

## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #132 on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at the National Eagle Center, Wabasha WI.

### Introductions, Minutes, Next Meetings, Due Outs (ALL)

- Introductions
- RRF 131 Minutes approval
  - Motion from WIDNR – Sammi Boyd
  - Second from USACE – Dano DeVaney
  - No discussion - approved as written.
- Next Meetings:
  - #133 December 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> La Crosse, WI. USGS conference room. 2630 Fanta Reed Rd La Crosse WI 54601
  - #134 Tentatively planned for April 21<sup>st</sup> in Prairie Du Chien.
- Due Outs carried forward from previous meetings:
  - Will continue to work on creating a Due-Out Tracking Spreadsheet – through meeting 123, but it is not finished.
    - USACE cannot post spreadsheets on the USACE website, but they can be emailed.
      - Minutes are still/will be posted online.
  - RWG will develop a recommendation to the RRF regarding the need for a programmatic NEPA document to cover beach nourishment and other actions at sites identified in beach management plans (Berg)
  - Hold a vote proposing to roll WLMTF into FWWG.
  - BUWG, RWG, NWG should create or revisit guiding principles or documents (from meeting 130)

### Agency Activities – (All)

- Steve Clark/Dano DeVaney – USACE
  - Staffing Updates.
    - Col. Mathew B. Chase assumed command of the St Paul District July 18<sup>th</sup>.
    - Tamera Cameron Retired
      - Chris Atkins Acting as Chief of Operations
      - Bre Popkins acting as Deputy Chief of Operations
    - RPEDN- Staffing currently stable
      - Steve Clark will temporarily give up his FWWG voting to another employee while he is acting as RRF Co-Chair
    - C&H- We are still short personnel, no guidance long term, Dano DeVaney is acting Channels and Harbors Chief
  - Budget

- FY 25 budget execution has been pretty good, Grand Encampment unload has slipped from FY25 to FY 26 Corps Island unload has slipped from FY 25 to FY 26.
    - Wing Dam Assessment
    - MN River Bathing Collection to Mankato
  - Closure to Navigation
    - LD 6 miter gate changes happening Aug 19, 21, 26 and 28 12 hour closures each day 0700 - 1900
- Sabrina Chandler – USFWS
  - Staffing updates.
    - Still in the hiring freeze
    - Sharonne Baylor retired at end of May
      - Jaylon H. hired in a Fellow Intern role
        - Will work thru end of Aug then continue school
        - Will continue her role in May for up to 2 yrs.
    - Anticipate some retirements at the end of the calendar year
    - Brian Nesvik was confirmed by the Senate Committee as Director of FWS.
      - Was formerly Wyoming Director of Game and Fish, National guard service member, and former Game Warden.
  - Project/Other:
    - GSA has rescinded lease cancellation for the Winona Office.
      - Can continue with a 1 yr leases
    - McGregor District office construction
      - Move in date is in spring of 26
    - Sam Gordy Slough project with WIDNR is completed
  - Budget Updates.
    - Just got FY25 Budget two weeks ago
    - Expecting cuts in FY26
    - Working out how to restructure to balance workload with current resources
- Holly Henriksen– National Park Service
  - Staffing
    - Only lost 1 Employee in DRP – still figuring out who will be attending the RRF long term
  - Projects/Other
    - Working on projects for applying for NESP projects
    - Working with USACE on mussel surveys
    - Have been continuing Recreation Surveys after successful surveys related to Disposition survey.
    - Two Lease cancellations got rescinded, will be able to continue 1 yr leases
- Shannon Young- USCG
  - Updates:
    - Wyaconda- has been down
      - Is completing sea trials

- Hoping to service AtoNs next week
  - Seeing up uptick in unregulated over the water fuel transfers
    - This is a regulated activity
    - Seeing in the Redwing
      - Diesel Dogs Company
- Staffing:
  - Fully staffed
- Liz Scherber – MN DNR
  - Projects:
    - 3M Priority Two settlement under the CAP 204 program.
      - Project would build Islands around Lower Gray Cloud
      - Waiting on Federal funds (CAP)
      - Liz Scherber (MN DNR) & John Henderson (USACE) are the contacts
- Sammi Boyd – WI DNR
  - Staffing Update
    - Multiple positions still vacant due to lack of federal funds
    - Vanessa also supervising Lake Michigan team at the moment
    - Travel restrictions in place, could continue thru Oct.
  - Projects:
    - Water Quality Certification completed for LD 7 Outdraft
    - Continued work on NESP reach planning
- Jacob Rapp- MPCA
  - Wabasha Barge Terminal Permit
    - Currently under review but getting close to issuing.
- Ryan Hupfeld – IA DNR
  - Staffing Update:
    - Scott Gritters is retiring Aug 28<sup>th</sup>.
    - Unable to hire currently.
      - Will have two vacant positions

## Channel Maintenance Program Update (Cottrell, DeVaney, Hammer)

- Channel Dredging - Dan Cottrell
  - Review of Dredge Schedule
    - Goetz – Began on May 21<sup>st</sup>, left for St. Louis on 7/18.
      - Dredged 250K cy
    - Govt Mechanical
      - Mostly worked thru Pool 6, still some need there.
        - Winona Small Boat Harbor Dredging
          - Hasn't been dredged since 2019
          - ~7500 yards and lot of which was fines.
        - Specific harbors are authorized by Congress but must have specific funding
          - Got Winona Small Boat Harbor funding this year.
            - Someone lobbied congress for this specific funding

- Funds received should be used in the FY but funds don't specifically expire.
    - Also risk if not used it could be taken away.
- Contract Mechanical 1
  - Started in April.
  - Generally kept below Lake Pepin.
    - However, we are currently moving them to Redwing for the Below Goose Bay Job
  - Production is good and should run them into November
- Contract Mechanical 2
  - Started in May
    - Generally kept above Lake Pepin.
    - Currently "smoothing out the edges" behind LD2 Protective Island Contractor at Boulanger Bend
      - Island Contractor (Plant 4) is constricted to 2022 conditions (when surveys were done)
- Contract Mechanical 3 (unload contractor)
  - Just transitioning this week to first channel dredging job in Pool 9
- Contract Mechanical 4
  - Currently dredging in Boulanger Bend for LD 2 Protective Island
  - Will be working through the end of the season there
- Below Goose Bay (786.0 -786.5)
  - We became aware of the need to dredge this cut last year, large concern for navigation.
  - This is a new cut and environmental needed to be completed.
    - EA was completed this Summer
    - Contract Mechanical Plant 1 is currently in route to start dredging here.
      - Will only dredge to 11' because of placement site constraints.
      - Since this is new, this will be a dredge and see what happens type situation
  - Question: did the CMS look at this "5<sup>th</sup> Cut" at Below Goose Bay?
    - The CMS did look at a closing structure here as part of a bigger project, but the bigger project did not move forward.
      - This cut could be looked at in individual model
- Unscheduled Work on Dredge Schedule.
  - MN River
    - We have surveyed the river a couple times, including surveying the entire 14-mile stretch
      - There is a lot of material in the MN River, but we have not seen any noticeable impact from the Rapidan Dam yet.
        - In 2024 we dredged 50k cy at Petersons Bar, currently 60k there.
    - MN river is funded separate from the Miss. River. There is plenty of funding this year.
      - Due to high water, we have not been able to dredge yet.
        - Currently 11' above LCP
  - Pool 2
    - Freeborn is always a challenge especially with fines
      - Hoping to use fines in island construction
  - Pool 4
    - Head of lake Pepin has a lot of material, but no placement site options
      - DMMP has started

- Pool 5
  - Most work was completed with dredge Goetz
- Pool 5a
  - Besty Slough was dredged early in the season but could use it again.
  - Wilds bend could be dredged but is missing two Red Buoys.
- Pool 6
  - Government Mechanical has dredge here already
- Pool 7
  - CM1 dredged the upper reaches, we won't probably dredge in the lower reach due to the LD 7 outdraft project.
- Pool 8
  - Goetz addressed large quantity
  - GM currently dredging here
- Pool 9
  - Unload Contractor is addressing the needs here
- Pool 10
  - Lower Pool 10 HREP is currently occupying the Placement site
  - Have a need to dredge but we may not be able to defer.
- Question: With all the work at Lower Pool 2, is a 15-barge tow going to happen?
  - No, not only because of island work. There are too many fines in Freeborn Bend and the island project will not use all those fines.
  - Island will used 285k granular, and a foot of fines.
    - Most fines will be dredged from over wintering habitat, not the channel.
- Question: The fleeting area at Isle La Plume in Pool 8 is filling in, is there any plans that may help this area?
  - The wing Dam assessment may start in Pool 8
  - USACE does not maintain the fleeting areas. Sometimes by dredging the channel can help fleeting areas by a secondary benefit, but USACE won't change our hydraulics to solely improve fleeting areas.
- Betsy Slough Sedimentation (slides)
  - Only site outside lock approaches that we dredge to 13'
  - Is unique in that it builds faster in medium flows
  - Dredged May 16<sup>th</sup>, and filled back in by July 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Aug 6<sup>th</sup>, we had a grounding as shoaling was outside the dredge cut.
    - You can see the holes and hump cause by the prop wash from the grounding
- Placement Site Summary - Dano DeVaney/Eric Hammer
  - Placement Site Current Activity Schedule.
    - Lock and Dam 2 Protective Island:
      - Contractor is progressing well, transitioning to 24hr 6 days a week.
        - Dredging is good quality, despite the large cuts
      - The Island is designed for embankment protection.
        - Solve a C&H placement need and embankment protection
        - Also provides a habitat benefit but on the island and in the water
    - LIDAR Surveys:
      - No additional evaluation work of last years surveys has been done
      - Flight plan task order was awarded for 2025 data collection.
    - Pine Bend:
      - LS Marine offloaded 11k cy of granular for Pigs Eye project
      - Pigs Eye Project hopes to be wrapped up this year, High water issues.

- One island to finish.
- Upper Boulanger
  - Pigs Eye project offload fines wrapped up.
- Corps Island:
  - A contractor completed bank stabilization last fall.
    - Contractor completed corrective action plan to address deficiencies.
  - Willow planting is expected to be completed TBD.
- Reads Landing:
  - Newt Marine is island off-loading at Reads Landing for the NESP Island #4 Project
    - This should wrap up soon.
      - We haven't been able to place material there for two seasons
- Wabasha Gravel Pit:
  - Under the 217 agreement contractors finished offload 135k cy from WGP at the end of May. Potential for another offload this fall.
  - Contractor completed some spring site shaping in the beneficial use area.
- Rolling Prairie:
  - M&R completed topsoil scraping an additional 5 acres at the Fitzzy 40 section.
  - Parking lot improvement at the homestead. Will consist of concrete removal, boulder placement, and gravel improvements. SOW is ready but on hold.
  - Gorman Creek Re-alignment was completed by M&R. Berm was breached on 16-JUL
- Above Fisher Island: Stabilization was completed in 2024, a willow planting contract is planned for 2026.
- Fountain City 1:
  - Army Reserve exercise: conducted fast water bridging operations at FC1 on April 25<sup>th</sup> and again Aug 6<sup>th</sup>.
  - We are still actively trying to move that material to the La Crosse Landfill.
    - Contract is currently in internal DQC review. Hope to award by end of FY.
- Wilds Bend:
  - Stabilization is complete. Deficiencies were corrected this summer.
    - Willow planting is planned for 2026.
- Homer:
  - M&R completed spring site shaping.
- Brownsville:
  - Completed tree removal project our ES office from the downstream end of Brownsville.
  - M&R completed spring site shaping.
  - Used goat to graze small vegetation, overall worked very well.
- Genoa Power Plant:
  - HTRW was completed for the site, continue course towards utilization
- Lansing Island:
  - Offloaded about 50k cy from our IDIQ contractor.
- Lansing Highway Bridge:
  - Bridge construction: It's still a little congested, as we are working within a shared space. Kramer is staging equipment here, along with us placing material at the LHB.
    - Construction is going well.
  - Car Ferry: IADOT is looking to do a car ferry once the old Lansing bridge is removed this fall. The ferry would dock at the beneficial use site. The site is owned by the FWS and operated by USACE.
    - Talks have just begun, but a lot of coordination must happen.

- Prairie Sand and Gravel:
  - Site was recently endorsed by RRF, RE agreement has expired.
    - Recently completed HTRW.
- McMillian Island:
  - Lower Pool 10 HREP Contractor is currently offloading up to 150k from McMillian Island.
  - Bedload collector currently is not planned for any project.
- Buck Creek:
  - Closed the placement site on 29-May.
    - with the upcoming HREP projects we don't have any current plans to place material at Buck Creek anytime soon.
- Placement Site Potential Activities:
  - Corps Island Unload Contract:
    - RE agreement with local landowner fell through. The PDT team has transitioned this project to CSPS (Contractor Selected Placement Site).
      - Contractor will have to bring material to either a readily available commercial site or be used for beneficial use.
      - Contractor will still have access to LD 3 wall to offload.
      - EA will be out for public comment in Sept.
  - Wabasha Gravel Pit:
    - Blowing Sand Stabilization. We are working on developing a plan to stabilize and protect the downstream section of the WGP.
      - Project is currently delayed due to staffing issues.
      - It will include berm and windbreaks, as well as topsoil and vegetation plantings.
        - An EA will be needed for the movement of topsoil from Rolling Prairie to WGP
  - Teepeeota:
    - Possible offload of material in support of the Big Lake HREP project.
      - Project is currently paused.
  - Grand Encampment:
    - 217 island offloads in support.
      - City is currently working through the Mitigation issues of the development of the barge facility.
      - Hope to have 217 island offload in 2026, may transition from Grand Encampment to Teepeeota.
    - Grand Encampment Unload contract
      - Originally Backstop to Wabasha 217: Island offload with placement at Zumbro River Flats properties.
      - PDT now developing an operations plan
        - Plan to complete by the end of FY
        - Then transition to a contract planning for an unload.
      - We held an onsite visit at the end of July.
        - MN has concerns with the constraint of the Zumbro River
          - Long term goal for MN is to remove the Levee.
  - Above West Newton:
    - Possible offload of Above West Newton through West Newton Chute to Rolling Prairie.
  - Wilds Bend:
    - Dredge Goetz reported difficulty getting in in 2024, investigate providing access cut.

- Above Brownsville:
    - Look at possibility of closing off ponding area and reinstalling drops before next GOETZ use.
    - Look at possibility of utilizing GOETZ for offload of Above Brownsville to Brownsville to alleviate residential concerns.
  - Brownsville:
    - Potential beneficial use to Reno Bottoms HREP. (trucking, no Federal Standard contribution) Currently on pause.
  - Mississippi Gardens:
    - All plans on hold until DMMP necessitates use.
  - McMillan Island:
    - Potential for floodplain forest restoration project adjacent to existing site.
  - Pipeline A:
    - Construction has completed for the pipeline.
      - M&R completed securing the pipeline in July
    - Awaiting delivery of the Booster pump this fall.
- Long-term planning, & DMMPs – Dano DeVaney & Eric Hammer
  - DMMP's:
    - Pool 3/Upper 4:
      - This PDT just kicked off, currently assessing dredging volumes and backlog dredging
      - PIIC will be contacted for input.
    - Pool 9:
      - Is currently in Development
        - Currently completing HTRW for TSP pit sites. This should wrap up soon.
        - Bedload collector option was removed from the DMMP.
    - Pool 2:
      - In implementation phase.
        - Currently working on purchasing property in pool 2.
    - Pool 4:
      - In implementation phase.
        - RE is currently working on purchasing property from willing landowners.
          - Offer letter has been sent and we expect these sales to be complete by the end of the FY.
    - Pool 6:
      - In implementation phase.
      - Fastenal Site for real estate agreement was signed
        - Badger Equipment site.
          - It has about 3.5 acres of area available for placement.
          - An EA closed April 27<sup>th</sup>

## Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) (John Henderson)

- Project Updates:
  - Construction
    - McGregor Lake
      - Stage 1: Complete turned over to FWS in March
      - Stage 2: finishing final grading, and seeding
        - Planned to turn over in 2026
      - Ribbon Cutting in 2026



- Lower Pool 10 HREP
  - Stage 1: getting started, placed about 20k cy
    - Will award last Option for stage 1 in Aug.
  - Stage 2 & 3: FY26 Pending funding (PBUD), Advertise Stage 3 first.
- Design:
  - Reno Bottoms (paused): Stage 1 (forestry) pending funding
  - Big Lake (paused):
    - Stage 1: paused at 65% design. PDT is ready to move pending funding
      - Hoping to pick back up in summer 2026
  - Robinson Lake:
    - Wrapping up Feasibility. Will be paused until after Big Lake
  - MN Riverbank Stabilization
    - Funding in 2026

## LD 7 Outdraft Update (Billy Thompson)

- LD 7 Outdraft Modifications:
  - Address due outs from last meeting:
    - Updated imagery to accurately represent site condition
    - Published news release for public impacts.
      - Has a video pending release
  - Contract Status:
    - Advertised on May 2<sup>nd</sup>
    - Award and Notice to Proceed June 16<sup>th</sup>
    - Mobilization after Labor Day
      - Expected rock placement in Sept.
      - Contract Completion planned for December 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - 2026 and Beyond: Project Phase III Update (Ported Guide Wall)
    - Will monitor the effectiveness of the changes
    - Project was submitted and ranked.
  - Public Affairs video preview: Video should be released next week.

## Water Level Management Task Force (Neil Rude)

- No new updates have not had a meeting recently.
- We are in an interesting spot as NESP was taking over most of this role.
- Talked about rolling the WLMTF into the FWVG will vote on in December

## Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Ryan Hupfeld)

- Hosting a meeting in Oct/Nov in the La Crosse area, details to come.

## Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) (Zach Kimmel)

- Programs Status:
  - Due to Lack of appropriations, have been working on getting projects to good pause point.
  - FY2025 – no new FY25 appropriations using FY24 funding.
  - FY2026.
    - Can not be funded thru P-Bud.
  - But looking for up to \$54 Million

- Status of MOU:
  - Templates are being reviewed by MVD and then to HQ.
- NESP- Navigation
  - Pool 7 Mooring Cell and dolphin
    - Trying to award contract in late summer/early fall
    - Work to complete in 2026
    - Pre-solicitation is currently out.
  - Pool 10: Mooring Cell
    - Funding is not available for an FY25/FY26 construction contract award.
      - Currently reviewing comments
      - Question: is the Corps PDT looking at alternative locations?
        - Yes, they will provide a list to Corps leadership
  - Navigation Mitigation Pool 4 Island 4
    - First systemic mitigation project, fully funded by the Navigation side of NESP.
    - Awarded 14 July 2023
    - Grading and seeding scheduled to be done in 2026
- NESP – Ecosystem projects.
  - Systemic Forestry
    - Buttoning up PMP
    - Coordination moved to MVR (Rachel)
  - Pool 4 Wacouta Bay (design)
    - Plans and Spec are expected to be signed this week.
      - Will be put on pause.
      - If funding does become available, it would be awarded in 2026.
  - Pool 10 Sny Magill-Effigy Mounds (design)
    - Plans and Specs will be paused around December 2025
      - If funding does become available, it would be award in 2026.
  - Pool 6 Johnson Island (PIR)
    - Final PIR Submission to MVD anticipated in September 2025; approval hopeful in Q1FY26.
    - Will shelve at that approval and await design funding.

## Sustainable Rivers Program (Steve Clark)

- Sustainable River Program is a newer nationwide USACE program.
  - Typically funded for about 5 million dollars.
  - Allows us to make operational changes at any of our dams for environmental benefit.
    - It is not a construction authority.
    - Study authority that may lead to operational changes (like gate operations).
  - Projects are proposed to program, pending selection they will fund that process.
- Proposed Operations Change at Lock and Dam 10
  - Aaron McFarlane is the lead on this project.
  - Question and concerns were brought forward from partners, along with concerns about LD10 Mooring Cell.
    - Concerns with water levels during the winter.

- Decided to halt this project, and redirect any remaining funds towards some tools for public outreach and education by the end of Sept.
  - Comment: Look at sharing water level management information at LD open houses.
- Comment: Could this program look at Plant habitat like Wild Rice.
  - SRP is working on creating a workshop for wild rice in northern headwaters. Looking to set up a meeting a kickoff meeting in Sept and onsite in December.
- Lock and Dam 2 Sturgeon Spawning Habitat
  - Trevor Cyphers is the lead, working with Neil Rude at MN DNR.
  - Plans to complete substrate mapping with sonar and H&H modeling this FY.
    - If substrate in the right areas. Will look at operational changes to improve spawning habitat factoring in Substrate, velocity, and depth.

### Other Topic and/or presenter (guest speaker)

- Friends of Pool 2 is hosting a program on Sept 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 6-8pm
  - Living Lands and Water Education Barge
    - Moored at Harriett Island
    - Talk on invasive Asian Carp
- Akermans Cut
  - Was successful collecting data at high flows this season
    - Initial review 90k cfs creates the worst conditions
    - Should be able to review data soon.
    - Will provide an update of findings in December
- Aug RRF meeting:
- Motion to adjourn:
  - USACE
  - MN DNR

### Other Topics/Issues, Due-Outs, Agenda Topics (ALL)

- Due-Outs from this RRF
  - Sammi will send Nibi RRF foundational documentations
  - Sammi will provide a template for Agency Updates for next RRF
  - Eric will contact PDC Public Library for April RRF
  - Nibi would like to connect with John and Liz on 3M project
  - Nibi would like to be notified of Public Release of Corps Island EA.
  - Nibi would like to be connect with Steve on Wild Rice workshop
  - Vote to move WLMTF into FWWG schedule for Dec. Meeting
  - LD2 Protective Island photos update at next meeting
- Motion to Adjourn – USACE- Dano DeVaney
  - Second – MN DNR - Liz Scherber

Steve Clark  
Co-Chairman, RRF

Introductions around the room 20-August-2025:

1. Dan Cottrell-Channel Manager- USACE MVP
2. Dano DeVaney – Placement Site Manager – USACE MVP
3. Eric Hammer – Channel Maintenance Coordinator – USACE MVP
4. Steve Clark – Environmental Compliance Section Chief – USACE MVP
5. Sammi Boyd – Mississippi River Planner – WI DNR
6. Vanessa Perry – Mississippi River Unit Manager - WI DNR
7. Liz Scherber – Mississippi River Coordinator - MN DNR
8. Lucas Youngsma – Area Hydrologist - MN DNR
9. Neil Rude – Mississippi River Habitat Specialist – MN DNR
10. Ryan Hupfeld – Mississippi River Habitat Coordinator- IA DNR
11. John Henderson- Project Manager – USACE MVP
12. Dan Reburn- Project Manager – USACE MVP
13. Zach Kimmel- Project Manager – USACE MVP
14. Billy Thomson- Project Manager – USACE MVP
15. Geoff Kramer – Hydrologic Engineer - USACE MVP
16. Trevor Cyphers - Biologist - USACE MVP
17. Sara Rother-Forester-USACE MVP
18. Carrie Nelson – Biologist - USACE MVP
19. Sabrina Chandler – Refuge Manager – USFWS
20. Kendra Pednault – McGregor District Supervisor- FWS
21. Holly Henriksen- Park Planner -NPS
22. Neil Smarjesse- Natural Resources Program Manager- NPS
23. Shannon Young -Supervisor Marine Safety Detachment St. Paul -USCG
24. Jacob Rapp - MPCA
25. Fritz Funk – Lake Onalaska Protection & Rehab District, Izaak Walton League
26. Rick Lewardowski- Riverview Tug Service (RTS)
27. Nibi Ogichidaa Ikwe - Wild Rice Consultant and Coordinator – Prairie Island Indian Community
28. Michael Anderson- Executive Director LPLA
29. Melissa Collins - MN DNR
30. Greg Genz - FoP 2, Lansing Bridge, Miss. Waterway Assoc., Red Wing Harbor Commission
31. Linda Loomis – Lower MN River Watershed District