

CEMVP-CO-CH

25 April 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #74, 6 & 7 December 2005.

1. Introductions / Approve Minutes – A meeting of the River Resources Forum (RRF) was held on 6 & 7 December 2005 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.

Following introductions, the Minutes from RRF #73 were amended to add the following to EMP drawdown dredging discussion:

It was recommended that the RRF revisit the use of EMP & NESP funds for drawdown dredging in about 18 months (spring 2007).

2. Next Meetings

Tuesday, April 25 Winona State University

Tuesday & Wednesday, August 29 & 30, Wabasha, MN area

Tuesday 7 Wednesday, December 5 & 6, Bloomington FWS MNR Refuge Office.

3. Agency Activities – Note: Only the agencies listed below had significant information to report.

A. LMRWSD – Terry Schwalbe. The sale of the Cargill site is nearly complete; paperwork is in attorney's hands; should be complete in Jan 2006. The use of the 494 site still being worked.

B. FWS – Mary Stefanski. Alt E is on the streets. There will be a minimum 60-day public comment period. Open houses are planned from Wabasha, MN to Savanna, IL in January 2006. Will be released for public review in mid-to-late October with a 45-day comment period.

C. WDOT – Larry Kieck. Funding, both state and federal, has been received to continue to operate the Cassville ferry. The WDOT will be changing their email addresses in the near future – format unknown.

D. COE – Dan Krumholz. Kevin Baumgard is the new Assistant Division Chief for operations. Dan will be the acting Locks & Dam Operations manager until a new manager is selected this winter. Steve Tapp will be the acting Channels & Harbors Operations manager until Dan's return. All of MVPs Natural Resource Management Functions have been re-organized into one branch; the Natural Resources and Recreation Management Branch.

4. Channel Maint. Program – Krumholz, Tapp, & Machajewski (handout 74 – 1,2,3,4).

A. Channels & Harbors Reorganization

- Steve Tapp: Dredged Material Manager

- Lisa Lund: Placement Site Coordinator

- Paul Machajewski: Channel Manager

- B. Fecal Coliform: Another round of sampling was conducted in 2005 with results similar to those in 2001 and 2002. Fecal Coliform levels at placement sites tested were not significantly different than levels in the main channel. The conclusion is that high recreational use does not elevate levels. More related to storm events.
- C. Dredging Summary:
- 31 dredging jobs = 1,003,248 cy
 - Placed at 18 different placement sites
 - 99.46% beneficial use of material
- D. Other dredging business
- MnDNR concerned with walleye spawning on Mn River next spring and the potential need for early season dredging (spawning usually occurs in mid-April). Dredging on the Mn River typically occurs later in the season due to river levels.
 - Although not funded specifically for FY06, carry-over funds from FY05 exist for Mn River dredging.
 - Dredge GOETZ: Working as effectively as WAT with booster. Traveling spud makes dredge GOETZ 30% more effective.
 - Mechanical Contractor, Andrie: Up and running. Learning curve realized at start of season. New Cable-Arm clam bucket makes dredging more efficient.
- E. Channel Mgmt Studies
- Pool 2: Is. 112 is 90% complete; fines and plantings schedule for spring 2006. Wing dam notching and side channel excavation pending NESF funding. May still pursue under O&M.
 - Lower Pool 4: Study to resume in Jan 2006. Looking at wing dam notchings and sediment control from Chippewa River.
 - Pool 5: Islands E1 & E3 90% complete; plantings scheduled for spring 2006.
 - Pool 9: PAR and draft hydraulic analysis complete.
- F. Pool 5 Drawdown
- Actual cubic yards dredged exceeded estimates for both main channel and rec access locations. Over-dredging was an issue in both cases. Dredge cut orientation was also a factor in the rec access dredging. Both will be looked at closely for future drawdowns.
- G. NESF vs. O&M Funding of Channel Mgmt Study
- The funding of Channel Mgmt Study features with NESF \$ was questioned at the previous RRF. The following reasons are given to support NESF funding

- i. NESP has a Modifying Training Structures Component
 - ii. Under NESP, we can expand the scope of the projects
 - iii. More monitoring can be done (pre & post) under NESP
 - iv. Under NESP the projects can be more experimental.
 - We will continue to pursue the construction of these features under O&M if NESP is not available.

- 5. Water Level Management – Schlagenhaft (MnDNR).
 - A. Pool 5 Drawdown: Preliminary results.
 - 1000 actual acres exposed vs. 938 predicted
 - Preliminary mussel mortality
 - 40% more mortality vs. control site in Pool 4
 - some state listed species
 - zebra mussels too
 - 72 species of vegetation documented (annual & perennials).
 - Shorebirds & waterfowl numbers increased
 - up from previous years
 - better hunting reported
 - Water quality monitoring
 - no effects of drawdown in weaver on water quality
 - Little effect, if any, on Cultural Resources

 - B. Next meeting is scheduled for 12 Jan at Winona State. Agenda items:
 - Status of drawdown in 2006; WLMTF recommendation with public input for April RRF.
 - Effects on mussels
 - possibly start earlier and drawdown slower
 - more experiments/tested needed; lots to learn
 - Additional monitoring of all effects
 - Funding
 - Public meetings
 - Rec boating
 - locals want wider and deeper cuts
 - marking of access channels
 - funding

 - C. Newsletter
 - One currently in circulation
 - Spring newsletter will have initial results

 - D. Next pools
 - Pool 9
 - NESP funding
 - Fleeting and mussel issues
 - Pool 9 is in pretty good shape
 - Pool 3 proposed by MnDNR

- Not in NESP long-term monitoring program
- Pool 6
 - Private access dredging issue
- E. Private Access Dredging
 - comes down to funding and authority
 - WiDNR can only do public access
 - Looking into other cost-share opportunities
 - Investigate purchase of dedicated equipment for environmental work.
- F. Programmatic Worksheet
 - What's next/how implement?
 - WLMTF to put next steps together.
 - Requested Dennis Anderson to use O&M Funds to take next step.
 - COE concerned with this because NESP language is not set and concerned if started under O&M may not be able to fund under NESP.
- 6. Environmental Management Program – Powell (COE) (handout 74-5)
 - A. EMP Funding of Drawdowns:
 - tabled for now, not pursuing at this time.
 - can only work on existing EMP projects in 2006.
 - no DPR movement on Drawdowns in EMP
 - B. EMP Funding
 - \$20.0M in 2006; \$4.0M MVP (vs. \$17.5M and \$2.9M MVP in 2005)
 - No Savings and Slippage is being assessed
 - C. Construction Project
 - Spring Lake, Pool Slough, Pool 8 Ph III Stage 1 & 2, Long Meadow Lake.
 - The Congressional mandate of no continuing contracts and program funding limits will require some projects to be broken down into several stages, resulting in an increase in overall costs
 - D. Projects being planned
 - Harpers Slough, Capoli Slough, Conway Lake, Lake Winneshiek
 - E. Other Activities
 - Project selection process developed by System Ecological Team will be tested with projects to be submitted by Districts. St. Paul District will submit project fact sheets endorsed at last RRF meeting.
 - Habitat project database being prepared by Rock Island District
 - Habitat project Design Handbook scheduled to be completed in April 2006

7. Recreation Work Group – Berg (handout 74 – 6)
 - A. Rec Boating Counts
 - Report completed; boating activity did not change due to Drawdown
 - B. Pool 5 Drawdown – User counts at boat ramps
 - Data being analyzed by MnDNR
 - C. Pool 9 Beach Use
 - Public meeting on 22 Aug with locals regarding area beach improvements. Locals willing to fund improvements.
 - Met on river with locals to identify sites which are accessible. Will meet again to discuss work limits.
 - D. Web-based Rec Info Site
 - St. Mary’s is working on this; foundation is set.
 - Funding from MnDNR, WDNR, & COE
 - Possible demo at next RRF
 - E. Next meeting: Dec 2005 or Jan 2006.
 - F. Other Issues: Concern rose about the lack of river hazards public educational info at boat ramps.
8. Navigation Work Group – Lambert (MDOT), Machajewski (COE)
 - A. Lake Pepin Ice
 - USCG is currently recommending that tows only use dry cargo barges, not tank barges, to be the 1st ones through Lake Pepin breaking ice in the spring. Use of just the tow boat would also be acceptable.
 - The NWG strongly recommends that the towing industry never use loaded tank barges to break ice in Lake Pepin.
 - There is unlimited liability to the towing companies since the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90); a result of the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Tow companies do not want to take that risk.
 - Tank barges are an expensive asset to towing companies; they don’t want to cause any unnecessary damage.
 - All barges are now double-hulled; this virtually eliminates loss of cargo through punctures. If a dry cargo barge is punctured water comes in and the product stays in as well.
 - Lake Pepin is 20 – 25’ deep along sailing line. Sediment re-suspension is minimal at these depths.
 - The towing companies only attempt to break through a short reach of blue ice.
 - NWG is seeking RIAC recommendation on when to go through Lake Pepin Ice
 - B. Critical Locations.

- CP Rail working on area above LD 7 in LaCrescent. Engineering firm designed repairs and work performed with marine based equipment.

C. Grounding Notifications. Updated Railroad Notification Numbers:

Burlington Northern Santa FE (BNSF)	(800) 832-5454 Ext. 3
Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Rail)	(800) 766-4357
Illinois, Chicago, Eastern (ICE)	(888) 279-6315

9. Fish & Wildlife Work Group – Wege (FWS) (handouts 74 – 7 & 8)

A. Relation with NESP

- Project prioritization
- Pool Plan implementation
- See FWVG role as steering NESP projects; FWVG recommendations.

B. Mussel update.

10. Navigation & Environmental Sustainability Program (NESP) – Stefanik (COE)

A) General

- 2005: busy year; rush to get projects rolling.
- 2006: No construction authorized, only PEDS. Funding at \$10 M (vs. \$12 in 2005); some projects cut.

B) Projects

- Pool 2 Wing Dams & Side Channel Restoration: funding cut, project on hold, baseline monitoring for wind dams is complete.
- Pool 5 Drawdown: Mussel issues.
- Pool 9 Drawdown: Continue with planning effort, EA & hydraulic analysis working; maybe draw pool down in 2007.
- Forestry Management: Public meetings being scheduled; draft report early 2006.
- LD 8 Embankment: Team met to review project status; concern with effect on Reno Bottoms – currently Reno is in good shape; need clear goals and objectives.

11. Embankments Study – Stefanik (COE)

A) General

- looking at sand berms vs. rip rap for bank protection.
- due to excavation needs at the Teepeeota Point Transfer Site in lower Pool 4, construction will be required in 2006 at the LD 4 embankment.

B) NESP Public Relations

- There was a discussion on the need for more public relations work on educating the public on the NESP program.

- *Gretchen Benjamin motioned and Dan Krumholz seconded that a letter from the RRF be sent to Chuck Spitzack supporting the funding of NESP Public Relation efforts. The motion was endorsed by consensus.*

12. Agency Permit Review – All (handouts 74 – 9, 10, 11, 12)

Due to retirements, new employees and agency reorganizations, it was recognized that there was a need to document each agency permit review process to maintain consistency. Each agency will submit an electronic version of the handouts to Steve Tapp (prior to RRF 75) who will in turn convert them to a consistent format for eventual posting to the web in the CMMP and on the RRF website. The permit review process will be limited to interagency use only (not for public use – too many permits to cover).

13. LD 3 Update – Wilcox (COE)

- Navigation Safety and Embankment project
- Navigation safety feature: Extend landward guide wall and channel modification.
- Embankment feature: Strengthen embankments with phased construction
- \$57 Million construction project. B:C = 2.15. Construction scheduled to begin in 2007 and be completed in 2008.
- Fish passage: No funding available for this feature under Construction General (CG) or the Inland Waterways Trust Fund. Funding will be pursued under NESP.

Daniel J Krumholz
Co-Chairman, RRF