Memorandum For The Record

4 December 2002

Subject: Downstream Citizens Group Meeting – Headwaters ROPE Study

1. On Monday, 2 December 2002, the Downstream Citizens Group - Headwaters ROPE Study met at the Library in Aitkin, Minnesota. There were 11 participants at the meeting. Stakeholders represented 8 of those attendees, including rural residents, farmers, a representative from the Audubon Society, and one person involved in wild ricing (see attached Sign-In Sheet for listing and details regarding participants).

2. Corps representatives provided a brief overview of the ROPE Study, its scope, and the role of the Downstream Citizens Group. There were general questions and answers regarding the study.

3. The objective of this meeting was to form a diverse and effective downstream citizen volunteers group. The agenda used for the meeting is attached as enclosure 2 and was generally followed.

4. A number of noteworthy points were raised and discussed at this metting, as follows:

    - Due to Tribal interests and requests, there will be an evaluation of what the system would be like if the current dams were not in existence, mimicking "pre-dam" or "natural" conditions.
    - Because the Corps does not control all dams (some are controlled by power companies), there is currently an effort to coordinate with all dam operators whose actions have an effect upon one another and on lake and river conditions.
    - Because wet and dry weather cycles occur, the ROPE Study is including wet and dry as well as "normal" cycles in its hydraulic model evaluations.

5. The representative from the Audubon Society stressed the effects that water – too high or too low – has on wildlife, and gave illustrations.

6. One Corps representative raised the issue of decreased upland water storage and increased drainage. When the dams were built, there was more room for storage of the water without damaging valuable developed property. Now, however, the development of the watershed has accelerated drainage, and development has occurred around the lakes. So, now it is unknown as to how much flood risk exists for upstream and downstream areas. Hydraulic modeling to be done as part of the ROPE should help us to better understand the flood risks throughout the watershed.

7. Regarding flooding issues in Aitkin and the surrounding area, a number of issues were discussed, and questions were raised.

    a. Rock ledge on the Mississippi River at Aitkin was mentioned as a trouble spot.

b. Points of the ramifications of flooding of farmland were raised, such as the need to move animals about, the flooding of cattle land resulting in the depositing of animal waste in the river (Note: farmers are required to keep animals away from the river for that very purpose. The positive results are negated during a flood.), and the loss of crops.
c. The potential for erosion of the Mississippi riverbanks due to flood waters was discussed.
d. The issue was raised regarding the need for better and more timely information from local authorities regarding rising waters. A possible flood hotline was discussed.
e. The Corps representatives explained that later this spring there is a likelihood of a Corps study starting to specifically address the Aitkin flood problems. It is called the initial appraisal under the Section 205 Study. This initial appraisal study would be 100% federally funded (up to $100,000) to evaluate flood problems in the Aitkin area and determine if there is a likely feasible project. If the initial appraisal findings are favorable, a more detailed cost-shared Feasibility Study could be initiated, and that could lead to construction of a Federal Flood Control Project for Aitkin.

7. The meeting was productive and accomplished its intent. It was agreed that the group would meet again in a few months, and encourage more participation by others in the Downstream Study Group.

/ s /

Ed McNally
Project Manager

Encls. 2
Sign-in Sheet
Agenda

Subject: Downstream Citizens Group Meeting – at Aitkin, MN Public Library on December 02
RE: Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Studies

Sign-In Roster

	Name	Organization	Email and/or Telephone
1.	Ed McNally	(COE)	651-290-5387
2.	Bill Fox		218-927-2837
3.	Dan Seifert	AUDUBON	dseifert@audubon.org 6512901195
4.	Ron Dotzlin	Aitkin	218-927 3944
5.	JEFF HASSKAMP	Aitkin	MN. 2189274189
6.	Gregg Struss	(COE)	218-829-2797
7.	Carl Vermeersch	Aitkin	218-927-2492
8.	FRAYDA NITSCHKE	AITKIN	218-927-6445
9.	Curtis Nitschke	AITKIN	"
10.	DENNY BELLIG	LITTLE FALLS	320-632-8617
11.	John O'LEARY	Grand Rapids	218.327.4027
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13.			
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19.			
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21.			

Subject: Initial Downstream Citizens Group
RE: Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Reservoir Operations Plan Evaluation (ROPE) Studies

A G E N D A

Welcome and Introductions
Name and something about yourself and/or your organization

Overview and status of the ROPE
Overview of scope, schedule, budgets, processes for this Study
(see part 1 of the meeting handouts)

Explain and discuss the roles of this Group and others being formed
Overview of the Groups being formed and the roles of each group
(see part 2 of the meeting handouts)

Discussion of the Task Force
Are diverse interests represented?
Are key interests missing? If so, how can the group get a representative from that group to volunteer?

Organize and Mobilize this Task Force
Review and discuss the Ground Rules and Meeting Procedures
Determine who will lead as Master of Ceremonies (suggest co-leadership)
Determine where, when and how often the Task Force should meet
1 Determine who will record a short summary of minutes of each meeting

General Open Discussions - *(focus on organizing the group -- as time permits)*

Summary and Discussion of any Follow-up Actions Needed

++++++++++ Breakout Groups for Q&A ++++++++++

(NOTE: You may use the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) form or the FAQ web page link to get your question answered and displayed on the ROPE web page.)