

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Meeting Notes

Chair: Kevin Stauffer

April 4, 2019; 9:30 a.m. at La Crosse District Visitor Center, Onalaska, WI.

These meeting notes are intended to document notable discussions, decisions and tasks of the FWWG. The attached agenda more accurately reflects all the items that were covered in the meeting.

Attachment List:

- Agenda
- Attendance list
- MVP – HREP Status for FY 19

Meeting Discussion Summary:

- 1) Kevin Stauffer (MN DNR) took over the Chair position in January 2018 from Steve Clark (USACE).
- 2) FWWG Charter needs a few minor updates, mostly related to Chair position and official representatives for each agency. Stauffer will draft those revisions and work with agency reps for approval and signatures.
- 3) This was the first full meeting of the FWWG in over a year. A portion of the meeting was focused on updates and information sharing and second part of the meeting was to begin dialogue on HREP Planning and Sequencing.
- 4) Steve Clark gave an update on the water level sag or “ice bite” that happened at Locks and Dams this winter and what causes this. He was looking for feedback from the group if there was any issues related to habitat, fish or wildlife that we were aware of. No major issues were brought forward, but people had heard some concerns from duck hunters late in the season.
- 5) David Potter (USACE) gave an overview of the Site Inspection tours that were done last summer and was asking for feedback from the group on how the tours went and if they were valuable. Everyone that participated thought they were valuable and a good way to help transfer the institutional knowledge to newer people working on the river and show people the variety of HREPs that have been built over the years. Lots of compliments to the Corp staff on the logistics for these tours. They went remarkably smooth considering the number of people, boats and such to get organized.
- 6) Riley Main (Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance) provided an update on the Upper Lake Pepin Section 204 project, including an overview of funding that has been approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (MN), project features, and an informational PowerPoint they have been using to inform the public about this project.
- 7) Shahin Khazrajafari (USACE) provide a status update on HREPs in the St. Paul District (see attachment)
- 8) Kevin Stauffer and Dieterman initiated a discussion on the use of shallow drive watercraft (mudboats, airboats, etc.) on the river.
 - a) MN DNR Commissioner has received letters from concerned citizens on Weaver Bottoms and has also received a resolution from the Isaac Walton League of MN
 - b) In part, the increase use is being driven by night bow fishing. There has been complaints about disturbances to shoreline residents, campers, and concern about disruption of resting wildlife and damage to aquatic vegetation.

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Meeting Notes

Chair: Kevin Stauffer

- c) During discussion, all agencies represented at FWWG said they have been getting similar complaints/concerns
- d) It appears this issue is something that resource managers on the river will need to address. We brainstormed a number of different ideas – anywhere from developing better record keeping to track the number of these watercraft being use, to developing some way to consolidate complaints the agencies are receiving, and potentially designing some studies that would be able to measure impacts to habitat, disruption to wildlife, and other impacts in shallow water areas.

Meeting Agenda Part II – Next Generation HREP Selection Process

- 9) Stauffer provided an update on the HREP Planning and Sequencing framework revision process that is underway. The new framework is expected to be rolled out in May and District River Teams will use the new framework to propose HREPs for FY's 21-25.
- 10) Nate DeJager provided an overview of the HNA II and how it can relate to HREP development. Incorporation of the HNA II is probably the biggest change that will come from this process, so the FWWG will need to have a lot of discussion on how we fold that into our processes for developing and prioritizing HREPs in the St. Paul District.
- 11) Briefly reviewed and discussed proposed changes to HREP Fact Sheet template.
- 12) The remainder of the meeting was a discussion on how FWWG should approach HREP development/prioritization and incorporation of HNA II.
- 13) As soon as the new HREP framework and guidance is issued, FWWG will meet to begin the process of developing and submitting new HREP Fact Sheets. It is anticipated that 3 to 5 new Fact Sheets will be needed by November 2019.

Action Items:

- 1) Kevin Stauffer will draft meeting notes, distribute them for comment, finalize, and have them posted them here: <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/RiverResourcesForum.aspx>
- 2) Next meeting date was not selected, but it is anticipated that 2 to 3 meetings will occur from June to October 2019. These meetings will be focused on 1) discussion of how FWWG plans to incorporate HNA II into identifying and prioritizing restoration work and 2) developing and prioritizing HREP fact sheets for FY's 21-25.