

Fish and Wildlife Work Group

CHARTER

Version 1.1

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**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 Purpose	2
2 HIGHER ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW	2
3 SCOPE	3
3.1 Mission	3
3.2 Goals.....	3
3.3 Objectives	3
3.4 Deliverables.....	4
4 MEMBERSHIP	4
4.1 Ground Rules for Being a Member	4
4.2 Active Member Agencies.....	4
4.3 Voting Member Agencies	5
4.4 Active Non-Member Participants.....	5
4.5 Voting.....	5
4.6 Conflict resolution.....	6
4.6.1 Internal Conflict Resolution.....	6
4.6.2 External/interagency Conflict Resolution.....	6
5 FWWG ORGANIZATION.....	7
5.1 Roles and Responsibilities	7
5.1.1 Chair.....	7
5.1.2 Other Responsibilities	7
5.2 Committees.....	7
6 COMMUNITY CHARTER APPROVAL.....	8

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The Fish and Wildlife Work Group (FWWG) enhances the exchange of fish and wildlife related technical information and provides a forum for early coordination between Federal and State agencies by field level technical experts and resource managers on issues pertaining to, and assigned by the River Resources Forum (RRF) in support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District Channel Maintenance Management Plan (CMMP), the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program (UMRR), and other various management activities on the Upper Mississippi River (UMR).

The FWWG deliberates, provides technical comments and information on matters concerning design and sequencing of studies and projects, alternatives being considered, methods, data needs and related items on topics that are reported to, and assigned by the RRF.

2 HIGHER ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The RRF provides a mechanism for all Federal and State agencies with management or regulatory responsibilities within the floodplain along the commercially navigable sections of the Mississippi River and its tributaries in the St Paul District to facilitate the coordination of their programs and activities; and to provide an opportunity for other interested parties to express their concerns and views to the agencies.

The RRF is an outgrowth of the GREAT I study for continuing interagency cooperation. When that study was completed in 1980, participating agencies realized that the cooperation and coordination process that was established during the GREAT I study should continue. Agencies with river resource management responsibilities needed a mechanism for ongoing coordination of channel maintenance and related activities, and so they joined together to form a partnership that started out as the Channel Maintenance Forum and later became the River Resources Forum in recognition of an increased emphasis on coordination of environmental and recreational resources. The RRF partnering agreement (CMMP Exhibit A) was signed September 19, 1991.

The RRF partnering federal agencies are: Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and National Park Service. State agencies include the Departments of Natural Resources and Departments of Transportation from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Representation is at the middle manager/policy-maker level, which has been successful in achieving results, because participants can effectively represent the interests and positions of their respective agencies.

The RRF normally meets three times annually to discuss issues pertinent to the involved river resource management agencies. All meetings are open to the public and all participants are welcomed into subject discussions; however, formal RRF recommendations are based on a consensus vote of each State and each Federal agency. Each State and each Federal agency will formally designate one voting member.

RRF Functions:

- Providing guidance on the relative priority of implementation of GREAT I study recommendations.
- Providing opportunities to openly discuss and assist agencies in the resolution of interagency conflicts.
- Recommending changes or modifications to the GREAT I channel maintenance plan, as necessary to allow implementation.
- Providing guidance and recommendations to implementing agencies on technical studies, data collection and similar efforts needed to resolve issues and/or problems.
- Providing recommendations on implementation of Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR, formerly Environmental Management Program) activities.
- Providing a mechanism for preparation of a comprehensive recreation management plan.

3 SCOPE

3.1 MISSION

The FWWG supports the RRF by facilitating coordination between Federal and State agencies on natural resource related issues allowing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District to effectively manage a range of management activities on the UMR, including but not limited to the implementation of the CMMP and the UMRR.

3.2 GOALS

The goals of the Fish and Wildlife Work Group are as follows:

- We will assure that the Upper Mississippi River floodplain continues as viable habitat for fish and wildlife.
- We will actively work to foster confidence and mutual trust by discussing issues openly and respecting differences if they should arise.*
- We will work jointly towards our objective of achieving consensus support for agencies' programs, projects activities, and studies.*
- We will promote effective and timely interagency and public communication so that realistic expectations are established and activities are conducted with full awareness.*
- We will facilitate internal coordination so that activities are expedited through the administrative process.*
- We will be guided by mutually agreed-upon operating procedures. *
- We will provide a forum for the RRF partner agencies and other interested parties to discuss technical issues related to UMR management.
- We will identify and communicate the official member agencies' perspective on Corps' UMR management activities including CMMP and UMRR implementation with regard to fish and wildlife related issues.
- We will work toward solutions to issues identified as priorities by the RRF.
- We will seek to establish a consensus among member agencies on sequencing and selection of Corps' UMR projects and activities.
- We will promote the timely and effective reporting of Corps' UMR projects and information to partner agencies, interested stakeholders, and the general public.
- We will evaluate the success of the FWWG on a regular basis and make recommendations to the continued improvement of the organization.
- We will look for collaboration points with partners outside of the FWWG.
- We will develop and support natural resources best practices.
- We will provide a forum for FWWG members to share ideas and information on natural resource policy issues, comprehensive management systems, natural resource trends, and other topics associated with environmental management.

*River Resources Forum partnering agreement goals.

3.3 OBJECTIVES

The FWWG will meet its goals by fulfilling the following objectives:

- Develop and provide partner information needs for sequencing, selection and implementation of Corps' UMR activities including implementation of the CMMP and the UMRR program.
- Respond to RRF requests for information and perspectives regarding Corps' UMR activities.
- Provide FWWG briefings at RRF meetings.
- Review and provide comments on major Corps' UMR guidance documents such as strategic plans, feasibility reports, environmental assessments, performance plans, and monitoring methods and protocols.
- Provide advance notice and written summaries of its meetings to all official agency representatives and other interested parties upon request

- Ensure that interested stakeholders have an opportunity to engage the team at its regularly scheduled meetings.

3.4 DELIVERABLES

The following table presents the major deliverables that the FWWG must meet in order for the organizational mission and goals to be satisfied.

Table 3-1 Deliverables

#	DELIVERABLE LIST	Responsible Party
1.1	Charter/member updates	Corps
1.2	Meeting coordination and documentation	Chair
1.3	Online collaboration: meeting minute archives, calendar, etc.	Corps
1.4	Issue Briefs	Chair
1.5	Channel management updates	Corps
1.6	HREP updates	Corps

4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 GROUND RULES FOR BEING A MEMBER

- Members are willing to share challenges, and lessons learned as well as successes
- Members strive to create an environment of trust and to foster insightful, non-threatening discussion of ideas and experiences
- Members distribute leadership responsibilities and collectively share in the management of the community
- Membership and topics reflect environmental issues related to Corps' UMR activities
- Members are practitioners, contributing to the community through their experiences, skills, and time
- Members agree to be respectful and use appropriate language in group discussions and to listen and respond to each other with open and constructive minds
- Members will not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions
- Members will openly express their agency's objectives when working to promote them
- Members will participate to the fullest extent possible
- Members commit to search for opportunities for consensus or compromise and for creative solutions
- Members will contribute to an atmosphere of problem solving rather than stating positions
- Members will attempt to build on each member's strengths, and help each other improve areas in need of further development

4.2 ACTIVE MEMBER AGENCIES

Official membership is limited to Federal and State agencies. Non-governmental organizations are allowed to participate in FWWG meetings with approval from the FWWG, but are not official members. Agencies are allowed membership upon approval by the FWWG or RRF. Members are expected to have expertise in UMR natural resources and are expected to participate in and contribute to FWWG functions on a regular basis. The active member agencies as of the date of this version of the Charter are shown in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1 Active Member Agencies

Active Member Agencies	
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey UMESC	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	

4.3 VOTING MEMBER AGENCIES

Voting agencies will be a select subset of the active member agencies. Voting members should be agencies with regulatory (permitting) authority over management of the UMR. Each state will have one agency designated as a FWVG voting member. Voting member agencies must be active member agencies. As of the date of this version of the Charter, designated representatives of the current federal and state voting member agencies are provided in Table 4-2. Other Federal agencies can become voting members with approval by a majority of current voting members or direction from the RRF. Each voting member agency will appoint one official voting representative to the FWVG. In the event that agency's official representative is unable to participate in a FWVG meeting, the agency or their representative may designate another staff person to serve in that capacity on a substitute basis. While not required, it is preferred that an agency's appointed official voting representative for the FWVG not be the same person as the voting representative for the RRF.

Table 4-2 Current Voting Members

Voting Member Agency	Representative
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Steve Clark
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Stephen Winter (chair 2020-21)
Iowa Department of Natural Resources	Kirk Hansen
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Neil Rude
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Jordan Weeks

4.4 ACTIVE NON-MEMBER PARTICIPANTS

While official membership in the FWVG is limited to Federal and State government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can participate in FWVG activities. Participation by such groups must be approved by the FWVG or RRF and should be limited to NGOs with a natural resource focus and interest in the UMR. The current list of active Non-Member Participants is shown in Table 4-3 below.

Table 4-3 Active Non-Member Participants

Non-Member Participants	Representative
The Nature Conservancy	Gretchen Benjamin
Audubon	Luis Ramirez
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance	Rylee Main

4.5 VOTING

Reaching consensus among all meeting attendees will always be preferred and pursued; however voting will occur on all issues/topics requiring a recommendation be reported to the RRF. Voting will follow the completion of an Issue Brief (Annex A). Voting will consist of the voting member or their substitute from each state and federal agency listed in Table 4-2 providing one vote. Votes will be conducted when there is a minimum voting threshold two state representatives and two federal representatives. Unanimous consent

among voting representatives will be the goal of votes, however, in the event that the first vote is not unanimous, the conflict resolution process described below will be employed.

No vote by the FWWG, unanimous or otherwise, will be construed to override any previously-existing department, agency, or organization's directives, policies, regulations, or legislative/statutory mandates.

4.6 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A major component to the establishment of the FWWG is to provide up front collaboration between agencies in order to reduce conflict between competing agency policy and positions, and priorities. Even though the FWWG is designed to reduce conflict between agencies, conflict is a regular part of group collaboration. The FWWG will address conflict head-on and has defined the following methods to overcome conflict.

4.6.1 Internal Conflict Resolution

Internal conflicts will be those conflicts between members of the FWWG that are not related to the issues assigned by the RRF or driven by agency differences. Internal conflicts could be related to the operation of the FWWG, selection of future meeting topics, etc. Internal FWWG conflict resolution will be addressed through standard team facilitation techniques.

- Prepare for resolution: acknowledge the conflict, discuss the impacts, agree to a cooperative process, and agree to continue to communicate.
- Understand the situation: clarify positions, list facts and assumptions underlying positions, analyze in smaller groups.
- Reach agreement: voting team members will conduct a voice vote with results recorded in meeting minutes. A decision will be based on a majority vote of the voting members, unanimous consent is not required. Meeting minutes will record all votes, and positions articulated.

4.6.2 External/interagency Conflict Resolution

The FWWG and the RRF are always working towards unanimous consent among official representatives in the best interest of all parties. While unanimous consent is the desired result, interagency conflicts will arise as differing agency policy and goals compete. When the FWWG is unable to come to unanimous consent on an issue or topic to be reported to the RRF, the following conflict resolution procedure will be followed to determine a consensus opinion:

- An Issue Brief will be completed, defining the subject, type of issues, issue statement, background, and alternatives.
- All voting members in attendance (as long as the minimum voting threshold has been met) will vote on each of the possible alternatives.
 - If after one vote on there is unanimous consent for a single alternative, that alternative will become the FWWG recommendation to the RRF.
 - If the first vote does not result in unanimous consent, a subsequent vote will be taken on all alternatives receiving one or more votes. The alternative with the most votes will be forwarded to the RRF as a recommendation if it receives a majority vote of FWWG voting members, along with information on all alternatives receiving dissenting votes.
 - If after two or more votes, no alternative receives a majority consensus, the FWWG will complete an Issue Brief to the RRF without a FWWG recommendation, but stating the issue, alternatives considered, and conditions leading to lack of consensus.
- Meeting minutes will record all votes, and positions articulated.

5 FWWG ORGANIZATION

5.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1.1 Chair

The chair of the FWWG (Chair) will rotate among the working group's voting member agencies on a two year basis. An agency may choose to designate a Chair other than their voting representative. Agencies may decline the Chair when the position has rotated to them. The Chair will rotate among voting member agencies in the following order: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

5.1.2 Other Responsibilities

- The Chair, in consultation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representative, will be responsible for preparing meeting announcements, agendas, making meeting arrangements, and preparing minutes of FWWG meetings.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be responsible for posting minutes of FWWG meetings.
- The Chair will be responsible to ensure appropriate coordination and communication between the FWWG and the RRF.
- Each FWWG member agency will be responsible for all costs associated with its personnel's participation in FWWG meetings and activities.

5.2 COMMITTEES

Temporary committees can be formed within the FWWG to address specific tasks. Such committees are formed and maintained only on an as-needed basis. Committee membership is voluntary and normally based on unique expertise and/or interests of members. Committee products and recommendations are to be vetted through the FWWG for approval prior to submission to the RRF.

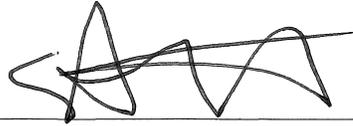
6 COMMUNITY CHARTER APPROVAL

The undersigned acknowledge they have reviewed the Fish and Wildlife Work Group charter and agree to abide by the contents within. Changes to this charter will be coordinated with and approved by the undersigned or their designated representatives.

Executed this 13th day of January, 2020 on behalf of the River Resources Forum Fish and Wildlife Work Group's partner agencies by the undersigned official agency representatives:



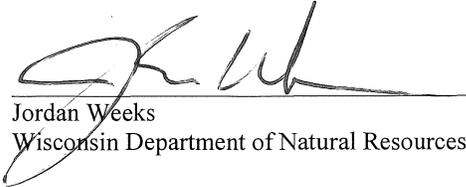
Steven Clark
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



Stephen Winter
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Neil Rude
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Jordan Weeks
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Kirk Hansen
Iowa Department of Natural Resources