

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #105, April 19, 2016; Brice Prairie, WI

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #104: endorsed by consensus as written
- Upcoming RRF Meetings:
 - August 23-24: Prairie Du Chien, WI, Harpers Slough UMRR Project as option 1, Wabasha, MN, Crats Island unloading as option 2
 - December 7-8: Bloomington, MN at the FWS Regional Office

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- COL Koprowski is in his last year of command, change of command will take place in June, 2016
- MV Mississippi will be making a trip upriver in August
- Dan Cottrell has returned from his detail to MVS
- Scott Uhl took a job as Chief of Maintenance on the Illinois Waterway in MVR
- Kristin Moe was hired as Scott's replacement, Chief of Maintenance & Repair
- Kevin Baumgard is now the Chief of Operations
- Tamara Cameron was hired as the Assistant Chief of Operations

Agency Activities- American Rivers (Olivia Dorothy)

- Completed a visit to Washington D.C., spoke to COE Headquarters and found that the Disposition Study at Upper St. Anthony Falls is a fairly low priority

Agency Activities- MPCA (Emily Schnick)

- Chandi McCracken, previously assigned to enforcement on COE permits, remains reassigned to another branch
- Beth Gawrys, hydrologist, is still reviewing reuse projects

Agency Activities- TNC (Gretchen Benjamin)

- Completed several visits to Washington D.C. to champion work on the Upper Mississippi River

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Megan Moore was recently hired as the Mississippi River Coordinator
- Jim Leetch has identified the PPA for North/Sturgeon as a high priority item

- MDNR is looking to re-establish the Mississippi River Team, which could lead to upper management attendance at RRF meetings
- Dan Dieterman is now a habitat specialist, though still working under the Fisheries Branch

Agency Activities- Audubon (Tim Schlagenhaft)

- There have been some positive strides in regards to revising language in WRDA to enable the states to sign PPA's

Agency Activities- FWS (Tim Yager)

- Tim Miller hired a biologist, Erin Andrews, to replace Wendy Woyczik's previous position
- Rich King is working to replace the Biologist position vacated by Lisa Maas
 - Also working to hire a temporary mechanic
- Jim Leach retired last Friday and started a new position with the MDNR as the Fish & Wildlife Division Director
- Restoration work on the Root River will commence soon
- Enforcement of railroad trespassing has been consuming a bit of time, FWS has been working with BNSF on standardized crossings

Agency Activities- UMRBA (Kirsten Mickelson)

- Working on a new contract to respond to oil spills
- WRDA markup is likely by the end of May
 - UMRBA looking to draft a letter to address the following concerns: NESP funding, PPA language, OMRRR, use of donated goods as part of cost-share agreements
- Facilitating the M35 project with the states and stakeholders
 - Advisory committee meeting will be held in February
- Planning for the 30th anniversary of UMRBA, to be held on 8/8 in La Crosse, WI

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- Jim Fischer is sitting in as co-chair in Dan Helsel's absence, Dan is working on a complex EIS and was unable to attend
 - Moving forward, co-chair responsibilities are uncertain as WDNR is going through a realignment
- Kurt Rasmussen was hired as the new Mississippi River Planner, fulfilling Sara Strassman's old position
- Recently signed another five year MOU with COE St. Paul District

- Mississippi River to Madison event was held in February to greater engage the Central Office representatives in Mississippi River efforts
- Fisheries Division is looking to hire several District Fisheries supervisor positions
- Working with MDNR and MPCA on a CWA pilot study regarding the Mississippi River channel

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- Bureau Trust Fund balance remains low, it is entirely funded by hunting and fishing license fees which haven't been increased in several years
- Vacant positions aren't being filled unless determined crucial
 - A couple vacant positions remain on the Mississippi River

Agency Activities- LPLA (Rylee Main)

- Public meeting was held last Friday, over 60 people were in attendance to discuss the Section 204 Project at the head of Lake Pepin
 - Awaiting feedback as to how the project team will be put together and when FID will begin

Agency Activities- EPA (Kathleen Kowal)

- No updates to report

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Channels & Harbors)

- Handout as attachment
- The dredge Goetz anticipates to begin dredging in Pool 5A, Betsy Slough at some point today
 - The next job for the dredge Goetz will most likely be a partial offload of the Above Brownsville placement site in Pool 8
- Government Mechanical is anticipated to start in Pool 5, Fisher Island in the near future
 - The dredge Goetz will likely dredge this location again at a later date
- There isn't a definitive plan for initiating dredging with either of the Contract Mechanical Plants at this time
- Mike Griffin asked if there was a guaranteed yardage for contract mechanical plants
 - Steve Tapp verified that it is dollar based, and that Plant 1 has a guaranteed \$300,000 in dredging once initiated, while Plant 2 has a guaranteed \$100,000 in dredging once initiated
- Pool 10, Mississippi Gardens is holding a lot of material and will likely need to be addressed this season
- Working on a potential wing dam modification adjacent to the Betsy Slough dredge cut to reduce dredging frequency and volume

- Below Mt. Vernon Light will likely require dredging in the future, this will be a top dredging priority for environmental review
- Working on an HEC-RAS model to determine the downriver impacts of reducing/eliminating dredging in the Upper Pool and/or Pool 1
- In discussion with USGS in regards to establishing an acoustic monitoring system on the Chippewa River
- Placement site shaping/preparation continues
 - Completed shaping at Brownsville and Ft. City 1, currently working at Lansing Highway Bridge
 - Will shape various sites in Lower Pool 4 and Pool 5
- Dredge Goetz will potentially complete a partial offload of the Above Brownsville placement site
 - Likely remove 150,000 cubic yards from the temporary site and place the material at the Brownsville Containment site, Ames Construction plans to remove ~80,000 cubic yards for the I-90/Dresbach Interchange Project
- Working to geo-reference placement site boundaries for all sites, starting with Corps-owned placement sites
 - Will coordinate with FWS once the survey crew transitions into FWS-owned placement sites
- Southport – meeting with the SPPA on 3/17/2016 was successful, COE Real Estate is drafting a 20 year agreement for continued use of the placement site
- Koch – will look to schedule an OSIT visit this season to discuss various placement site alternatives in the Hastings area after losing use of the Koch site
- Blackhawk Park – looking into dredged material placement options at the park, COE will collect (internally or via contract) additional cultural resources data prior to placement
 - An OSIT meeting will be scheduled after additional cultural data is collected
- Section 204 Projects: Pigs Eye Lake – currently formulating project alternatives, looking at various island designs with the goal of improving aquatic habitat and reducing shoreline erosion; Head of Lake Pepin – currently assessing whether there is a Federal Interest in pursuing a project at the head of Lake Pepin
- Dredged Material Management:
 - MN River – Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) and COE signed an MOU for the LMRWD to cost-share transportation of dredged material beyond the Federal Standard
 - COE and FWS are evaluating the potential of utilizing dredged material for floodplain forest restoration projects at various locations throughout the St. Paul District
 - McMillan Island is one of the locations, which also may utilize two national COE programs: Regional Sediment Management and Engineering With Nature for data collection and post-construction monitoring

- Pool 2 DMMP – planning effort has been delayed primarily due to focus on completion of other DMMP efforts in Pools 4, 5, and 6
- Pool 4/5 DMMP – looking into decreasing the use of transfer sites to reduce overall costs to the COE
- Pool 6 DMMP – currently the highest priority for completion, hope to have the draft report to agency partners in early February
 - The preferred alternative is restoring Mosquito Island and acquiring the Homer site, looking into the potential of acquiring both the Hemker and Grover portions of the placement site as identified in the CMMP
 - Objective is to have the report completed in October/November 2016
- Lost Island excavation contract – currently a high priority project for the St. Paul District, targeting contract award in September, potential to remove 1,300,000 cubic yards of material depending on availability of funding
- CMMP – set a goal to have the annual updates completed by the end of May and complete the overhaul by the December RRF, though that objective may slip as resources are pulled elsewhere

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association OSIT Questionnaire – not on agenda (Kirsten Mickelson)

- Questionnaire as attachment
- UMRBA drafted a letter to MVD in an attempt to draw more attention to the dredging and funding needs within MVP
- An OSIT questionnaire was distributed to various partners in an effort to identify means in which we could increase the effectiveness of channel maintenance management on the UMR
 - The following four questions were identified in the questionnaire: What are the three most critical policy constraints limiting effective channel maintenance management? What information needs or analytical tools are needed to facilitate interagency coordination and management in regards to channel maintenance? What might be new ways or innovative approaches to improve channel maintenance – lower costs, increase effectiveness? Some states have indicated that new, updated channel maintenance plans need to be established before they will issue new permits – what must these plans address in order to meet the States' needs for issuing permits?
 - UMRBA was very pleased with the response to the questionnaire
 - Mike Griffin commented that we (the partnering agencies) should be pushing toward similar goals without drawing lines in the sand
 - Kristin Mickelson stated that UMRBA is looking for feedback on the draft OSIT questionnaire response prior to the next board meeting which will be held on 5/24

- After the board meeting, an interagency meeting will be held to discuss action items moving forward

MPCA Soil Reference Values Update (Emily Schnick)

- The group revisited the proposed timeline for revision of the SRV's via the link below
 - <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/c-r1-13e.pdf>
- There haven't been many changes since this topic was first presented in December 2014
- SRV's are developed by the remediation group and the risk assessment group within the MPCA
- Once the revised SRV's are determined, it will take some time to implement the new numbers into dredge permits
 - 2017 is likely the first year we would see the implementation of new SRV figures in dredge permits
 - COE permit is unique and may require different treatment
- There are three levels of disposal requirements: Level 1, residential/recreational; Level 2, industrial; Level 3, landfill
- Currently, MPCA is still in the process of determining the background values

Recreation Workgroup (Tim Yager)

- Pool 7 & 8 beach planning efforts continue, currently going through one more round of comment
 - MDNR plans to load the document on their FTP site so it is available for viewing
 - The document will also go through a public comment period
 - planning to seek endorsement of the beach plans at the August RRF
- Tim Yager is working on a programmatic EA to identify best management practices, plans to present the EA to the RRF eventually for endorsement, though it is not likely to be completed by the August RRF
 - No channel maintenance material will be used for beach enhancement until the EA has been finalized, beach shaping will also require completion of the EA
 - Tim stated that the beaches identified in the CMMP, however, have adequate NEPA coverage to accommodate dredged material placement for beach enhancement purposes
 - Up to 1,000 cubic yards of material will be covered in the programmatic EA, separate documentation will likely be required for volumes beyond 1,000 cubic yards
- All beaches in Pools 2-10 have been digitized

Upper Mississippi River Restoration (Tom Novak)

- Presentation as attachment

- Harpers Slough – project is at 33% completion
 - Contractor is attempting to be more aggressive and reduce the project timeline from three years to two years
 - Suffered a hydraulic fluid leak from the line on a piece of equipment, causing 20 gallons of fluid to leak into the river
- Capoli Slough – project dedication will be held in Ferryville, WI on 5/13, from 11am-12pm
- North/Sturgeon Lakes w/ minor drawdown – had split the project into two phases a few months ago, the project is now condensed into one phase due to input from MVD
 - O&M pertaining to the features in North Lake is still an issue, still trying to identify which agency will be responsible for O&M
 - WLM drawdown call will be held with MVD on Thursday, still trying to sell the justification of costs incurred for a 75% probability of success
 - No decision has been made as to the extent of the drawdown (1'/1.5' at the dam, etc.)
 - Hope to have a contract awarded by fall of 2017
- Conway Lake – measures are focused on overwintering habitat and floodplain forest
- McGregor Lake – project have been deferred due to other planning efforts, though it is the next project in the queue
- There is potential of combining UMRR efforts with the McMillan Island project in Pool 10

Pool 2 Channel Management Study (Tom Novak)

- Presentation as attachment
- Draft report has been completed, the team still needs to complete quality assurance prior to distribution for review
- The preferred alternative remains increased channel maintenance with structures to channelize the river flow
 - The industry still prefers the cutoff alternative, though cost is the prohibiting factor as that doubles the alternative cost from \$8 million to \$16 million
- Coordination will be required for the treatment of certain State listed mussel species
- Proposed 2016 work: August RRF endorsement (FY16); September-December prepare plans and specifications pertaining to stage one, structures (late FY16/early FY17)
- Proposed 2016/17 work: October-January prepare plans and specifications pertaining to stage two, increased channel maintenance (FY17); March advertise and award stage one contract (FY17); October advertise and award stage two contract (FY18)
- There are a lot of moving parts in Pool 2 right now, several planning efforts and projects
 - Pool 2 DMMP is somewhat overarching, planning where to place 40 years of dredged material considering the various projects is a critical component

Water Level Management Task Force (Mary Stefanski)

- Plan to schedule the next meeting toward the end of May
- Draft Pool 8 White Paper – Dan Cottrell is working to finalize the cost component of the white paper associated with the additional dredging required for routine drawdowns
 - The cost portion is nearly completed (in draft form) and will need to be reviewed
 - Completion of the white paper is dependent on finalizing the dredging cost component
- Randy Ulrich provided an updated draft supplement to provide as an amendment to the COE Master Plan recommending pool wide drawdowns as a preferred water level management technique when financially and environmentally possible
- Tim Schlagenhaft and Gretchen Benjamin are working on a conceptual model for drawdowns in order to better explain the process to the public
- Drawdown synthesis paper was published in the March issue of River Research and Applications

Fish & Wildlife Work Group (Steve Clark)

- Held a work group meeting last Thursday, 4/14
- FWWG draft charter has been completed
 - Voting member agencies were identified in the charter and consist of: COE, FWS, MDNR, WDNR, IDNR
 - Steve Clark questioned whether there was a dual control conflict having individuals represent their respective agencies on both the FWWG and the RRF
 - Steve Tapp stated that it's probably best to have different voting members if possible, but acknowledged that it may not be feasible at all times
- FWWG continues working on Environmental Pool Plan updates
- Working on beneficial use restoration projects, targeting ideal locations for habitat and forest restoration adjacent to historic dredging locations
 - Draft fact sheet has been completed for ~10 project locations
- Steve Clark stated that there may be future discussions at the FWWG level pertaining to the intersection of Bald Eagle nesting and channel maintenance efforts
 - COE intends to apply for a take permit on the refuge if needed for Crats Island/Lost Island excavations, though that is generally considered unacceptable within the refuge
- AIS:
 - COE – no updates
 - FWS – Tim Miller stated that a group of individuals came together last October in an effort to remove Water Lettuce and Water Hyacinth, the group plans to gather again in search of the invasive plants this year

- MDNR – will participate in a workshop pertaining to acoustic barriers for invasive Carp from 5/17 – 5/18 in La Crosse, WI
- Listed Species:
 - Northern Long-Eared Bat – published the 4(d) rule, which was finalized this year
 - The Upper Mississippi River is within the White Nosed Syndrome Zone
 - 6/1 – 7/31 is generally considered the pup season, but that can vary as early as April and as late as October

Beneficial Use Restoration Projects (Steve Clark, Randy Urich, Zach Kimmel)

- Discussed various beneficial use restoration projects throughout the St. Paul District
 - McMillan Island – hydraulic modeling has been completed, which revealed that a project is possible within the historic island footprint while still meeting flood stage impact limitations
 - Still collecting hydrographic and topographic survey data to determine the quantity of material that will be required
 - Lansing Island – no new updates
 - Mosquito Island – project is shovel ready
- A draft fact sheet has been completed, detailing ~10 floodplain forest restoration projects throughout the St. Paul District
- Jim Fischer stated that it may be beneficial to send out a questionnaire to determine the statutory restrictions pertaining to floodplain forest restoration projects, from the perspective of each of the agency partners
 - WDNR generally strives to have dredged material placed upland and out of the floodplain

Engineering With Nature (Burton Suedel)

- Presentation as attachment
- Overall goal of incorporating the Engineering with Nature program into projects throughout the Upper Mississippi River
- Program objective is to combine navigation benefits with economic and socioeconomic benefits, using nature and science for the betterment of projects
- Lower Atchafalaya River Project was presented as an example of EWN program benefits
 - New Orleans District encountered a problem as all feasible dredged material placement sites were exhausted
 - The solution was to place mid-river dredged material mounds upstream of a sandbar, and allow the river's energy to develop new habitat
 - EWN program provided quantification of the project's benefits
 - The island formation reduced dredging requirements and also reduced the overall channel length

- There was a question as to whether or not an EIS was required for the action, Burton responded stating that an EIS wasn't required, New Orleans District coordinated with the State of Louisiana and the New Orleans Port Authority and neither had major concerns with the project
- Jon Hendrickson questioned whether the hydrodynamic analysis was modeling or expert opinion, Burton responded stating that extensive modeling was completed for the project
- Jim Fischer asked what the level of interest was when EWN was presented at the RRCT, Burton responded stating that there was a lot of interest at the RRCT level
- There is a possibility that the St. Paul District will submit a funding request for FY17 involving use of both the EWN and Regional Sediment Management Programs pertaining to the McMillan Island Floodplain Forest Restoration Project
- Dan Dieterman stated that he likes the thought of the EWN program, using the river's energy to create its own habitat
- Mike Griffin stated that the EWN approach is similar to the approach for the Pool 8 seed island
- Rich King stated that there are a lot of components being discussed which have been done in the past (to an extent) and we can learn from that
- It is important to note that neither the EWN nor RSM program provide construction funding

Emergency Contact Information (All)

- COE agreed to distribute the Mississippi River Organization Chart to provide as a template for other agencies to utilize
- Agency partners were encouraged to develop their own contact charts by the August RRF (FWS, WDNR, MDNR, IDNR; MPCA provided to RRF)

Navigation Work Group Activities (Dan Cottrell)

- Handout as attachment
- A meeting regarding rail and barge traffic safety was held on 3/23 in Davenport, IA
 - Meeting was triggered by a few near collisions between barges and trains, five were documented in the last two years by CP Railroad
- Looking into adding critical areas on IENC
 - This year is the first year that the USCG is allowing sole use of IENC
 - NWG will verify whether the railroad miles are included within IENC
- Dan Cottrell volunteered to chair the Navigation Work Group

Other Topics/Issues, Due-outs, Agenda Topics (All)

- Recommendation to include UMRBA OSIT questionnaire as an agenda topic at the August RRF
- Due-outs
 - White Paper for routine drawdown of Pool 8: first draft to be completed by spring of 2016 (Novak, Clark, Urich, Hendrickson, Cottrell)
 - COE to forward 2014 Dredging Season AAR upon completion (Tapp)
 - OSIT to investigate erosion at Lost Island and Fisher Island (Kimmel)
 - COE to look into shoaling below Lock and Dam 2 to determine if the shoal is tied to the hydropower plant (C&H)
 - COE to define emergency dredging in the CMMP (C&H)
 - Distribute Environmental Assessments for Mosquito Island, Lansing Island, and McMillan Island to RRF as completed (Clark)
 - Tim Yager will distribute a preliminary draft EA of the beach plans for Pool 2-10 to the RRF upon completion
 - Zach Kimmel will distribute the most recent NWG bridge handout to the RRF
 - NWG to validate that railroad mile markers are listed on IENC
 - NWG to revisit the issue pertaining to daymarks near Minnieska
 - Agencies to provide a template for emergency contacts pertaining to efforts tied to the Mississippi River (WDNR, MDNR, IDNR, MPCA)
 - COE to look into a means of distributing canoe paddling information to the RRF for the 150th anniversary of the COE
 - RRF to draft a letter to distribute to the USCG pertaining to buoy maintenance throughout the St. Paul District (Tapp/Helsel/Fischer)
 - COE to establish a team to identify potential uses of the Corps' Regional Sediment Management and Engineering with Nature Programs tied to the McMillan Island project (Kimmel)

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF