOT being able to assist with funding but found that this type of work was not eligible. Scott Bates (USCG) will investigate possible funds assistance through the Aids to Navigation program.

Dean Peterson (COE) suggested that the NWG put together a "position paper" on the status and progress of this issue including a section on regulations and the enforcement thereof. Distribution of this paper should be by 15 November so it can be discussed at the Nov/Dec forum. The RRF concurred with this approach.

7. Environmental Management Program (EMP) – Don Powell - COE. Don distributed and discussed an updated EMP handout (RRF #55-2). Highlights include: Tremp NWR (Pool 6) – Pre-final meeting will be in Sept. Work remaining is ice damage repair and installing a security fence between railroad and pump station (vandals).

East Channel (Pool 8) – Need to identify preferred location of lock waiting area.

Pool 8 Islands – Friday, 17 Sep is the project dedication. More info to follow.

Pool Slough (Pool 9) - DPR written, out soon.

WRDA 99 Reauthorized; 20.75 Mil (habitat), 10.25 Mil (LTRM); funds for use in 2001 & 2002. HQUSACE guidance needed on usage of money and ranking of projects. FWWG should re-evaluate and strategize current list; need to keep in mind other Miss. River districts for competition of funds.

Brief recap of the Engineering & Design workshop held in La Crosse in June.

8. Channel Maintenance Program - Dan Krumholz – COE. Dan distributed and discussed a Channel Maintenance Program handout (RRF #55-3).

Dakota Placement Site: The COE is waiting on a response from the MDNR regarding an internal meeting of the MDNR regarding the site. Steve Johnson stated that a letter addressing the site to the COE is being prepared.

Diamond Bluff: Gretchen Benjamin has been contacted numerous times by local landowners in Diamond Bluff regarding erosion from the pile. At this point, there is no clear authority on who can resolve problem. A site visit by COE and WDNR will be scheduled for late August.

Minnesota River DMMP: many unresolved issues remain after OSIT meeting held 04 Aug. A meeting is scheduled with the Watershed District on 31 Aug.

Channel Mgmt Plans/DPRs:

Pool 2: Plan to cover area from I494 to L/D 2.

Pool 3&4: See handout (RRF #55-4).

Pool 5: See handout (RRF #55- 5 *A facsimile endorsement will be sought after 10 Sep for the Pool 5 DPR*. No endorsement at this RRF #55 because it was not on the agenda and the report had not been available for 30 days (MDNR). OSIT meeting to be scheduled for mid-Sept.

Pool 8: OSIT will be scheduled for late Sept.

Weaver Bottoms: Terry Moe (WDNR) asked that the final report be presented to and reviewed by the RRF. Also, the findings should be presented to the public. *Finally, the final report should get formal RRF endorsement at the Nov/Den RRF.*

Regional Dredging Team: MDNR sees no value in this team, thus will not sign charter. WDNR also will not sign the charter but will attend meetings.

9. River Mechanics Workshop. - Dan Krumholz – COE. Dan distributed a handout (RRF #55-6) and reported for Jon Hendrickson that the River Mechanics Workshop will be held on 05 Oct at the FWS Refuge in Onalaska. If there is enough interest, a second workshop will be held.

10. Recreation Work Group. – Dick Otto – COE. Also in attendance was Chris Ensminger (St. Mary's U) and Jim Harrison (MWBAC). Dick distributed a handout (RRF #55-7) of the Rec. Boating Study Flight Schedule with actual flight dates. Purpose of the project is to note trends, trouble spots, congestion, beach use...etc on the Mississippi (from L/D 1 to L/D 10 except Lake Pepin) and the Lower St. Croix Rivers. A full report will be presented at the Nov/Dec RRF.

Beach Plans:

Pool 2: All agency comments received; being worked in St. Paul.

Pool 7&8: Recommendations implemented. Need more public involvement. Looking to compare beach areas from 1975 to present; show changes.

11. Water Level Management. – Gary Palesh – COE. *There will be facsimile endorsement for the Water Level Management Plan along with the Pool 5 DPR on or about 10 Sep 99.* A deviation from the Operating Band has been requested. No additional COE funding will be available for the drawdown (O&M funds only). The Drawdown is still funding and weather permitting.

The MWBAC will be the Non-Federal sponsor for the 1135 dredging. On 23 & 24 Sep. there will be an 1135 Dredging OSIT meeting to identify the sites.

12. Fish & Wildlife Work Group. – Rich Frietsche – FWS. Non-Biologist workshop held on 11 Aug. May hold another. Will possibly get on Waterways Association Agenda.

13. Other Business & Topics Discussed.

M/V Mississippi. Dean Peterson stated that the M/V might be available on the upbound trip, to any of the agencies for tours while it is in the St. Paul District. Terry Moe expressed interest for WDNR's Natural Resources Board.

Navigation Aids on the Lower St. Croix River. Several agencies received letters from the USCG's District Office in New Orleans stating that they will no longer be maintaining the navigation aids (buoys) on the Lower St. Croix River. This responsibility may be turned over to the state agencies. Scott Bates (USCG) will look into this.

EMP & Dredged Material Placement Sites will be available on the St. Paul District's Web page.

Hydropower Study: Judy Mader (MPCA) has received information from Universal Electric Power (UEP) regarding hydropower at L/D's 3 -10; the COE has not received anything. UEP is seeking licensing. A letter from the Dept. of Interior will be sent to them regarding these proposals.

14. Next RRF Meetings:

30 November – 01 December; St. Paul, MN.

Dean Peterson
Co-Chairman, RRF