

CEMVP-CO-CH

29 – 30 August 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR Record

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #58, 29 – 30 August 2000.

1. Introductions / Approve Minutes – A meeting of the River Resources Forum (RRF) was held on 29 – 30 August 2000 in the Community Room of the Municipal Building in Trempealeau, Wisconsin. Attached is an attendance list. *Following introductions, the Minutes from RRF #57 were approved with the following changes:*

Item 3. L/D 3 Embankment: Changed Corps O&M funds to CG funds.

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

COE – Dean Peterson – On 30 June 2000, a lock operator at L/D 2 accidentally opened one of the dams gates all of the way. The rush of water caused a 6” water surge at Prescott, broke some slips apart at Leo’s Landing, and a small fuel spill. The COE has accepted all responsibility. Leo’s Landing will be rebuilt and operational next season. The COE is reviewing operating plans.

MDNR – Steve Johnson – Amy Denz has replaced Allen Robbins-Fenger; welcome Amy. Commissioners Garber & Morris toured Pool 5 in mid-Aug.

LMRWD – Kevin Bigalke – Kevin introduced himself to the RRF as the new administrator for the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District.

FWS – Gary Wege – Reviewed handout (RRF#58-1); jeopardy declaration. Zebra mussels have made their way up the St. Croix to above Afton, MN (reproducing). Best Higgins Eye bed is at Hudson, WI.

MWBAC – Keith Uhlig – Gov. Ventura appointed James Sieben to replace Robin Grawe.

MDOT – Dick Lambert – Trying to get the Commissioner out on the river and interested in river issues.

USCG – Jason Neubauer – Jason has replaced Scott Bates in St. Paul. John Grez in the “new guy” in the La Crosse, WI office.

3. L/D 3 Navigation Safety & Embankments – COE - John Bailen.

A. On 31 August 2000, a stakeholders meeting will be held at Frontenac State Park to discuss alternatives. Dr. Steve Bartell will conduct a risk analysis of the alternatives.

B. No construction scheduled in 2001; June 2002 earliest.

C. MWBAC to facilitate public meetings.

D. Funding has not been determined yet; too early. Possibly all CG with cost/benefit justification.

E. Fish passage is still being considered.

F. Non-construction alternatives are also being considered.

G. There is not a 100% solution to this problem. Compromise will be needed.

4. WLMTF – Gretchen Benjamin (WDNR).

A. There will be a meeting during the 1st week of October 2000 regarding the pool-operating plan.

B. Pool 8: Monitoring this summer. Attempt drawdown in 2001. Use 1135 program to fund recreational dredging in 2001; no recreational dredging was conducted in 2000. WDNR still needs two of the three required permits; also only has draft MOU, no final signatures. MDNR has all required project permits. As it turns out, this summer was not optimal for a drawdown; lots of water fluctuation (>75,000 cfs to <17,000 cfs).

C. Drought conditions: Gretchen will discuss this at the next WLMTF meeting. Will coordinate with LTRM. Gary Wege would like someone to investigate adding oxygen to river during drought.

D. Will report on Lizzy Paul and Peck Lake mini drawdowns at the December RRF.

5. NWG – Dan Krumholz (COE).

Welcome to Jason Neubauer (USCG) who replaced Scott Bates. Jason will retain the chair duties of the NWG for the USCG.

A. Railroad Embankment: A review of COE policies resulted in no COE programs available to fund such repairs (i.e. Avoid/Minimize). Col. Mudd's (Rock Island District Engineer) suggested program at Navigation Industry days in St. Louis was WRDA 99, Sec. 458 (levee protection). This program is authorized but not funded, however, does not apply to this situation. COE would need special legislation to fund this type of program. However, this will be tough to justify.

B. Signs: The COE has suggested verbiage (CRITICAL ZONE: POTENTIAL RAILROAD TRACKBED EROSION); need to confirm railroad commitment to sign portion of program.

C. Mooring Buoy: Program is a COE program coordinated through the OSIT process; separate from the Critical Location program but there is some overlap. Environmental Review is ongoing (COE). Paul Machajewski is preparing an implementation timeline.

6. RWG - Dick Otto (COE).

A. Pool 2 Beach Plan: Requesting comments from agencies. Plan to endorse at December RRF.

B. Pool 7 & 8 Beach Plan: Public meetings scheduled for 10 – 12 Oct 2000 in Trempealeau, La Crosse, & Brownsville.

C. Suggest holding "Pool Meetings" in the future to discuss "all" issues in that pool.

D. Trends Analysis is being reviewed. Will report on at next RRF.

E. Will report on FY01 Boating Study at next RRF.

7. FWWG – Rick Frietsche (FWS).

A. Conceptual pool planning: Pools 5 & 9 almost complete; will be used as models for other pools. Desired condition of pool in 50 years. Drafts being reviewed. MWBAC to facilitate public meetings (RRF#58-2).

8. Weaver Bottoms Task Force – Eric Nelson (FWS).
 - A. Vegetative sampling: Poor in Weaver and Pool 5; Lost Is. and Spring Lake looking good. Bottom samples collected, identified and tested.
 - B. MN4 & 5: Both lowered and MN4 notched in August. WDNR not happy with decision to notch MN4 vs. MN5.
 - C. Citizens task force is very interested & active.

9. CMP – Dan Krumholz, Steve Tapp, & Paul Machajewski (COE).

Steve and Paul reviewed handouts (RRF#58-3 & 4).

 - A. Dakota Island Excavation: Mathy now owns Hot Fish Shop site. L&S Industrial Marine is excavating approximately 50 – 75,000cy and barging to Hot Fish Shop. Mathy is removing material. COE is looking into trading Dakota Creek site for extra area needed at Hot Fish Shop. MDOT involvement needed to configure new entrance road.
 - B. Lansing: IDOT is looking into replacing the highway bridge; very early in the planning process.
 - C. MN River DMMP: Waiting on 404 & EA. Kevin Bigalke, new to LMRWSD, wants to get things going.
 - D. Lower Pool 2: 1.2 million cy of material placed on Grey Cloud. Depending on channel conditions, temporary containment islands should be good for 15 – 20 years. Working on topsoil and seeding. Unclear on how Grey Cloud will look in 20 years (i.e. residential, park, both).
 - E. Wild's Bend: 334,000 cy to EMP Island, 166,000 cy to Mathy Pit #2. High-speed dewatering of fines will be tested on this project; should come out like potting soil by adding flocculent to slurry.
 - F. McMillan Island: Project delayed until 2001; need to acquire permanent flowage easements.
 - G. Lower Pool 4: Combination of Channel Management Study & Dredged Material Management Study. Kickoff meeting fall of 2000.
 - H. Pool 8, Is. 116: Letter from Ron Kind; citizen complaint of not enough rock protecting the island.

10. EMP – Don Powell(COE).

Don reviewed his handouts (RRF#58-5 & 6).

 - A. Project completion and evaluation reports; 6 projects under contract.
 - B. Public meetings in September. Ask 20 – 25 questions of the public about the projects. Contract facilitator (Earthtec?).
 - C. Open Houses on M/V Miss; good turnout.

11. Hydropower – Judy Mader(MPCA)
 - A. 3-year preliminary permit granted by FERC to do survey. Permit eliminates competition at these sites from others wanting to do hydropower. Reports are to be going to FERC; not sure if this is happening.
 - B. Re-licensing Ford plant at L/D 1; same as in past.

12. Containment Area Access – Rick Frietsche (FWS).

Based on letter from Jim Fisher (FWS) to Dan Krumholz (COE) (RRF#58-7).

 - A. Health & Safety: Need tests to validate concerns (FWS will take lead on this).
 - B. Disbursement of People: Bathtubs keep people away from prime habitat areas and concentrates them in areas where we want them.
 - C. “Gatherings” Permits: Need to address big party issues. Large groups are against FWS policy. Six allowable public use activities; all focus on wildlife. Non-compatible uses; possibly have local congressional representative change designation in this area for recreational use.
 - D. Operational Areas: Per LUAP, most is FWS fee title. Possibly change/transfer land from FWS to COE; would take legislative action.
 - E. Miscellaneous comments regarding keeping open or closing access: Used to close them in past but had blowouts into backwaters. When open, COE can use site for both hydraulic and mechanical dredging. Great recreational demand to leave open. Demand for beaches on river is growing. Bigger boats mostly use bathtubs. When 1st left open, it’s great deepwater fish habitat. Zebra mussel breeding grounds when left open. When open, it’s easier for law enforcement to monitor people in concentrated areas vs. all over the pool. Only one problem since 1984. The FWS has limited staff for public use management.
 - F. Decision: A meeting to discuss containment area management will be held this fall with RRF representatives.
13. Next Meeting.

December 5 - 6, 2000, National Park Service office in Science Museum in St. Paul.

Dean Peterson
Co-Chairman, RRF