

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #112, 20-21 August 2018, Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center, Lansing, IA

Introductions, Minutes, Next Meeting (All)

- RRF Mins 110, comments have been incorporated. Approved as edited on 27 April 2018.
- RRF Mins 111, no comments. Approved as written on 5 June 2018.
- Dec 4-5 likely at the MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center in Bloomington, MN, 2nd floor.

Agency Activities- COE (Tapp)

- New Deputy District Engineer, Patrick Sullivan
- Disposition Study public meetings, 500+ attendees at 4 meetings.
 - Common themes at meetings: clarification of scope, potential future use, near & long term steps and processes.
 - Update study and EA based on public meetings
 - Release to public in 2019
- Endangered Mussels Monitoring
 - COE, NPS, and MDNR monitoring mussel populations on St. Croix River near Hudson, WI. Three federally endangered species known to be in the area were found during the survey. Surveys were needed to comply with Biological Opinion issued in 2000.
- Fed Gov't Reform and Reorganization
 - Several reforms and reorganizations noted in document from the Administration. Proposal to split COE by function into DOD, DOI, and DOT.
 - COE focusing on policy and regulation reforms. Need to "Revolutionize" the way the COE operates and focus on "Delivering the Program."
- WLM of all COE locks & dams
 - Megan Moore asked about a recent decision by the COE to stop drawdowns.
 - This is related to litigation on the Missouri River. The COE was operating dams for environmental reasons, which is not the intended purpose.
 - The COE will need to update Water Control Manuals.
 - The COE should follow up at the December RRF meeting.
- New biologist for COE in St. Paul, LeAnn Glomski

Agency Activities- WDNR (Rasmussen)

- WDNR Secretary & Office of Great Waters tour of Pool 8 on 1 August 2018 went well. Secretary was impressed with activities and work by agencies.

- Hi-Crush FRAC sand
 - May incident. Bulldozer sunk in soft sediment and needed to breach levee to rescue operator. Sediment released into Trempealeau River. Testing showed elevated levels of lead and arsenic. WDNR will update at the December RRF meeting

Agency Activities- MDNR (Moore / Dieterman)

- New Division Director, Steve Colvin
- New Fisheries Chief, Brad Parsons
- Pool 3 Brewer Lake inlet
 - Work completed in April. No significant, unexpected impacts from high water
- Pool 9 (Upper)
 - Flood plain forest restoration project moving forward. Funding approved in June.
- Boarder Waters fishing regulations, potential changes
 - Public comments, Over 850 surveys and comments submitted.
 - MDNR & WDNR meeting to discuss

Agency Activities- IDNR (Hansen)

- License fee bill passed legislation. It doesn't increase fees, but allows IDNR to increase by administrative rule.

Agency Activities- FWS (Tim Yager)

- Personnel changes/retirements: Vickie Hirschboeck, Trempealeau NWR retired
- Land acquisitions: Riverview Cemetery, Pool 4; Mud Lake, Pool 6
- COE received funding to update Land Use Allocation Plan (LUAP)
- Agreement to manage 1000 acres in Aghaming Park, owned by City of Winona
- Lots of Pool 8 tours this summer (UMRBA with Mississippi River Commission, Sen Ron Johnson)

Agency Activities- Friends of Pool 2 (Senglaub)

- Inquired about COE Disposition Study of upper locks

Agency Activities- American Rivers (Dorothy)

- New staff in St. Paul, Brad Gordon, floodplain restoration
- Participating in Disposition Study and will be submitting a letter of interest in Lock & Dam 1 and Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock & Dam.

Agency Activities- LMRWD (Loomis)

- Working on a plan to make Dredged Material Management a permanent capital project. Public hearing schedule on 17 September 2018 at Scott County Law Enforcement Center.

Agency Activities – LPLA (Becco)

- Lots of outreach for 204 project. Focusing on fund raising efforts.

Agency Activities - Genz

- UMWA – appreciate all the dredging at Boulanger this season
- Red Wing Marine Museum – open on Saturdays and when Queen Boats are in town

Section 204 Projects & 1122 Pilot Projects Update (Novak)

- Sec 204, Head of Lake Pepin (Pool 4)
 - Alternatives being developed, rough quantities
 - Existing alternatives are based on flood stage impacts
 - Alternatives will change
 - Agency tour and discussions, Wacouta Bay & Catherine Pass
 - Goal to stabilize natural levee
 - ~400kcy of sand from Reads Landing
 - Bay City committed \$10k to project
 - Project exists even without 1122 funds
 - Challenging project, lots of features
 - Need to clean up sediment-laden waters
 - Next public meeting will likely be when Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) is ready
 - Additional agency meetings to occur
- Sec 204, Pigs Eye Lake (Pool 2)
 - Report at MVD
 - Ramsey county seeking funding (Lessard-Sams)
- 1122 Pilot Projects
 - Still in Assistant Secretary of Army (ASA) office
 - Assist with additional cost of transportation and placement of sand/dredged material
 - Lots of speculation on authorities and abilities
 - Selections confirmed or denied by end of August; does not guarantee funding

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Tapp, Cottrell and Machajewski)

- Dan reviewed the dredging & placement site activity schedules
 - Goetz is regional equipment; may not do additional work in MVP later this season
 - Request for Placement Site Stabilization OSIT
 - Pool 4 successes, Pool 5 OSIT inspection still needed, Corps will coordinate with Sara Strassman
 - Grounding Reporting
 - Current practices ok for now
- Paul covered site unloads & DMMPs 4, 5, & 6
 - Lost Island

- 750kcy removed to date (of 1.3Mcy), may finish this fall
 - Began 3 months earlier than in 2017 due to eagle monitoring by Driftless Area. Agreement was reached between that FWS and the Contractor, not COE. Observations showed no impacts by dredging operations
 - Corps Island
 - Bid opening held on 8 August 2018, Newt Marine apparent low bidder
 - Contractor Selected Placement Site
 - Work plan pending
 - Wabasha Gravel Pit Trucking CT
 - 300kcy, LS Marine apparent low bidder
 - Work plan pending coordination with City of Wabasha
 - Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Mechanical Unload Contract
 - Developed, advertised and awarded contract to partially unload temporary CMMP island sites to CMMP upland sites.
 - First site likely Pool 9 Lansing Island to Lansing Hwy Bridge
 - ~100kcy.
 - Pool 4 DMMP
 - Sec 217, Tipping fee to manage material
 - Wabasha developed a Port Authority
 - MOU signed on 5 June 2018 between COE & City of Wabasha to find solution
 - Late summer/fall develop plan with City of Wabasha
 - Draft to stakeholders fall/winter
 - Spring 2019 DRAFT to public
 - MDNR concern with Sec 217 & NEPA compliance
 - COE NEPA will assess initial placement, what happens to the material from there is on City of Wabasha to manage.
 - Pool 5 DMMP
 - Process delayed due to Pool 4
 - Large farm near Kellogg willing seller
 - Draft report to COE leadership fall 2018
 - Draft report to stakeholders & public spring 2019
 - Pool 6 DMMP
 - Updating Draft report
 - Hemker property purchased in June
 - Concern from Homer residents regarding long-term use of site
 - Stakeholder meeting fall 2018
 - Need to identify additional placement opportunities
 - Draft to public spring 2019
- Zach covered Pool 2 DMMP

- Hoping to have Draft report completed by end of October 2018.
- Stakeholder meeting scheduled on 14 September 2018
- Dan & Steve covered harbor dredging in Zippel Bay
 - Planning started, but not enough funding to dredge
- Old Daymark base by Minneiska is now marked
 - USCG is looking into removing
- Dresbach buoys removed
 - Janice Hoeschler not happy
 - Concerned with shoreline erosion and safety

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Stauffer)

- Subgroup met in February regarding HNA2, another round in near future
- Next FWWG meeting later fall 2018
- HREP sequencing workshop, late fall/winter

Pool 2 Ch. Improvement – Boulanger Bend to LD 2 (Novak)

- Contractor, Newt Marine has completed 500lf of the 3500lf to date on the upstream structure
- 30,000 mussels moved
- Construction of downstream structure scheduled in 2019
- Court issued stay until 4 September 2018 on ruling for lawsuit from PAS (landowner on Grey Cloud Island) against MDNR. Asking for 60 day extension. MDNR and PAS have no problem extending, but up to courts.
- Need to coordinate Met Council sewer outfall protection
- No concern with gas pipelines

LD2 Embankment (Novak)

- Protect embankment & use dredged material
- Conceptual ideas of berm and off-shore island
- Material source: temp placement sites, channel dredging, overwintering dredging
- Public meetings this winter

Upper Mississippi River Restoration (Novak)

- Conway Lake
 - Awarded in July to Kaiyuh
 - 2.5 years for construction starting in 2019
- McGregor Lake
 - Plan to ask for RRF endorsement at December 2018 meeting
 - Concern with fine material make-up; very soupy, chocolate milk
 - Possible RFP vs low bid
 - Expect 2-3 years for construction

- Harpers Slough
 - Some erosion on W island
 - Project dedication scheduled in October 2018
- Bass Ponds
 - Planning started in December 2017 and moving quickly
 - Tentatively Selected Plan could come out fall 2018
- Might have two projects shovel ready in 2019. Need a decision at some point on sequence. If McGregor goes first, Bass Ponds will sit for 3-4 years due to funding
- Tom retiring May 2019, Shahin taking over for Tom.

Engineering with Nature (EWN) / Regional Sediment Management (RSM) (Hendrickson / Kimmel)

- RSM funds (~\$110K) have been used for Chippewa sediment monitoring, data was collected, processing remains
- USGS dune tracking was completed, extra effort funded by the USGS
- USGS sediment monitoring at Durand using acoustic samplers and physical samples continues
- RSM FY19 proposal to develop a sediment transport model for the lower Chippewa
 - Correlate Durand data with sediment being transported at the mouth Chippewa
- RSM FY19 proposal to look at a sediment collector in Pool 1 at the Pool 1 placement site
 - Concern with the application on UMR or Chippewa

Navigation Work Group Activities (Cottrell)

- Have not met since fall of 2017, meet next in fall/winter 2018
- Agenda item: Track lines

Day 2

Recap from Day 1

WC Control Manual – Steve Clark will get clarification whether only environmental deviations are prohibited or all deviations.

Agencies would like bank identified when the Coast Guard sends out an OPSUM about a grounding.

Forest Management on the UMR Work Group Development (All)

- Table discussion until April 2019 RRF. Regional Forest Management PDT will meet in December 2018 and will be addressing the issue.
- Concern that FWVG is more focused on fisheries vs forest management (Stefanski)
- Possible restructuring for UMRR project selection process (Fischer)
- We have a regional forestry coordination committee; how will this be different? (Hanson)

- Subgroup(s) reporting to FWWG discussion - all
- Task/project driven vs holistic program - all
- Scope: COE fee title lands vs all lands - Clark
- Fischer & Tapp to follow up with Urich

Recreation Work Group (Pednault)

- Notes below as submitted

Meetings: June 21, 2018 with attendees from USFWS, WI DNR, USACE, NPES, FOP2

Next meeting: September 13, 2018

Housekeeping – Rec workgroup will meet four times a year (September, November, February, May) in different locations, prefer afternoons for travel purposes, next meeting September 13 in Winona and FWS office

Attendee updates:

USACE: New interpretive staff at Blackhawk; Mississippi River master plan part 3 (recreation element), Randy working on SOW for contractor

NPS: Allen Robbinsfeger let us know have additional staff, running lock visitor center for USACE (good reception by the public and vying for activities at the sites, discussed the iPaddlePort program that was funded with alternative transportation money, operate lockers to get kayak, paddle and pfd)

FOP2 – concerned with disposition study and developing a position paper, working with MPLS rowing club, briefed Rec workgroup on upper landing concerns

USFWS – updates on staff changes, Winona office now managing Aghaming Park and received a grant to implement Leave No Trace HotSpots program which Mary presented to the group

Status of Assignments to Recreation Workgroup

FOP2 Upper Landing – John briefed the group and has participated in Rec Workgroup meetings, more was learned and guidance was that not a Recreation Workgroup issue

Beach plans – Two topics

Programmatic EA - discussion at both the February and June Recreation Workgroup meetings; most of the concerned revolved around how to conduct a programmatic EA that would sufficiently cover NEPA requirements for impacts to resources in a timely manner as the river environments changes so frequently. All beaches from Pools 2-10 have been visited in at least the last decade and recommendations provided for management actions. In addition, many of the beaches and actions are covered under either the CCP or the CMMP. Current proposal is to add a column to the Excel table and identify beaches that do not have NEPA coverage then discuss developing an EA for these beaches and/or adding them to future revisions of the CMMP.

Pool 7 and 8 beach plans – write a foreword explaining NEPA coverage and present to RRF for endorsement. Challenges sharing such a large file, but ACOE (Kimmel) can help.

Charter discussion – Sara Strassman wrote a draft charter using the FWWG, we also looked at Joint charter for UMRR, RRF Operating Procedures. The draft Charter was discussed at June meeting and has been sent to team members for feedback. The group brainstormed goals and outreach as primarily agency staff are active members, but many parties are interested in recreation on the river. Lack of infrastructure was discussed (i.e. posting meeting minutes, agendas. Etc.). Discussed other resources that have identified recreation needs on the river such as the plan of studies for a comprehensive recreation plan, GREAT studies, etc. Sara shared the UMRCC history of recreation and water use technical section that also has a laundry list of projects group was involved in. Team to provide edits at the September meeting.

Visitor Use Survey – The forum suggested the RWG look into a visitor use survey. The RWG discussed the many types and questions that visitor use surveys can answer and also discussed that several use studies have been conducted in the past. The RWG proposes to start tackling this assignment by conducting some data mining to see what has been done previously and might be used to better define an objective for this assignment.

Rec work group to look into portaging status at USAF Lock – included in previous RRF meeting due outs, but am not sure what the assignment to the Recreation Workgroup is?

- Upper Landing Discussion
 - COE cannot ask the City of St. Paul how to use their land
 - It is a City of St. Paul Parks & Rec decision on use
 - This is not a RRF issue
 - Fleeting areas
 - Are they temporary or permanent
 - COE Regulatory Office permits the fleeting areas
 - Safety issues not clearly defined/documented

Water Level Management Task Force (Stefanski)

- Notes below as submitted

The Water Level Management Task Force held a tour of Pool 5 on Tuesday, June 12, 2018.

Drawdown Video – Tim Schlagenhaft provided a link to the final 5 minute video which was produced by Audubon MN with support from the McKnight Foundation. The video can be found at <http://mn.audubon.org/landingwater-birds-and-people/advocating-drawdowns>

Publication – Kevin Kenow, Brian Gray, and James Lyon were successful in publishing the manuscript

'Flooding tolerance of *Sagittaria latifolia* and *S. rigida* under controlled laboratory conditions' in *River Research and Applications*. Members of the WLMTF (Tim Schlagenhaft, Ruth Nissen, and Megan Moore) reviewed the draft manuscript prior to submission. The online version of the publication can be found at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/rra.3337> and is also attached.

Conceptual Model – Aaron McFarlane made some additional edits to the conceptual model and it will likely be called “final” at the next Task Force meeting. The latest version is attached.

Pool 5 tour – June 12. Four boats spent a glorious day on the water exploring sites of interest on Pool 5. The day included re-visiting the challenges and successes of the 2005/06 drawdowns as well as ideas on how to move forward with accomplishing a future pool-wide drawdown. Several action items were identified which will be discussed at the next meeting.

- 1) Identify two landings on each side (MN and WI) of the river that could easily be maintained to provide recreational access during a pool-wide drawdown.
- 2) Make contact with the marinas in the pool (Bass Camp, Great River Harbor, Buffalo City (Peck)).
- 3) Add an appendix about Pool 5 dredging quantities that would be necessary to implement a drawdown in the new Pool 5 DMMP.
- 4) Explore ideas for using dredge material to enhance the islands forming along the right descending bank near River Mile 740.
- 5) Review and solicit input from the Task Force on the current Pool 5/Weaver Bottoms UMRR fact sheet. Funding through the MRR program could be a viable route forward.
- 6) Keep informed about pool wide mussel surveys, especially for Pool 8.

Aaron McFarlane provided photos via flicker which can be found at <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmnWEWei>

The next meeting has not been determined but will likely be in September.

Beneficial Use Restoration Projects (Stefanski)

- Mosquito Island review (pre, during, and post project pics)
 - AAR of design, construction, stabilization
 - Although appears to be in rough shape, FWS still believes this was a success
 - Bad timing of floods, veg was not established
 - WDNR had reservations on location
 - Need to get some lessons learned
 - Ask designers if they think the island will be stable now
 - What's next
 - Cobble stones, M&R estimate, vegetation

- WDNR permit compliance/grandfathered
- McMillan Island, rolling design into Pool 10 UMRR project

UMRS Watershed Study (Salvato)

- Tapp & Fischer to facilitate Channel Maintenance/Sediment Management Issue Group
- Not much appetite for additional studies and need to ID shortfalls – Moore
- Don't let it turn into another Comprehensive Plan – Dorothy
- Some contentious issues; not easily resolved – Dorothy
- Need multi-agency & stakeholder input – Dorothy
- Pessimistic this will result in changes – Genz
- Reference the General Galloway report – Huber
- Will be a group effort, need PAIs (potentially affect individuals) input – Salvato

USCG AtoNs Study (Cottrell for Mackillop)

- Western Rivers, Waterways Analysis & Planning Study (WAPS)
 - Comment period closed on 1 July 2018
 - Concerns that nobody heard about it to comment
- Concerns with public outreach by USCG on issues and incident communication with agencies. Discussed elevating this to UMRBA (5 states) for discussion
- Check on status of using smaller main channel buoys
- Discuss use of smaller buoys and communication at December 2018 RRF meeting

RRF Due Outs Process (Tapp/Fischer)

- Reviewed list of due outs from previous meetings. Agreed that due out list should be part of the minutes.

Other Topics (All)

- Cottrell will try to re-engage the Federal Railroad Administration on NWG and RRF issues
- Moore provided an update on Newcastle disease. Notify FWS & DNR of dead waterfowl in large numbers
- FWS would like to see more coordination regarding DNR inspections at boat landings. States will look into this and coordinate with Stefanski

AAR

- Driftless Area Education and Visitor Center great facility for RRF meetings
- Lodging in area difficult for this group

Steve Tapp
Co-Chairman, RRF