

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #109, August 22 & 23, 2017; National Eagle Center, Wabasha, MN

*Introductions (All)*

- Minutes from RRF #108: endorsed without edit
- Next Meeting:
  - December 5th and 6th RRF #110 will be held in the Twin Cities area. Corps will follow up with location.

*Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)*

- Zach Kimmel is back from HQ assignment.
- Contract for guidewall cribs at L&Ds 5 and 6 were awarded and L&Ds 8 and 9 should be awarded soon.
- Major General Wehr (Mississippi Valley Division Commander) is moving on September 7th.
- Corps HQ approved continuing the Disposition Study for the upper 3 locks. The study has been funded and will continue.
- Hydraulic Dredge Goetz left the St. Paul District for work in Rock Island and St. Louis Districts on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)*

- The Governor signed an MOU with Foxconn to build a LCD factory in Wisconsin. This would be a major manufacturing facility in SE Wisconsin if approved.
- WDNR is fielding comments on Pool 4 draft DMMP – has responded to two letters that were sent to the Governor's offices.
- Working with Rock Island District on Pool 11 placement site and a new MOU.
- Rolling out new format of groups under Great Water organization. Water Quality executive committee chaired by Greg Searle.
- Steve Galarneau replaced Dan Bauman on UMRBA, Jim Fischer is the alternate.

*Agency Activities- FWS (Tim Yager)*

- Staffing/Personnel
  - Three staff are detailed to western fires – Jeremy Lawrence, John Below and Hallie Rasmussen. National fire “planning readiness” is at level 5, which is the highest

level possible. We are strongly encouraged to make our fire trained staff available to assist.

- Upcoming “events”
  - National Wildlife Refuge Association will be visiting La Crosse October 12 and 13
  - Habitat Management Planning – final draft of HMP is undergoing internal review before coordination with State/Federal partners. You can expect to be contacted directly by Steve Winter regarding individual partner meetings to review/coordinate HMP.
- Visitor Services
  - Access at boat landings – sedimentation. Half Moon and Cold Springs are case examples: Cold Springs (pool 9) where the EMP project (dredging of the south lobe and installation of flow diversion structure) almost certainly exacerbated sediment capture/transport from Miner’s Creek. Now, recreational access is compromised due to sedimentation of channel. Pressure from public to spend taxpayer dollars to dredge access channel. Public is questioning the benefits of the project compared to the long-term costs.
  - Senior pass sales – huge burden on administrative staff to sell passes at Winona and La Crosse. Price of passes is increasing from \$10 to \$80 on August 28, 2017. Well over 700 passes have been sold at Winona since January 1 compared to 373 passes sold in the previous 24 years! Minnesota Valley NWR sold 750 passes in one day.
  - Refuge will be conducting outreach on voluntary use of non-lead ammunition for deer hunting to reduce indirect exposure/ingestion of spent lead ammunition fragments by bald eagles.
- Other
  - Two commercial waterfowl guides who were previously permitted to guide on the Refuge were recently sentenced for Lacey Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act violations. A third guide is currently scheduled to go to trial in October.
  - Reports of a die-off of faucet snails in Pool 7 – don’t have details on this.
  - Multiple fatalities on the Refuge/River this summer.
- Several compatibility determinations (CDs) remain under review. Refuge Manager Sabrina Chandler and Deputy Regional Director Charlie Wooley met with WDNR Deputy Secretary Kurt Thiede, along with legal counsel from both agencies, in Madison on July 12 to discuss next steps in moving forward with finalizing CDs. The Service is awaiting a written response from WDNR before determining appropriate next steps. Legal counsels for both agencies continue to coordinate.

*Agency Activities- MDNR (Megan Moore)*

- Dan Lais is new Division Regional Manager, two levels above Megan.

- Pool 3 – Brewer Lake Inlet project – preconstruction meeting held today. Will start after Labor Day.
- Invasive Carp in Minnesota – going through the Legislative approval process to tag and release 2 invasive carp. Plan to release them in Pool 2, will track the movement.
- Pool 4 Draft DMMP – the document has caught a lot of attention state wide.
- Report from residents at Camp Lacupolis that it appears tow boats are grounding on the left descending bank across the navigation channel across from them.
  - The Navigation Work Group will discuss this topic to see if there have been any groundings and if so how to prevent them.

*Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)*

- New Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, Dale Garner is the new Division Manager, Todd Bishop is the new Chief of Wildlife.
- Budget cuts eliminate the Forestry Bureau in Iowa – those workers will be absorbed by the Wildlife and Parks Department.

*Agency Activities- American Rivers (Olivia Dorothy)*

- American Rivers currently has a 2 year fellowship filled by Brad Gordon, 1<sup>st</sup> year is in Washington DC, will be working the river in year 2. Primarily working on floodplain restoration.
- Strategic plan – Plan will focus on floodplain restoration for Upper Miss Basin. Will be having a 2 day meeting in Madison WI in October of 2017, limited space but are looking for people speaking to issues in multiple states.
- American Rivers is following the Disposition Study of the Upper 3 Lock and Dams. Working the Nan Bischoff of the Corps St. Paul office.
  - Hosted a public meeting in June with the Corps. Gathered information from the public. There seems to be a 50/50 split of people for and against disposing of the locks. All options remain on the table.

*Agency Activities- UMWA (Greg Genz)*

- Last year Greg took a tow boat and barge from St. Paul, MN to Davenport, IA. In general conditions are poor through the whole area. Very few tow waiting areas. Can't fix the locks and neglect the channel.
- UMWA and Friends of Pool 2 recommend continue to dredge in Pool 1 as a sediment trap. Historically, Minneapolis has always sold all the material dredged in Pool 1. Sand isn't as desirable once it mixes with the finer material from the MN River.
- Friends of Pool 2 would like more beach establishment in Pool 2.
- The Island at RM 828 has lost 1/3 of its size in last 5 years.

*Section 204 Projects –Head of Lake Pepin - Pigs Eye Lake- (Tom Novak)*

- Head of Lake Pepin and Pierce County Islands
  - Feasibility Study is 100% Federal Cost. Started in June 2017, held public scoping meeting in July (70 attended).
  - Kevin Nelson is doing sediment sampling today will have all the sediment info in the fall.
  - Will do concept screening and preliminary plan in fall of 2017.
  - \$30 - \$40 Million cost if all features are built.
  - Will try to do bathymetry in the fall.
  - Planning should be done about 18 months faster than an HREP.
  - Section 204 projects are limited to \$10 Million.
  - Congressmen Ron Kind and Jason Lewis have shown support along with State legislators from MN and WI.
  - Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance is waiting for sampling data then will push for more outreach for funding if it looks like it will move forward.
- Pigs Eye Lake
  - Handout shows tentatively selected plan
  - Preliminary report is out for agency review
  - FY18 work will include posting report for 30-day public review, final report and EA, enter into partnership agreement with sponsor (Ramsey County), and begin design phase.
  - FY19 work will include advertise and award contract, and start of construction.

*Pool 2 CMS – Boulanger Bend to LD 2 (Tom Novak)*

- Looking for RRF Endorsement. Steve Tapp will send out request for endorsement, which will include executive summary and hydraulic report comments.
- FONSI signed 31 July and contract advertised on 6 August.
- Plan to obligate funds before the end of the Fiscal Year.
- Rock Structures (Phase 1) Six entities responded for review. 350,000 yards of rock to do this.
  - Mussels will be relocated before and during construction.
- Full implantation will take two years.

*Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Steve Clark)*

- FWWG – Met March 27<sup>th</sup>
- Next HREP
  - Issue Brief signed June 1<sup>st</sup> and provided to RRF co-chairs. The brief explains the challenges in selecting the next HREP to pursue.
- Next FWWG activity – selecting two additional HREPs.

- WDNR working on 7 projects now, MDNR working on a project for Weaver Bottoms, and FWS might have a couple new projects.
- IDNR asked if they needed to re-do the 20 they have in now. Clark said no need to re-do, but send them in.
- Tim Yager reported that Sabrina Chandler informed the UMRRCC that any projects requiring FWS refuge sponsorship need to be vetted through Refuge Manager Sabrina Chandler and Assistant Refuge Manager Tim Yager prior to FWWG approval.
  - Criteria in which they will be reviewed by the FWS:
    - Floodplain forest is a priority of the FWS. Projects have a direct impact on migratory birds. Larger continuous blocks of forest are important.
    - Fisheries – Paddlefish, sturgeon, large river species
    - The FWS has been the only project sponsor with O&M responsibilities, so they need to support them.
    - Two projects per State – sent to Tim and Sabrina, will add to 6 fact sheets that FWS have generated already.
- IDNR concerned because they worked with previous FWS managers and waited through the HREP process. They now have a project close to the top of the ranking and the criteria is changing, plus the FWS would always have the veto authority on projects.
- FWWG – Hope to have the impasse resolved by Mid-September.
  - All projects must meet defined criteria
  - Shooting for endorsement of the two new projects by December.
- FWS stated a holistic view would be to concentrate on the Middle Miss River. Their position would be to support HREP money spent in the Middle Mississippi River.
  - States are concerned they are not going to have their fair shake. Also concern that the program could receive less funding if all states are not getting some funding.
  - FWS stated the biggest and greatest needs of the environment need to come first as a core principal of the program.
- Losing bathymetric diversity is just as important as topographic diversity, Jon Hendrickson would like to discuss using the river’s energy to create bathymetric diversity. It’s complicated and only works in certain areas.

*Upper Mississippi River Restoration (Tom Novak)*

- FY 16 budget \$3.6M
- FY 17 budget \$8.2M
- FY 18 Budget \$8.2M
  - Need to be leaning forward with projects
- Harpers Slough HREP is virtually done – dedication in the spring.
- Conway Lake HREP
  - ***Endorsement requested on June 21 and endorsed by consensus email vote on July 14.***

- P&S July
- Award in September – Fully Funded
- McGregor Lake HREP
  - Feasibility – continue planning, focus on floodplain forest & overwintering
  - Complete draft and final report in FY 18
  - Complete P&S and award contract FY 18
- Other jobs
  - Pool 8 rocks sill repair – repair rock sill C8 ~ \$100k this FY by M&R
  - Peterson Lake
    - Look at installing rock closure of the openings to increase overwintering benefits and reduce sediment
    - Define SOW/EA if just rock maybe use M&R
- RRF Endorsement of next HREP
  - FWWG looked at 3 projects (Lower Pool 10, Weaver Bottoms, and Bass Ponds) for endorsement.
  - FWWG recommended endorsement of the Lower Pool 10 HREP.
  - FWS indicated they would not endorse anything but Bass Ponds HREP.
  - WDNR made a motion to endorse Lower Pool 10, Corps seconded the motion.
  - Discussion:
    - Jim Fischer; UMRR is a partnership, that has followed the partnership agreement in the past.
    - Tim Yager; Refuge is not going to commit to Lower Pool 10 today. The FWS believes there will be other locations with higher ranking after new projects are considered. Tim is the only one who signs O&M agreements.
    - FWS will complete HMP soon and won't likely accept another project until the HMP process is completed.
  - Vote on motion to endorse Lower Pool 10 HREP: All in favor except FWS.
  - IDNR made a motion to endorse Bass Ponds, MDNR seconded the motion.
  - Discussion:
    - Concern for how this process will work in the future.
    - Tom Novak will start conversation to determine best path forward on how projects are submitted, approved, studied and constructed. Need 1 or 2 more projects vetted through.
    - Tim Yager recommended leaders of all organizations (Charlie Wooly for FWS, COL Calkins for Corps, etc.) have a discussion as to how this will move forward in the future to avoid having meetings like this one.
    - Kirsten Mickelson will work with Tom Novak to help facilitate a meeting.
  - ***Vote on motion to endorse Bass Ponds HREP: Endorsed by consensus.***

*Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Cottrell, Kimmel, Machajewski and Tapp)*

- Dredge Schedule
  - Early Start in April
  - Late funding for a few harbors
  - 58 hour closure in Pool 6 – discussion with industry on use of boats to free barges. Self-induced problem after first boat grounded outside the channel. Ten tow boats waiting, 100 + barges before cleared.
- Channel Management Study - Upper Approach to LD 7
  - Looking at project to reduce outdraft
  - Problems begin at about 40k cfs
  - Jon Hendrickson: more flow in the main channel, less flow in to Lake Onalaska and Sommer Chute.
- Channel Management Study - Lower Pool 10
  - Kick off for this study has been delayed due limited personnel available.
- Placement Site Activities
  - Fountain City 1 – reestablished haul road to barge loading area.
  - Brownsville Containment – storm blew down fence this summer, looking at rehab soon.
  - Thanks to the FWS and the States for the Law Enforcement support keeping rec users away from the Dredge Goetz and its placement site while working in Pool 8. To clarify, all placement sites are closed to use when we are placing at them.
  - Mississippi Gardens: EA underway and should be done soon.
  - Blackhawk Park: Working on cultural review.
  - Real Estate Issues: Moving away from easements and moving to fee title ownership.
    - Internal conflict of how to obtain access to place sand on someone’s property.
      - Process took about a week to execute in the past, but that process will not be used any more.
      - Used a Right of Entry (ROE) for construction in Red Wing MN. Could only be used for channel dredge cuts and only for 49 days.
  - Pool 2 DMMP:
    - Met on August 14 – working on draft report should be done by the end of the month. Stakeholder meeting will be held after that.
    - Tom Novak is working on a communications plan.
    - The plan will carry forward all CMMP sites except St. Paul Barge Terminal. Work will be done on a ROE for 350K CY of material generated from Channel Management Study. 350K CY is also needed to complete the Pigs Eye 204 project.
  - Crats Unload

- Contractor JF Brennan
- Work completed on 8/2/17
- ~826,000 CY unloaded and transferred to the WGP at a cost of \$10.63/CY
- ~421K CY in 2016
- ~405K CY in 2017
- Lost Unload
  - Contractor Dubuque Barge and Fleet (aka Newt)
  - ~1.3M CY project, funding in Fiscal Years 2016 & 2017, work in Calendar Years 2017-2019.
  - Mechanical unload, barged to West Newton Chute placement site then hydraulically pumped into the site
  - Began site unload on 7/19 after eagles fledged nest on Lost Is
  - ~35K CY removed to date
  - Public not seeing/obeying MDNR sign regarding boat landing closure
  - COE feels signage was inadequate
- Next site unloads
  - Pool 3 Corps Is, Lower Pool 4 Reads Landing
- DMMPs
  - Pool 4
    - DRAFT report to agency partners 4/27
    - DRAFT report to landowners & public 5/11
    - Public meetings held 6/6 & 6/15 (Nelson, Wi & Wabasha, MN)
    - Much public, political and media opposition
    - Several alternatives being suggested
    - Fix Chippewa River, Build large islands in Lake Pepin & Big Lake, Place material in Tiffany Bottoms “wasteland”, Place material on gov’t-owned lands, Barge elsewhere, Use as FRAC, Do anything but what is in DRAFT plan
    - Current Schedule
      - 8/25 Comment period closes.
      - 9/15 All alts received shared with stakeholders
      - 10/1 Alts worth evaluating to stakeholders/public
      - 12/15 Alts analysis/Fed Standard determined (if different than current)
      - 1/1 Final report or new DRAFT for Public Review

Comments: Olivia Dorothy – Missing a partner at the table, the Department of Commerce for marketing of dredged material.

Zach Kimmel - would like to set up a beneficial use working group and get input from others.

There is some interest, but decided to wait for now.

Greg Genz – Make sure this process is one we can use again.



- Pool 5
    - Current Schedule likely to slide due to Pool 4
    - Draft report to stakeholders fall 2017
    - Draft to public & public meetings fall/winter 2017
    - Show all options being considered
  - Pool 6
    - Initial DRAFT to partners 2/1/2016, reviewed & responded to comments
    - Updated DRAFT to stakeholders 8/19/2016
    - Incorporated increased dredging quantities
    - Purchase of Hemker portion of Homer site
      - Issues with legal description
      - Hope to Close fall 2017
    - Current Schedule likely to slide due to Pool 4
    - Updated DRAFT to partners, stakeholders, and public fall 2017
      - Show all alternatives being considered
    - Public meetings fall/winter
  - Pool 9
    - Kickoff planned for fall 2017
      - Likely to slide due to Pool 4
      - ID scope
- C&H Program
  - Funding in FY17 to exercise last option for material at Lost Island unload
  - Good Funding for FY 18
  - Plan to work on contract for next year to focus on placement site unloading with options for channel dredging.
    - Direct them to sites to do mechanical unloading and transport to a location for permanent placement or truck to a permanent location.

*Navigation Work Group Activities (Cottrell)*

- NWG will meet in fall of 2017 to go over issues
  - Camp Lacupolis – report of rec users seeing tow boats ground across from the camp.
  - Head of Lake Pepin buoys.
  - Buoys in General
  - Mileage signs on day marks
  - Safety zone during or after a grounding

*Engineering with Nature / Regional Sediment Management (Kimmel)*

- Two FY 18 RSM projects submitted
  - McMillan Island floodplain forest RSM proposal unlikely to get funding in FY 18, more likely through EWN or ERDC.
  - Chippewa River proposal – using dune tracking technology is the process they are proposing.
    - Durand and Hwy 35 bridge locations.
    - Started this on the MN River in 2012. Bedload is only 1% or less on the MN River. Suspended load is more of a factor on the MN River.
- RSM is study funding only, cannot be used for projects.

*Beneficial Use Restoration Projects (Clark and Kimmel)*

- McMillan Island – moving forward with planning as part of O&M, need to stay within the federal standard.
  - Finalizing design and volumes
  - Considering work in phases – would like to do 40k cy at a time.
  - identify components / phases
    - Iowa comfortable with that approach and has done it in MVR
- Iowa is interested in the Lansing Island, Wisconsin agrees there might be an opportunity.
- Mosquito Island – OSIT was 8/24
  - Sending out weekly updates
  - Placed about 25k cy at this point
  - Rock placement has began
  - Woody Veg in vanes – internal concerns of transporting ash in Pool 6, concern for loss of production. If production were lost could push the project beyond the federal standard.
    - No real monitoring has occurred at sites where woody veg has been used in vanes to know if is worth it.
    - Dan Cottrell will talk to Al VanGuilder to see if we can use multibeam at Crats, Teepeeota and Reads to see if it will work to evaluate whether woody debris is still there.
    - Minnesota: We don't want to stop or slow the process but still interested in woody veg use.
  - There will be future OSIT meetings
  - Mid October completion

*Recreation Work Group (Stefanski)*

- No meeting since last RRF so nothing to report
- WDNR – did some Pool 7&8 beach cleanup / management

- Partnered with FWS on some herbicide treatments.
- Look in to having an NGO as chair and plan to discuss at next meeting.

*Water Level Management Task Force (Mary Stefanski)*

Water Level Management Task Force

RRF 109 Report

August 23, 2017

*Conceptual Model* – Aaron McFarlane provided new drawings for the public conceptual model. There were a few recommendations from the group regarding the drawings but overall they look great. Tim Schlagenhaft stated that Audubon is working with a graphic artist on a video which is intended to make people take action and understand the concept of drawdowns. This person could also take a look at the drawings. Aaron will take one more crack at changes to the drawing.

*MN DNR LSOHC funding for Pool 3.* Dan Dieterman reported that the permit issues with the Brewer Lake inlet partial closure project have been resolved. The project is expected to reduce sediment load to Sturgeon and Buffalo by 50%. MDNR has own plans and specs for the project with the intention to begin work August 1 with a budget of \$780,000.

*UMRBA Workshop* – this workshop was well attended and received by the participants. Several people from the Task Force attended the workshop. The Task Force felt they could be of benefit to this effort in the future by offering assistance to other USACE Districts about setting up a Task Force.

*White Paper Final (Pool 8 white paper Final May 2017)* –The Pool 8 Final White Paper was presented to the Task Force. Thank you to the team that got the paper to the finish line (Randy Urich, Tom Novak, Jon Hendrickson, Dan Cottrell, and Steve Clark (and others who assisted)). The paper clearly recommends a feasibility study. A non-federal partner could potentially support funding at least part of the feasibility study if there was a commitment to implement the program following the study. The Task Force believes the UMRR program has the authority to fund implementation, however, is there support for the UMRR program to do this? If this were looked at as a 50 year project and cost \$12 million it would only be 7% of the UMRR budget or \$250,000/year. The Task Force would request that given UMRBA's interest in drawdowns, that the white paper be forwarded by the RRF to the UMRBA with a request that they investigate if UMRR funding can be used for implementation and if so, what mechanism would be used.

The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for September 6, 2017.

- Jim Fischer and Steve Tapp will draft a letter to the UMRR-EMP Coordinating Committee requesting clarification to see if it will be feasible to do drawdowns as outlined in the white paper on a reoccurring basis. Is there a mechanism available to fund this for the long-term? Mary Stefanski will review prior to sending it out.

#### *UMRS Watershed Study (Mickelson)*

- Decided to cost share on section 729 study UMRBA included as a cost share sponsor.
- Planning assistance to states – working with Aaron Snyder to define what can be pursued.
- Summit held in Dubuque, IA in July – 100 people attended to scope out what a watershed study would involve.

#### *Other Topics (All)*

- Next Agenda
  - Keep UMRS study on agenda
  - No wake enforcement around dredge in Pool 8
  - Figure out message to send out related to safety around dredges.
  - HEC-RAS results presented from on the Coon Rapids to Head of Lake Pepin Study
  - Discuss full use of Pool bands in the winter so lock employees don't need to come in on overtime.
- Due-outs: Carried forward from previous RRF meetings
  - 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 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)
  - RRF to draft a letter to distribute to the USCG pertaining to buoy maintenance concerns throughout the St. Paul District (Tapp/Fischer)
  - 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 (Kimmel)
  - MnDOT to reengage in discussions pertaining to modifying fill specifications for construction projects (Phenow)

- 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)
- MDNR to reach out to Dan Cottrell pertaining to railroad bank erosion near Swift Creek (Dieterman)
- COE to define emergency dredging in the CMMP (C&H)
  - Add language to remove natural occurring shoals causing emergency conditions
- Recreation Work Group to look into portaging status at USAF Lock
  - Continue looking for a chair person
- COE to provide one page write-up for December RRF endorsement of Mosquito Island and Prairie Sand & Gravel (Machajewski/Kimmel)
- Jim Fischer to send POC info for WDOT to Dan Cottrell (Fischer)
- FWVG provide items to RRF voting member with back ground related to deciding next HREP projects. (Clark)
- Each agency shares their objectives for UMRR projects (All)
- Ask Alex Nelson to present on HEC-RAS of Coon Rapids to Lake Pepin (C&H)
- Ask Andy Meier to present at December RRF on Forestry Model (C&H)
- Due-outs: Generated from RRF meeting 109
  - Corps will work with Law Enforcement from partner states to define a better way to create safety zones around dredges, specifically the dredge Goetz. (Cottrell)
  - Corps will work with USGS to explore the potential of working with USGS to monitor track lines in real time with sounding data of tow boats. (Cottrell)
  - Navigation Work Group will meet in fall discuss camp Lacopulis concerns. (Cottrell)
  - Corps will send formal endorsement request to RRF voting members for the Lower Pool 2 CMS, including the executive summary, hydrology and hydraulics report, and public comments. (Tapp)
  - Corps & UMRBA will start conversation to determine best path forward on how HREP projects are submitted, approved, studied, and constructed. (Novak/Mickelsen)
  - RRF will draft a letter to the UMRRCC requesting clarification to see if it will be feasible to do drawdowns as outlined in the white paper on a reoccurring basis. (Tapp/Fischer)

Steve Tapp  
Co-Chairman, RRF