

CEMVP-OP-CH

26 April 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #71, December 7 & 8, 2004.

1. Introductions / Approve Minutes – A meeting of the River Resources Forum (RRF) was held on December 7 & 8, 2004 at the US Fish and Wildlife Service Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor and Education Center in Bloomington, MN. Attached is the attendance list and handouts from the meeting.

The Minutes from RRF #70 were approved by consensus.

2. Agency Activities – The agencies below had significant info to report.

WiDNR – Gretchen Benjamin: The WiDNR is facing major budget issues and LTRM may get hit pretty hard; looking at reducing over 150 positions; next 6 months critical.

WiDOT – Larry Kieck: The WiDOT is going through reorganization and will be consolidating offices throughout the state in Madison.

COE – Dan Krumholz: The Dredge THOMPSON will be replaced by the Dredge GOETZ next spring; estimated delivery to Fountain City is April 29. The rights to the THOMPSON has been turned over to GSA who then sold them to the Maritime Heritage Society in Winona, Mn who will eventually display the THOMPSON as an exhibit / museum. This winters' lock and dam rehabilitation work consists of the dewatering of the lock at Upper St. Anthony Falls (may plan for a RRF tour this winter) and the installation of bulkhead slots and LDs 2 & 5. Jeff Gulan reported that General Crear announced a Division wide 10% cut in overhead costs for FY05.

FWS – Dan Stinnett: The Upper Miss FWS budget is in good shape for FY05, however programs like the Contaminants Program will take a hit in FY's 06 & 07. Don Hultman: Bob Drieslein will be retiring this Jan. Tim Yager recognized Bob on behalf of the FWVG for his efforts throughout his career – thanks again Bob and good luck. The Trempealeau Refuge will now report directly to Don as a separate station. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) has been submitted to the regional office for internal review; public meetings will be held this winter. Received \$400,000 for land acquisition along the UMR.

UMWA – Greg Genz: A 10-year extension has been signed with the city of Minneapolis for the Minneapolis Harbor. A proposal has been submitted to Cargill from the Minnesota River Watershed District for property acquisition for a dredged material placement site. A meeting will be held this winter with the MnDOT regarding the potential 494 dredged material placement site.

NPS – Steve Johnson: Effigy Mounds has expanded 1000 acres. MNRRA will be hiring a hydrologist. \$2.0M is available via the Miss River Fund (Ashland Oil & McKnight Foundation \$) in grants.

MnDOT – Dick Lambert: Although MnDOT is facing budget cuts it is expected that the cuts will be in programs and not personnel. An updated River & Great Lakes Terminal Directory is available; CF Industries (pool 2) requested that the DOT not publish an aerial photo of their facility in the directory, citing terrorism concerns.

3. Next Years Meetings

April 26, 2005: Winona State University

August 23 – 24, 2005: Buffalo City, Wi.

December 6 – 7, 2005: Bloomington, Mn (Minnesota Valley Nat'l Wildlife Refuge)

4. Channel Maintenance Program – Tapp & Machajewski (COE) (handouts 71 – 1 & 2). Steve and Paul gave a PowerPoint presentation on the construction season activities.

A. Dredging Schedule: The dredging season ended on 11/12 with the completion of the WAT job at the Head of Raft Channel in pool 8. For the year (calendar) 576,223 cy of material was dredged at 23 locations; 100% beneficial use of material was achieved.

B. Channel Mgmt and Placement Site activities: The following notable projects were completed in 2004:

- Wing dam notchings in pool 3
- Peterson Lake bank stabilization project completion in lower pool 4
- Wing dam notchings and accreted Is. fortification in upper pool 5
- West Newton Chute and Above West Newton construction complete in pool 5
- Mallard Is. and MN-14 modification in pool 5
- Brownsville Placement site reshaping in pool 8
- Buck Creek placement site landscaping complete in pool 10.

C. CMMP update: Now available via the MVP Web site.

5. Embankments – DeZellar (COE).

A. LD 8: Unable to award contract in FY 04; awarded Nov 29, 2004 (FY 05), \$825,000. Work to include spring seeding, mulch, rip rap (stockpiling old rip rap); still investigating use of biosolids from City of LaCrescent as fertilizer.

B. LD 5A: Urgent repair of 2001 flood damage; will incorporate PAR findings into repairs (i.e. plantings, minimize vegetation removal, stockpile old rip rap...etc); award contract at end of FY 05. Once work at 5A is complete all 2001 flood repairs will be completed

C. Embankments Study: \$100,000 available in FY 05 for study; Jon Hendrickson working on recon level designs (i.e. berms, islands, lowering embankments); will use Nav Study report for fish passage guidance; priority embankments for initial designs are 8, 9, 7, & 5; Pre-construction engineering and design in Nav Study bill.

6. Recreation Work Group – Otto (COE).

A. The next Rec Work Group meeting will be 12/14 in Winona. Agenda items include future Aerial Boating Studies, Recreational Beach Maintenance Plans, GIS/ArcView Program for Boating Study Data. Other items will also be discussed.

B. Beach Planning: Pools 7 & 8: According to Don Hultman (FWS) the beach planning effort can move forward because all Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) alternatives include beach planning to some degree; go ahead and work on already agreed-upon sites .

However, he asks that the beach plans not be released until the CCP is released, which should be this winter (04-05). Don has some concerns regarding beach sites that conflict LUAP uses; asked that a few sites be removed. Other pools: Don asks that the RWG take a conservative approach to begin other pool planning; FWS will provide CCP preliminary guidance to the RWG.

7. Navigation Work Group (NWG) – Lambert (MnDOT).

Mooring Buoy: Since the buoy was placed below LD 8 in 2003 it has not received much use. The NWG will work with the River Industry Action Committee (RIAC) to ensure the buoy is placed in the proper location. It was suggest that a line be added to the upper kevel to assist with tying-off to the buoy with empty barges.

8. Water Level Mgmt Task Force (WLMTF) – Schlagenhaft (MnDNR).

A. Pool 5 Drawdown: General comments: The preliminary report is out which will be followed by the Letter Report/EA. There is strong support from the public for this drawdown; public wants more that 1.5'. Dredging to accommodate a 1.5' drawdown will be funded via the COE's O&M Program. There have been no commitments to date to fund the supplemental / environmental dredging (beyond a 1.5' Drawdown). Dick Otto will follow-up on the possibility of a transfer of funds between the states and the COE for supplemental dredging funds. The WLMTF will explore the option of a second-year Drawdown. The COE still needs MVD approval to deviate from the water-regulating manual and to perform advance maintenance dredging; no obstacles anticipated with this approval. Recreational access dredging funds are available from the States of MN & WI, FWS, Buffalo City and the Isaac Walton League. A preferred Drawdown depth from a biological perspective varies. There are increased Cultural Resource concerns/impacts as the Drawdown depth increase. The WLMTF recommends a 2.0' Drawdown, but prefers 2.5'. It is requested that the COE and FWS write letters of support to the USGS for Kevin Kenow's drawdown monitoring efforts. Matching sediment transport monitoring funds are available from the COE's Engineering Research & Development Center; Dan Krumholz will follow-up on securing this funding. There is a vegetation-monitoring plan for pool 5, however it is not as extensive as pool 8. A public education effort is planned similar to pool 8. The draft EA will be distributed to the WLMTF by the end of Dec 2004. Developing a long-term water level management plan to be discussed at the Jan 05 WLMTF meeting. Recreational Access dredging: The FWS has money up-front to transfer to the COE; looking to lowering the administrative fees (23% to 6%). COE will incorporate the rec access work into their Mechanical Dredging Contract.

B. Agency positions on pool 5 Drawdown (Handouts 71-3, 4, & 5):

WiDNR: 1.5' with current funding; 2.0' if funds available

MnDNR: 2.0' (support WLMTF recommendation), 2.5' if funds available.

IaDNR: concerned with EMP funding for drawdowns

EPA: supports project; remains neutral on depth

FWS: 2.5', best benefit to the resource

COE: 1.5' with a placement site unloading plan

NPS: 2.0', good compromise.

C. Supplemental funding: EMP funding will not be available in FY05, there is a potential in FY06. There is not a RRF consensus on the use of EMP funds for a drawdown; WLMTF will work with Don Powell to develop a RRF position on use of EMP funding for Drawdowns. 1135 programs funds are not available. No other funding sources have been identified. March 1, 2005 has been set as a drop-dead to secure funds for supplemental dredging.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources motioned and the US Fish and Wildlife Service second the motion below...

The River Resources Forum (RRF) endorses a drawdown in Pool 5 during 2005, or the earliest year possible to implement the drawdown, with a preferred level of two feet. Funding for supplemental dredging will be pursued to implement a 2-foot drawdown, but a minimum drawdown level will be 1.5 feet. The RRF also endorses the concept of a drawdown in the year following the initial drawdown. RRF agencies will assign staff to participate in a Task Force to address permanent placement of material at the Lost Island and Fisher Island placement sites.

The motion was endorsed by consensus.

9. Fish & Wildlife Work Group – Yager (FWS) (71-6).

Pool Plans: Actions identified in the plans will be addressed in a programmatic fashion. Programmatic fact sheets to include WLM, Embankments, Exotics/Invasives. A Forestry & Floodplain Habitats subgroup was formed; John Lindell (FWS) is chair. Consensus project work areas have been identified for pools 8 & 10; next pools are 4, 5, 5A, & 6. Systemic planning deferred until programmatic approaches are clearer. Will have an Asian Carp discussion/presentation/update at next FWVG meeting; will develop an issue position for next RRF.

10. Environmental Management Program – Powell (COE).

- A. FY05: \$17.5 M program for MVD, \$3.5 M for MVP.
- B. 2005 projects include: Spring Lake (5), Pool Slough (9), Pool 8 Is. Ph III – St 1 & St 2, Long Meadow Lake (MNR).
- C. Plans & Designs: Harpers Slough (9), Capoli Slough (9), Conway Lake (9).
- D. Completion Reports: 6 complete and sent to partners for review; 8 underway.
- E. Drawdown: Discussion held on use of EMP funds to cover supplemental / environmental dredging. Need to develop a RRF position regarding the use of EMP funds for April 2005 RRF.
 - “Appropriate use of funds” – Dan Krumholz.
 - “EMP already over-obligated” – Gretchen Benjamin.

11. Restructured Nav. Study, Feasibility Study – DeZellar (COE).

- Omnibus Bill passed by Congress
 - \$13.855M for Preconstruction Engineering & Design only, no construction.
 - 27% savings and slippage factored in brings amount available to \$10.0M.
 - \$11.0M budgeted: \$2M Systemic Planning, \$4.5M Eco system, \$4.5M

Navigation.

12. Strategic Planning – Krumholz, Col. Pfenning (COE).
 - Challenge: Push the RRF planning horizon beyond 1 year, shoot for 3 – 5 years.
 - What goals do we have? Who's clearing the way for us?
 - Request each agency do an initial assessment regarding Strategic Planning for the April 2005 RRF. Items to include but not limit to are name, planning horizon, and status.

Daniel J Krumholz
Co-Chairman, RRF