

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #106, August 23-24, 2016; Prairie Du Chien, WI

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #105: endorsed by consensus as written
- Upcoming RRF Meetings:
 - December 7-8: Bloomington, MN at the FWS Regional Office

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- St. Paul District has a new District Engineer, COL Calkins replaced COL Koprowski
 - COL Calkins has completed several visits to COE field sites already
- MV Mississippi traveled throughout the St. Paul District
 - Public hearing was held on August 8 in St. Paul, followed by a Pool 2 navigation tour
 - Public open houses were also held in Red wing and St. Paul
- St. Paul District celebrated the District's 150th anniversary, the canoe trip from Lake Itasca to Lock and Dam 10 is now completed
- Planning and Environmental Division Chief Tom Crump is leaving the St. Paul District to fulfill new duties with the COE at Fort Shafter, HI
 - Terry Birkenstock is the acting Chief of the Planning and Environmental Division for the St. Paul District

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- Hope to hire a Fisheries Supervisor in early September to replace Ron Benjamin
- Keith Weaver, Fisheries Technician, is now working out of La Crosse with Pat Short
- The reveal on the organizational alignment is anticipated near the end of August
- Continue to work with MPCA and MDNR on a field pilot study pertaining to the Clean Water Act, looking to establish a uniform strategy with all five states
- Involved in a lot of local coordination for the 30th UMRR celebration
 - Set up a STEM tent, thanks to all involved in making that possible
- Working with UMRBA to improve PPA language

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Megan Moore is now the Team Lead / Mississippi River Coordinator and will take over as MN voting member for the RRF

- Monitored I-90 bridge demolition and had some concerns about potential fish kills
 - The contractor did attempt to move fish out of the area prior to blasting, though a few dozen fish still surfaced
- Low dissolved oxygen in the backwaters is causing fish kills
- Weaver Bottoms contract is expected to be completed prior to the duck opener (September 24)
 - \$923K of Lessard Sams funds will be executed for the contract
 - VEIT is the contractor, dredging to a depth of 7', anticipate 40K cy of fines
- MDNR officially requested FWS to carry forward the O&M for the North/Sturgeon Lakes UMRR project in order to reach a signed PPA

Agency Activities- LPLA (Rylee Main)

- Plan to hold a meeting in September in Stockholm, WI pertaining to hydraulics on the MN River
- COE obtained concurrence from Division pertaining to the Federal Interest Determination for the Upper Pool 4, Head of Lake Pepin Section 204 Project
- Obtained a grant from the University of Minnesota to put a promotional video together

Agency Activities- MnDOT (Patrick Phenow)

- Bridge handout as attachment
- Involved in discussions pertaining to improving bridge demolition strategies to reduce fisheries impacts
- Freight Office is wrapping up a state-wide multi-level freight plan
- There may be funding available for ports in the near future
- A transient dock is looking to be established in Red Wing, MN, though there are several obstacles
- A heavy lift pad is being proposed in Winona, MN at the municipal dock
- A heavy lift dock is close to being executed in St. Paul, MN
- Red Wing bridge replacement contract is anticipated in 2017

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- LTRM technician has moved on, position will be backfilled in the near future

Agency Activities- FWS (Tim Yager)

- Darren Witt accepted the National Canine Coordinator position, though he will stay in Savanna District
- Rich King has moved on to a position at UMESC, began duties yesterday

- Wendy Woyczik is acting District Manager for McGregor District behind Rich King, detailee will fill in as Deputy behind Wendy
- Sent thanks to staff at Lock & Dam 8 for enabling the FWS to harbor their barge boat there for several days, was an immense help
- Compatibility determinations are still underway, purpose is to assess the uses of the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
 - 23 of the uses need to be re-evaluated
- Secured Lessard Sams funding for a project on the Root River to restore natural hydrology within the local area
 - Began construction on July 17, high water has impacted the project
- Dan Dieterman collected and identified Faucet Snails in Pool 5A, which can be associated with Coot death
 - Trematodes infest water birds and can destroy the stomach lining
- FWS received request letter from MDNR pertaining to signing a PPA for the North/Sturgeon Lakes UMRR project, FWS anticipates responding in the near future

Agency Activities- American Rivers (Olivia Dorothy)

- Olivia anticipates beginning maternity leave within the next month
- Meeting was recently held to explore the option of taking out the Lower St. Anthony Falls lock and Lock and Dam 1
 - Olivia was unable to attend, though she believes the group will begin meeting on a monthly basis
 - Hoping to get the project fleshed out ahead of the disposition study so that it can be fully evaluated as part of the disposition study
 - Pursuing the potential of closure, partial demolition, and full demolition of the two locks

Recreation Workgroup (Tim Yager)

- RWG hasn't met since the last River Resources Forum meeting
- Pool 7 & 8 beach plan is still under final review
 - No progress/updates on the status of the EA pertaining to the beach plan, Tim has not been able to address this given other priorities
 - EA is to address reshaping beaches and addition of sand from dredging actions
 - WDNR offered to assist in finalizing the beach plans
- Bill Howe (member of the public) commented that the number of boaters has expanded significantly and we need to recognize the impacts due to this change in use

Engineering with Nature and Regional Sediment Management Update (Zach Kimmel)

- Both COE national programs in which funding can be used for research and development, monitoring, but not construction
- Looking into the use/application of both programs as part of the McMillan Island project
 - Engineering with Nature will likely look to answer questions pertaining to survival/mortality rates of different tree species planted at various elevations
 - Regional Sediment Management will likely look to answer questions as to the fate of dredged material placed in open water
 - Project wasn't quite far enough along to put in a request for FY17 funds from these two programs, though will look to request funding if available (as excess) in FY17 or formally for FY18 depending on the project status
 - An interagency team will be established once the project is further along

Upper Mississippi River Restoration (Tom Novak)

- 30th anniversary of UMRR was held in La Crosse, WI
- Harpers Slough – support for construction engineering
- North/Sturgeon Lake – plan to complete planning and design
 - TSP identified three islands in North Lake and one O&M island in Sturgeon Lake, as well as overwintering fish habitat
 - MDNR reached out to the FWS in regards to the PPA issue
 - Still analyzing the potential of constructing an O&M island in Sturgeon Lake
 - Potential for Lessard Sams funding to be used for this project
 - Still plan to complete the report detailing construction of four islands though may not come to fruition
- Conway Lake – plan to continue planning, and complete by the end of the year
 - Measures are focused on overwintering habitat and floodplain forest construction
 - Project will act as backup plan for next construction project
- McGregor Lake – plan to reinitiate planning and resume data collection
- Capoli Slough – undergoing dedication and closeout

Pool 2 CMS – Boulanger Bend to Lock & Dam 2 (Tom Novak)

- Proposed FY16 work: preliminary draft report/EA to agency partners for 30 day review
- Proposed FY17 work:
 - October – public meetings
 - December – finalize report, sign FONSI, obtain RRF endorsement
 - January – begin plans and specs for stage 1 and 2
 - Award stage 1, training structures
- Proposed FY18 work: advertise and award stage 2, widening existing navigation channel

- Potential to have a combined agency meeting: Pool 2 CMS, Pigs Eye Lake, Pool 2 DMMP
- Steve Tapp questioned whether there were any showstoppers from an agency perspective
 - Jim Fischer expanded, asking if there were any contaminant concerns tied to widening the existing channel
 - Tom novak responded that there aren't any major concerns tied to contaminants
 - Jim also stated that WDNR has some concern about sediment transport in Wisconsin waters
 - Tom responded again stating that Scott Goodfellow's (COE, Hydraulics) model shows that dredging would be very similar to existing conditions
 - Jon Hendrickson expanded stating that a HEC-RAS study will take place next FY, targeting potential downstream impacts from reduced or eliminated dredging in Upper St. Anthony Falls Pool and Pool 1, which may have some analytical value in Lower Pool 2 though Scott's 2-D model is more detailed
 - HEC-RAS model will span from USAF-UP4
 - MDNR commented that they are also concerned about the hydraulic implications from the project

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Channels & Harbors)

- Handout as attachment
- Dredging:
 - Began dredging early with the dredge Goetz and Government Mechanical
 - Dredge Goetz departed for the St. Louis District last week
 - Dredge will be dry-docked for maintenance in Memphis, TN throughout the winter
 - Contract mechanical plant 1 is currently working 24 hrs/day 5 days/wk
 - Operation will continue until the Friday prior to Labor Day
 - There have been some challenges with 24 hour operations, but we are working through them
 - Government Mechanical is planned to resume dredging operations next week at Betsy Slough (Pool 5A)
 - Dredge cut has built 130' into the channel and 6' of face since the Goetz dredged the location in April
 - Contract mechanical plant 2 is planned to mobilize to Pool 2 after dredging in Pool 3 has been completed, and will likely remain in Pool 2 for a while
 - Lost the ability to post to the website on May 26th, still working to regain posting permissions
 - Plan to send out notifications with attachments until the issue is resolved

- Placement Site Actions:
 - Still working to collect survey data to geo-reference placement site boundaries
 - Southport (Pool 2) – draft dredged material placement easement is currently under review
 - Hastings (Pool 3) – working on a small scale dredged material management plan to find a replacement for the Koch Site to hold material from the Lower Approach to Lock & Dam 2
 - Need to evaluate wetland delineation and hold on OSIT meeting to discuss all identified alternatives
 - Above Brownsville – dredge Goetz completed a partial offload of the placement site, received a lot of positive feedback from the public
 - WDNR thanked the dredge crew for providing a tour of the project
 - Mississippi Gardens – OSIT meeting has been scheduled for October 17th to discuss the hydraulic placement site modification
 - EA is anticipated to be completed by the end of December
 - Prairie Sand & Gravel – seeking RRF endorsement for recurring use of the placement site, likely at the December RRF
- Excavations:
 - Crats Island – Brennan Marine won the contract award in September, 2015 to offload ~900K cy of material from the island to the Wabasha Gravel Pit
 - Began dredging on August 2nd, average production is 4K cy per day
 - Excavation will likely be underway through next year
 - Lost Island – contract was recently advertised to offload ~1.3 million cy of material from the island to the West Newton Chute site
 - Newt Marine was the apparent low bidder (out of five bidders)
 - Protest is underway questioning Newt Marine’s small business status, SBA has 15 days to make a ruling on that protest
- Long Term Planning:
 - Pool 2 DMMP – utilized a sediment assessment compiled by Jon Hendrickson and Emily Libbey to come up with a 40 year dredging volume of ~6.76 million cy
 - Currently developing the placement site evaluation matrix
 - September – November – finalizing volumes and capacities, alternative screening
 - December – draft report to be completed
 - Pools 4/5 DMMP – both 40 year plans are being looked at collectively
 - Looking to use temporary placement sites (islands) less frequently
 - Draft report will be distributed to the agency partners this fall
 - Will look to begin contact landowners regarding potential land acquisition

- Pool 6 DMMP – completed an internal review of the document and found that the Pool 6 dredging figures were underestimated given that full channel dimensions weren't reached from 2011-2014
 - This increased the capacity needed for the selected alternative from 120K cy to 168K cy
 - Increased capacity need required expansion to utilize the entire Homer site (both Hemker and Grover ownership)
 - Both the Hemker and Grover portions of the Homer site are included in the TSP
 - Plan to follow up with the Grover family to inform them of the COE interest in their property
 - Property acquisition (of the Hemker portion) is being pursued at the present moment
- 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

Navigation Work Group Activities (Dan Cottrell)

- Bridge handout as attachment
- IENC updates are made on a monthly basis, the railroad markers will be updated as part of the September posting
- Working with the USCG on remnant day marker near Minnieska to determine how it should be dealt with
- Jim Fischer questioned whether there was any discussion at the work group level as to encourage “green pilots” to phone for help if they get outside the channel, as opposed to attempting to get off ground themselves via horsepower
 - Steve Tapp mentioned that though the work group hasn't met in a while, COE Navigation does meet with the Navigation Industry on an annual basis to discuss this issue (among others) with pilots

Section 204 Projects: Pigs Eye Lake and Head of Lake Pepin (Zach Kimmel)

- Continuing Authorities Program Section 204 projects involve a three-way cost-share with O&M providing the Federal Standard for routine channel maintenance costs, while the remaining construction costs are split 65/35 with the (CAP) Section 204 program and a non-Federal sponsor
 - Mike Griffin commented that work in kind can count toward the non-Federal sponsor's cost share contribution and that he's been involved with projects that have switched to Section 206, so keep that in mind as an option

- Pigs Eye Lake – beneficial use of dredged material from temporary placement sites (islands) in Lower Pool 2 to construct islands in Pigs Eye Lake
 - Alternatives range from using 350K-800K cy of material for island construction
 - Settlement and lateral displacement are concerns for island construction in Pigs Eye Lake
 - Feasibility study is nearing completion
- Head of Lake Pepin – beneficial use of dredged material from temporary placement sites (islands) in Lower Pool 4 to construct islands at the head of Lake Pepin
 - District concluded with the Federal Interest Determination, stating that there is an interest in pursuing a feasibility study for this project
 - Division concurred with the FID on August 17th
 - Plan to move forward with the feasibility study in September/October timeframe
 - Credit to Rylee Main and Tim Schlagenhaft for the effort they put into moving the project along

Emergency Contact Information (All)

- WDNR – distributed contact list and informed the RRF that the organizational structure is likely to change with the alignment anticipated in the near future
- MDNR, IDNR, and FWS – will distribute emergency contact lists for channel related issues to the RRF

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

- Mike Griffin mentioned that it would be beneficial to speak with Jon Klingman (Rock Island District) in regards to constructing islands using the O&M authority
- Mike Griffin stated that the IDNR can provide some funding for tree planting
- Discussed the potential for constructing O&M islands using the dredge Goetz
 - Spring Lake Islands were constructed with a 24” hydraulic dredge
- Specific Projects:
 - Mosquito Island – listed in the MOU with WDNR, though is still pending RRF endorsement – seeking RRF endorsement in December
 - Lansing Island – no movement in the recent past, Zach Kimmel will follow up with FWS, McGregor District to see if there is still interest
 - McMillan Island – project continues to move forward, currently evaluating project alternatives and calculating dredging and construction costs
 - Andy Meier (Recreation and Natural Resources Branch) has put together recommendations pertaining to elevations beneficial for various tree species
 - Looking to implement Regional Sediment Management and Engineering with Nature programs

- Draft fact sheet was compiled identifying ~10 potential sites where we can implement the beneficial use of dredged material to restore floodplain forest throughout the St. Paul District
 - The AQVCD (available quantities via channel dredging) portion of the fact sheet was updated after the April FWWG meeting
 - Next steps are to identify additional team members at the next FWWG meeting and discuss advancing the fact sheet this winter

Fish & Wildlife Work Group Activities (Steve Clark)

- Work group hasn't met since April 14th, next meeting will likely be scheduled in October
- Hope to finalize the FWWG charter by the next meeting (October), currently the charter is still in draft form

Water Level Management Task Force (Mary Stefanski)

- Handout as attachment pertaining to water level management on the Upper Mississippi River
- Task force last met on May 24th, the next meeting is scheduled for September 1st
 - Held the May 24th meeting in conjunction with a tour on the Cal Fremling
- Pool 8 White Paper – draft white paper is continuing to move forward
 - Randy Urich is the primary POC for the white paper
 - A status update will be provided to the WLMTF at the September meeting
- Kirsten Mickelson thanked Mary and the WLMTF for putting together a water level management fact sheet for the UMRBA quarterly meeting
- MDNR stated that they may pursue the potential of utilizing Lessard Sams funds to subsidize costs of completing a drawdown in Pool 3
 - Funding needs to be obligated by June, 2018
 - Jon Hendrickson cautioned utilizing the funding for a Pool 3 drawdown instead of the Brewer Lake inlet as a more certain ecological benefit could be sacrificed in the process
 - Jim Fischer questioned whether there is a concern of not being able to reveal benefit for executing the Lessard Sams funding, to which Dan Dieterman replied that benefit is not a requirement for executing funds
 - MDNR will determine how to proceed internally and keep the RRF informed

Upper Mississippi River System Watershed Study (Kirsten Mickelson)

- Handout as attachment
- Kirsten thanked the individuals and agencies that worked on responses to the OSIT questionnaire
- OSIT questionnaire was presented and reviewed by agency partners at the April RRF

- UMRBA board met in May and reviewed the OSIT questionnaire survey and discovered there were some common denominators
 - Goal of a systemic and strategic long-term focus on channel maintenance management
 - Variety of different ideas were presented to reach this objective
 - Is there a way to identify hydraulic, environmental (among other) relationships to the decisions that are made and the projects that are constructed
 - Board believes there needs to be a comprehensive approach
- Question as to whether or not it was possible to combine the efforts pertaining to flood risk reduction and channel maintenance into one watershed study
 - Olivia Dorothy commented that combining both efforts may not be as effective due to the fact that both efforts are substantial
- Jon Hendrickson commented that hydraulic modeling should be completed throughout the UMR so that we can come up with a computational solution
 - Approach would be similar to the watershed study being completed on the MN River
- Section 701 of WRDA (2014) provides a means for a project to be proposed by a non-Federal sponsor, which can lead to completion of a feasibility study

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

- Other Topics/Issues:
 - Jon Hendrickson commented that there is not enough evidence to prove that the establishment of the power plant at Lock & Dam 2 caused the recurring shoal at the Lower Approach to Lock & Dam 2
- Agenda Topics:
 - MN River Watershed Study
 - Hydraulics, Hydrology, Sediment Movement
 - RRF asked if we could have someone give a talk on watershed scale planning at the December RRF, Jon Hendrickson recommended either Jason Smith or Rebecca Soileau
- Due-outs:
 - COE to look into the status of portaging at the St. Anthony Falls locks and Lock & Dam 1 (Tapp)
 - COE to forward 2014 Dredging Season AAR to the RRF upon completion (Tapp)
 - OSIT to investigate erosion at Lost Island and Fisher Island (Kimmel)
 - COE to define emergency dredging in the CMMP (C&H)
 - COE to distribute Environmental Assessments for Lansing Island and McMillan Island to the RRF upon completion (Clark)

- FWS to distribute a preliminary draft EA of the beach plans for Pools 2-10 to the RRF upon completion (Yager)
- COE to distribute the most recent NWG bridge handout to the RRF (Kimmel)
- Agencies to provide a template for emergency contacts pertaining to channel maintenance issues (FWS, MDNR, IDNR)
- RRF to draft a letter to distribute to the USCG pertaining to buoy maintenance concerns throughout the St. Paul District (Tapp/Helsel/Fisher)
- COE to establish a team to identify potential uses of the Corps' Regional Sediment Management and Engineering with Nature programs pertaining to the McMillan Island Project
- Agencies to look into alternative options to fill the Recreation Work Group chair position (All)
- COE to discuss sediment sources as an agenda topic at the next RRF (Hendrickson)
- MnDOT to reengage in discussions pertaining to modifying fill specifications for construction projects (Phenow)
- MDNR to schedule a meeting in order to reinstate the Weaver Bottoms Task Force (Dieterman)
- COE to verify which remaining agencies need to provide emergency contact information (Kimmel)
- COE to reach out to Jon Klingman (MVR) in regards to the O&M islands constructed in Pool 13 (Kimmel)
- COE to reach out to Wendy Woyczik (FWS) in regards to the status of the Lansing Island floodplain forest restoration project (Kimmel)
- COE to provide one page write-up for December RRF endorsement of Mosquito Island and Prairie Sand & Gravel (Machajewski/Kimmel)
- MDNR to reach out to Dan Cottrell pertaining to railroad bank erosion near Swift Creek (Dieterman)

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF