

## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion Points; River Resources Forum Meeting #115, December 2-3, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, Bloomington, MN.

*Introductions, Minutes, Next Meeting (All)*

- Introductions were made including Colonel Jansen, acknowledging this was his first RRF meeting.
- RRF Minutes for 113 were approved as Steve Tapp updated due-outs; RRF Minutes for 114 endorsed as written.
- Proposed Meetings for 2020:
  - Apr 21-22, support from RRF for a two-day meeting, venue likely between Wabasha, MN and La Crosse, WI
  - Aug 18-19, possible McGregor Lake HREP tour depending on project status; also discussed holding near Bloomington, MN with tour of MN Valley HREP
  - Dec 1-2, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, Bloomington, MN

*Agency Activities- COE (Tapp)*

- Kevin Baumgard, Chief of Operations, will be retiring end of December
  - Advertising to backfill behind Kevin as of 3 Dec, will also backfill temporarily on 120-day assignment
- Randy Urich has been promoted to Recreation and Natural Resources Branch Chief
  - Andy Meier is backfilling Randy's position on a temporary basis
- Maintenance being completed on the tow rails for locks 6, 8, 9; locks will be closed from 10 Dec through 13 Mar for maintenance
- USAF LD Disposition Study is ongoing
- Locks 15, 24, and 25 closed 15 Dec through 30 Mar
- Tom Novak's position, UMRR Program Manager, is currently being advertised
  - Angela Deen is filling in on a temporary basis

*Agency Activities- WDNR (Fischer)*

- Continue working on UMRBA flood risk and sediment management PAS
- Working with UMRR program to identify several new habitat projects in the Corps' Districts
- UMR Water Quality Improvement Act
  - Drafting legislation with UMRBA
  - To include
    - Nutrient reduction strategies
    - Unified Monitoring and Assessment Strategy for UMR

- Establish National Program Office (EPA and NRCS) for Mississippi River
- Scott Walter is the new Wildlife Supervisor for the Mississippi River
- Dianne Drake was hired as a Science Lead at the LTRM Field Station
- Myron Smith Air Program Associate passed away while visiting family in Georgia

*Agency Activities- FWS (Yager)*

- Staffing/Personnel
  - Headquarters – none
  - Winona District
    - Rob Hirschboeck, Federal Wildlife Officer took a position in Region 6, left on November 16<sup>th</sup>
    - Ed Lagace, Park Ranger is retiring this Friday (December 6<sup>th</sup>)
  - Trempealeau District – none
  - La Crosse District
    - Bill Kiser, Private Lands Biologist in La Crosse is taking a position with the U.S. Forest Service
  - McGregor District – none
  - Savannah District – none
- Activities
  - Habitat Management Plan has been finalized; reflects refuge priorities.
- Other
  - Headquarters and Winona District Offices will be moving to 102 Walnut Street in Winona, MN in February 2020
  - DOI re-organization – proposal is to move supervision/management of stations in Iowa and Missouri to Region 4 (Atlanta). Upper Miss Refuge would stay in Region 3.
  - Confirmed presence of a Eurasian Widgeon on the river in Pool 8, near the Goose Island closed area

*Agency Activities- NPS (Robbins-Fenger)*

- Late winter / early spring will be hosting introductory seminar to discuss impacts of Emerald Ash Borer on NPS properties
  - Includes information as to how to re-plant behind impacted Ash trees, detailing which trees have the most likely chance to succeed given growing conditions, climate change, etc.
  - Four training seminars will be available.
- Looking into implementing a dive program, Allison Holdhusen will be the point of contact for this program
- There are three parcels of land (two islands) within Dakota County that have gone into tax forfeiture, there has been discussion between the MDNR and NPS with regard to taking ownership of those properties

- Working with City of St. Paul about possibly building a learning center at Watergate Marina, and possibly move office to that location.

*Agency Activities- MDNR (Moore)*

- New Regional Director, Grant Wilson
- New group, Water Train, looking to pump potable water from aquifers in the region and transport that water via rail to other locales out west. Initial request denied, but proposal will likely to go UMRBA for review. Estimating 40 M gallons a month.
- MDNR and WDNR working on fishing rules. Looking into changing bag and size limit for most species of fish as of March 2020
- Noticing a lot of break-out channels in the Reno Bottoms area
  - Jon Hendrickson mentioned that the Corps has been monitoring that as part of the Reno Bottoms Project

*Agency Activities – UMRBA (Stephenson)*

- Working on Water Quality Improvement Act
- Working on Flood, Sediment, and Drought Management PAS
- Working on UMRR HREP selection process
- Water Level Management Regional Coordinating Committee met in October 2019 and had some very productive conversation
- Kirsten Wallace had a child, will be coming back to work in February 2020

*Agency Activities – LMRWD (Loomis)*

- ~\$385K was the low-bid for improving dredged material placement site, most likely awarding to the low bidder at the December Board Meeting
  - Contractor has four weeks to finish construction once started
  - Will keep in communication with the Corps to ensure construction won't impact any channel maintenance needs
- Spent last year drafting rules in order to implement Watershed Management Plan, hoping to have rules approved sometime in January 2020

*Agency Activities- Friends of Pool 2 (Senglaub)*

- Mary Senglaub participating in the RRF in place of Jon Senglaub, no other updates

*Agency Activities – American Rivers (Dorothy)*

- Launched the Upper Mississippi Rivers Basin, will likely provide additional fundraising and some new positions within the Midwest Region

*Agency Activities – USCG (Kwok)*

- Angel Kwok replaced Matt McKillop
- Increasing use of electronic aids to navigation

- Marinetraffic.com reveals electronic aids to navigation

#### *Beneficial Use Work Group Activities (Kimmel)*

- Held an internal conference call on 9 Sep to discuss participation in the Beneficial Use Work Group
  - Participation is anticipated from the following disciplines within the Corps: Operations, Environmental Stewardship, Recreation, Environmental Compliance, Hydraulics and Hydrology, Project Management
  - Specific individuals from the Corps: Zach Kimmel (Ops, chair), Randy Urich to decide on ENS, Kevin Berg to decide on REC, Aaron McFarlane (Env Comp), Jon Hendrickson (H&H), Tom Novak and Angela Deen (PM)
- Also discussed that this will be a stand-alone work group that will focus on beneficial use of dredged material without any blinders (ie, not specifically focused on beneficial use of dredged material for habitat projects or beneficial use of dredged material solely for DOT projects, etc)
  - Goal is to maximize beneficial use of dredged material through this work group by bringing folks together from varying areas of expertise to expand current ideas and explore new ideas
- Hope to establish an active distribution list early 2020 and schedule the first work group meeting prior to the April RRF
- Each agency please e-mail Zach who the participant will be from their agency.
- Col Jansen expressed that the team should have an aspirational vision for beneficial use of dredged material and could become some of the leaders throughout the nation when it comes to beneficial use
- Will need to integrate the join La Crosse County / Harbor Commission Beneficial Use Group with this effort

#### *Navigation Work Group Activities (Cottrell)*

- Work group hasn't met in several years
- Met Council sewer outfall at ~RM 818.9 on LDB, construction was completed in August and it extends ~30' beyond the rock structure toward the navigation channel; pipe is less than 9' below LCP. The Corps will facilitate a discussion with interested parties.
- November 14<sup>th</sup> there was a discussion between CP Rail and Union Pacific Rail, held in LeClaire, IA, discussed concern of barges nosing into critical areas and coming too close to the railroad
  - Pilots aren't required to have electronic charting in the vessel, rather either electronic charting or hard-copy charting; this may be contributing to vessels nosing into critical areas
  - Olivia Dorothy asked if realignment of the rail was ever discussed, Dan Cottrell responded that it was never discussed

- Megan Moore asked if it was possible to ask Navigation Industry to light-load barges when there are a lot of channel problems so that some traffic can pass
  - Steve Tapp said the Corps can make recommendations based on channel conditions and coordinate that with the USCG and the Navigation Industry, but only the USCG can impose draft restrictions.
- Kurt Rasmussen asked about outdraft at LD7
  - Dan Cottrell mentioned that the weir was installed in October 2018 and we've had outdraft conditions since that time; looking into resolving the issue
  - Jon Hendrickson commented that the critical discharge range is ~100K cfs, the weir would work better under normal flow conditions rather than very high flow conditions
    - Less flow into Lake Onalaska and less flow down the old navigation channel, both of these things are also contributing to outdraft conditions
  - Jim Fischer asked whether it's worth considering a channel management study in this reach. The Corps will analyze and review with the navigation industry.

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

- C&H Overview, Steve Tapp
  - The season was very challenging. The Hydro-survey section completed a record 627 surveys that covered 43,000 acres compared to the previous record (2018) of 477 surveys covering 32,000 acres.
  - If Congress is able to pass a year-long Continuing Resolution Authority or pass a budget for FY20, we should know about our Work Plan budget packages within a month or so afterward
  - Currently the CRA goes through 20 December, in the President's proposed budget St. Paul District Navigation would receive \$52.4 Mil if passed, which includes \$22 Mil for channel maintenance. Supplemental packages for flood damage requested in 2019 were approved and we're getting some of it slowly.
  - Overall we've had pretty good funding over the past five fiscal years
  - Zach Kimmel commented that the cost of managing dredged material has increased proportionally over the last decade
- Dredging Overview, Dan Cottrell
  - Three locations were dredged in 2019 under the emergency declaration per the CMMP definition
  - Dredging season ran from April 29<sup>th</sup> – November 14<sup>th</sup>, total volume of 1,087,703 cy
    - ~1.4 million cy of material remained in the unscheduled portion of the dredge schedule
  - 20-year average for dredging is now ~950K cy annually

- Used a few new means of adding dredging resources, such as sole source contracts and purchase order contracts
- As of 24 November there were 81 reports of channel problems this season, 40 of which were critical
- USCG Cutter Wyaconda only made two trips to St. Paul in 2019, attempted a third, but had a mechanical breakdown in Genoa, WI
  - Jim Fischer mentioned to Andrew Stephenson that the RRF will be drafting a letter to the USCG asking for more support for channel marking and it should be discussed at a UMRBA board meeting as well
- There were three USCG draft restrictions or closures: Freeborn Light 4/29-5/9, Diamond Bluff 8/24-8/28, Below Winona RR Bridge 9/7-9/10
- Plan to continue monitoring outdraft conditions at LD7
- Lower Pool 10 CMS – hope to have a TSP by 2020, followed by a meeting with Navigation Industry sometime in January
- Have added another mechanical dredging contract for one additional plant, awarded in November 2019 for one season (2020)
- Will continue to develop E-AtoN process and streamline steps to utilize them more efficiently, also to set them up on weekends
- Placement Site Overview, Zach Kimmel
  - Hastings Site – prepared the site for future placement by completing some minor tree clearing (four Cottonwood Trees) and creating a turn-around to cycle trucks
  - Brownsville Site – fence rehabilitation was completed to repair blown down fence between the site and adjacent neighborhood on the upstream side of the site
  - Lower Pool 10 Thalweg Site – went through AAR at the August RRF so won't go into a ton of detail, looked at various options for placement in Lower Pool 10 and ultimately the OSIT agreed that placement in the thalweg was the best option in this emergency situation
    - Recently collected another hydrographic survey from LD10 upstream to the placement matrix
    - Will continue to work on the EA, survey data will be integrated into the document
  - Looked into ways of managing dredged material throughout the District with as little environmental impact as possible, particularly under emergency circumstances
    - Considered placement in Pool 3, North/Sturgeon Lakes as well as pushing material downstream from the Corps Island site; Pool 6, discussed the potential of enhancing Mosquito Island and tweaking design; Pool 10, discussed O&M placement within McGregor Lake and within the Lower Pool 10 HREP footprint

- Took a proactive approach to get as many hydraulic sites as possible prepared for placement prior to 2020 in anticipation of challenging channel conditions heading into the season
  - Reads Landing and Grand Encampment were shaped twice for hydraulic placement, so will be ready immediately in the spring of 2020
- Real Estate: overall, process for acquiring real estate via easement / right-of-entry is a very complicated process and requires approval from the Corps' Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C.
  - Non-standard estate request for continued use of the Southport placement site currently being reviewed by the Corps' Headquarters Office
  - Renewed real estate agreements at the following sites: Winona Harbor, Winona Technology Park (2019 will be the last year using this site), Isle La Plume, and Prairie Sand & Gravel
- 2020 Placement Site Activities
  - Erosion inspection – is this still a concern? Last I believe Sara was going to coordinate an OSIT meeting, know some people looked at different locations as part of the HREP tour
  - Continue to do whatever we can to secure short or long-term real estate interest in placement sites
    - Non-standard estate (waiver for any interest that isn't fee acquisition) – request for Southport will continue to be reviewed at Headquarters, a programmatic request will be put together for various existing placement sites in the District as well as mining pits
    - Right of Entry for Construction – will be pursued for Southport and the Red Wing Commercial Harbor placement sites as a stop-gap (likely a 1-2 year agreement)
  - Hastings Site
    - Likelihood of utilizing Hastings site has increased due to the fact we deferred dredging at the Lower Approach to LD2, site has limited capacity (est ~10K cy)
  - Mississippi Gardens
    - Corps is working to finalize the Environmental Assessment and put together a mitigation plan for use of the ~11.35 acre site which would enable hydraulic placement
    - Haul road will need to be re-established prior to mechanical placement
    - Likelihood of utilizing the Mississippi Gardens site has increased due to the fact dredging was deferred
    - WDNR has concern with the ownership of the material and the Corps' potential inability to control removal of material from the site to restore capacity
  - Prairie Sand & Gravel

- With renewed RE agreement, will now work on RRF endorsement request for use of the two sites that we have used of the three we have real estate interest in (third is on St. Feriole Island and partners have expressed concern of mussel impacts cycling barges in and out of this location)
  - Lower Pool 10 Thalweg Placement
    - Complete Environmental Assessment and request 404(t) permit from IDNR
  - Continue looking into creative ways of managing dredged material
    - Looking to partner with UMRR and place channel material within McGregor Lake
      - Likely that this is done by Government Mechanical early in the 2020 dredging season; already have permits from the FWS and WDNR for placement of 70K cy, will need to work with partners to amend permit for next season
      - 70K cy of placement under O&M will save the UMRR program an estimated \$400K
    - Will continue to evaluate potential placement alternatives in Pool 3 North / Sturgeon Lake and in Pool 6 Mosquito Island
  - Can construct O&M Island in Pool 3 without a State permit on tribal lands, will coordinate with the state regardless but won't require any State permitting
  - Jim Fischer asked what the criteria are for approving a non-standard estate request, COL Jansen responded that he spoke with the Director of Real Estate who is responsible for making the decision and expressed the importance of approving this request from a program perspective
- Long-Term Planning Overview, Paul Machajewski
  - Corps Island Excavation
    - Contractor agreed to conduct well testing and provide bottled water at the public meeting which relieved tension with and appeased the public
    - OSIT meeting was held on 20 Nov
    - Were some complaints to MDNR about the landing closing without notice
    - 460K cy removed as of last week. Should be complete by the end of this week.
    - Kevin Baumgard expressed that there is benefit to the contractor selected placement site as the contractor has more flexibility in working with landowners and obtaining sites that we may otherwise overlook
      - Paul Machajewski mentioned that he would prefer to have it as a tool in the toolbox
      - Megan Moore expressed concern with the closing of the boat landing, communication with the contractor and the permitting process of Contractor Selected Placement Site method used for this project. The MDNR still does not support this process.

- Jim Fischer expressed that he does understand the benefits but it does circumvent the MOU process and adds to the workload for WDNR, so they would not encourage it. If we follow the MOU process, Kurt and Sara can handle it, but if the contractor selected process is used, other permits and other people need to be involved.
- Lost Island Excavation
  - Completed 21 Jun
  - COE completed project early due to need to utilize contractors equipment for channel dredging and placement of material on Lost Island.
  - 1.262 Mil cy removed. About 20K cy left behind.
- Pine Bend Excavation
  - Completed a partial excavation of ~50K cy of material, taking material from Pine Bend to Southport
- McMillan Island Excavation
  - Looking to restore capacity in 2020 at McMillan Island, priorities to place material at Buck Creek, McGregor Lake, and/or Prairie Sand & Gravel
  - WDNR (Rasmussen) expressed interest in seeking habitat opportunities adjacent to McMillan Island
- Reads Landing Excavation
  - Looking to restore capacity in 2020 at Reads Landing, will need to do so prior to DMMP completion
  - Will work with pit owners and the City of Wabasha in hopes of moving material sometime next season
- Lower Pool 4 DMMP
  - Working on Section 217 agreement with the Wabasha Port Authority (WPA), which would require the WPA to restore capacity for Corps' placement of dredged material – hope to have a draft document by Easter of 2020
  - Corps is working to finalize base plan
  - Three willing sellers with property north of the Zumbro River have approached the Corps since the release of the Pool 5 DMMP
  - Hope to have the draft report ready for agency review in the spring of 2020 followed by public review in the summer of 2020 and final in the fall of 2020
- Pool 5 DMMP
  - Willing seller came forward in Pool 5, nearly 1,000 acres
  - Offer-to-sell was signed in August
  - Draft report was submitted to the agencies in August
  - Draft report is currently undergoing review at the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division

- MDNR would like to work with the Corps on managing the wetlands that the Corps acquires through this DMMP
- Will be important to engage agencies throughout implementation process
- Pool 6 DMMP
  - Draft is at MVD for review
  - Plan is to continue to utilize Winona Harbor and Homer West
  - Will look into potential expansion of the Winona Harbor site and adding use of the Homer East site
  - Also looking at additional pit sites as contingent options, though management of material would be at an increased cost
  - Draft report to partners winter 2020
- Future DMMP's: Pool 3, Upper Pool 4, Pool 9, and Pool 10 all on the horizon

*Endorsement of Emergency Dredging Language (Tapp)*

- Discussion was tabled due to lack of time and will be addressed either via email or at the April RRF meeting

*Pool 2 Projects – Channel Modification, DMMP, LD2 Embankment (Novak)*

- Channel modification
  - Two structures are now in place, still need to complete channel dredging ~400K cy of material estimated; need to find a placement site for material
  - Discussion needs to happen with regard to sewer outfall and potential impacts to navigation
- DMMP
  - Public meeting will be held in Cottage Grove, MN on 9 Dec
  - Public release and comment period for the draft report 22 Nov to 8 Jan
  - MDNR will complete their own EAW, will not be included in the draft report
- Pool 2 O&M Island
  - Purpose is to protect upstream side of LD2 embankment from erosion due to wave or current actions utilizing channel material
    - Estimate is to utilize ~300K cy of material
    - Cost estimate for the project is ~\$4.7 million
  - Goal is to release the report this year and have the FONSI signed
  - Jon Hendrickson mentioned that similar projects could be done at LD5, LD8, LD9

*Climate Change (Moore)*

- Long Term Resource Monitoring is an element of UMRR, Federal partnership including six field stations
  - Collecting data in Pool 4 for ~30 years
- Lake Pepin ice-out date is ~17 days earlier on average from 1850-2000's (Apr 15 to Mar 29)
- Increased water temperature of ~3.7 degrees Fahrenheit over the past 26 years

- Warmer water shifted timing of peak zooplankton abundance, yellow perch spawning did not shift with temperature shift, which led to a bad recruitment year
  - Zooplankton is the main food sources for a variety of fish species
- Warmer water also leads to better conditions for growth and survival of larval carp
- Discharge is one of the main variables for measure climate change impacts and precipitation, most of the measures come from LD3
  - Chart revealed that average flows across the calendar year were substantially higher overall 2010-Oct 2019
- At 10K cfs it would take a particle ~21.8 days to migrate through Lake Pepin, at 50K cfs it would take a particle ~5.7 days to migrate through Lake Pepin
- The last 8 years we've experienced higher discharge yet vegetation has remained resilient
  - Concern regarding how long the system can maintain such resilience under continued high water discharge
- Indications of climate change: shorter winters, warmer summer water temps, double the water in the river
- Discussion about identifying specific locations throughout the St. Paul District where there's a greater likelihood of establishing floodplain forest at a higher elevation without incurring stage impacts

*Recreation Work Group (Strassman)*

- Last met in May 2019, next meeting will take place in January / February 2020
- Most work being spent on updating the Master Plan / LUAP
  - Largest change is that the amount of areas designated low-density recreation will be reduced in the updated Master Plan / LUAP
  - Agencies are still completing review of the updates, uncertain when next interagency meeting will be
- Very close to finalizing the RWG charter
- With extended high water and competing priorities, no beach OSIT's were conducted
- Frustration from public regarding landing access tied to high water
- WDNR and MDNR working on updating fishing regulations
- WDNR and MDNR working with boating administrators and wardens to educate boaters about excessive wakes, particularly during high water conditions

*Upper Mississippi River Restoration (Novak, Deen)*

- FY20 President's Work Plan: \$33.3 million / \$12 million for the St. Paul District
- Reno Bottoms HREP – Feasibility
  - Multi-phased project
- Lower Pool 10 HREP
  - Feature groupings and alternative development are in progress
  - Three primary areas: McMillan, Ferry Slough, South Ferry Slough

- Measures include: islands, shoreline protection, rock mounds, rock sills/channel blocking structure
- Hope to have a TSP sometime summer 2020
- McGregor Lake HREP
  - Continue plans and specs documents
  - Goal to award contract in the third quarter of FY20
  - Opportunity to obtain sand from both the channel and McMillan Island
    - Looking into the potential of moving sand only for phase one of the project, then will later construct islands
  - Current volume of material from feasibility study is 288K cy of material, but through discussion with A/E we anticipate that volume will increase
- Bass Ponds HREP
  - Held bid opening 13 September, contract has yet to be awarded though
    - Looking to award contract as soon as possible
  - Consists of control structures which would allow the service to drawdown the lakes
  - Third HREP on the Minnesota River
- Conway Lake HREP
  - Awarded in the summer of 2018
  - Looking to start construction in the spring of 2020, will likely conclude in 2022
  - Need 280K CY and the plan is to take it from the Lansing Island site
- Peterson Lake HREP modification completed by the Corps' Maintenance & Repair crew
- Harpers Slough HREP damage repair
  - 100 acres of islands both new and existing
  - Completed in 2017 at a cost of \$12 million
  - Record flooding damaged islands, large breaches and extensive erosion
  - Possibly use FY21 funding to repair nearly 2000 LF of island shoreline, estimated cost of \$2 million
  - Spoke of the possibility of implementing Engineering With Nature principles similar to what was done in Pool 8 with the seed islands, this would reduce concern of overtopping prior to establishment of vegetation

*Section 204 Projects & 1122 Pilot Projects Update (Novak, Deen)*

- Pigs Eye Lake
  - Currently in plans and specs development
  - Estimated contract award date is August 2020
  - Material would come from the St. Paul Barge Terminal dredge cut and Pine Bend placement site
  - Project consists of seven islands with the purpose of restoring degraded habitat in Pigs Eye Lake
- Head of Lake Pepin

- Had 20 minute briefing to Division regarding the project, they had no comments regarding the project's TSP
- WDNR is the sponsor for the project
- Section 1122 funding still uncertain, though there is \$7.5 million in the House and Senate nation-wide for the ten pilot projects
  - WDNR expressed that they would like to wait until Section 1122 appropriations become available as opposed to moving forward under Section 204
- Will require ~400K cy of material to be taken from Reads Landing and cost-shared with O&M
- Hope to have a PPA signed with WDNR sometime summer 2020, plans and specs won't begin until the PPA is signed
- Rylee Main expressed concern about communicating to the public any damage done for walleye habitat by transporting material through Catherine Cut
  - Also asked the question as to how long the access channel would remain open for recreational traffic, Jon Hendrickson mentioned he believes its beyond five years but would take some analysis to have a more concrete answer

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

- Engineering with Nature
  - Engineering With Nature is the intentional alignment of natural and engineering processes to efficiently and sustainably deliver economic, environmental, and social benefits through collaborative processes
  - If we're able to prove that this practice can be successful in the St. Paul District, there's potential to take the District's beneficial use program to another level
- Regional Sediment Management
  - In-progress review meeting was held in late August to discuss projects funded in FY19
  - FY20 project requests were submitted in June 2019, St. Paul District submitted two requests: 1) Study feasibility of a sediment collector in Pool 1, 2) Continue monitoring / data collection from the Chippewa River
    - The Chippewa River project received funding while the Pool 1 sediment collector project was deemed more suitable for other Corps programs
- Regional Sediment Management, Chippewa River Project
  - After 2014 flood and subsequent closures in Lower Pool 4, we decided it was prudent to take a closer look at monitoring sediment transport through the Chippewa River to help inform management decisions
  - Goal is to monitor and develop models to help understand floodplain connectivity and sediment storage, geomorphic lag time, and sediment delivery to the Mississippi River

- We're monitoring three sites on the Chippewa River
- Have been two funding sources for this work, both O&M monies and RSM monies
  - FY20 \$108K from O&M and \$85K from RSM will be utilized to continue data collection and monitoring on the Chippewa River, partnering with both USGS and the Corps' Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC)
- Ultimately the goal is to collect real-time sediment data on the Chippewa River
- COL Jansen asked if it was possible to use the data to help determine sources and stop the sand from coming into the Chippewa River
  - Jon Hendrickson mentioned that does come up often because the Chippewa River is such a large source for sediment and there was a study completed a long time ago, we're receiving more pressure to revisit the study
    - Also mentioned that there's a lot of work that would be required to stabilize the sources of material entering the Chippewa River

*Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Stauffer)*

- Next meeting will be held Jan 13, after that Stephen Winter (USFWS) will be taking over as FWWG chair
- Objective was to implement the habitat needs analysis two (HNA-II) indicators as part of the project selection and ranking process
- Develop ranking criteria – split into two groups of questions: individual project ranking driven by ecological criteria and HNA-II indicators and agency ecological objectives
  - Roughly 70-75% of the ecological ranking came from HNA-II indicators with the remaining consideration primarily being agency ecological objectives
  - Decided not to include any projects in the McGregor District due to the fact that there are various ongoing HREP's in McGregor District
- Status of fact sheets: all teams have met and have a draft fact sheet completed, draft fact sheets are being routed for agency review with comments due early January, final drafts will be completed prior to the next FWWG meeting and presented for discussion and approval
  - Fact sheets are being completed for the following projects: Black River Bottoms, Lower Pool 5 and Weaver Bottoms, Bank Stabilization and Natural Levy, Lower Pool 4, Pool 8 Floodplain Forest Project
  - Decision to table Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge fact sheet at this point
- How do we move forward with RRF endorsement? Tom Novak mentioned that Reno Bottoms is the last HREP that has been approved
  - Goal is to get to 3-1-1, three projects in design, one in plans and specs, one in construction (right now St. Paul District has 1-1-3 setup)

- With robust UMRR budgets, we need to be in a position to execute and get more projects in the queue
- Fact Sheets will be prioritized and put together by the FWWG, endorsed by the RRF, endorsed by the UMRCC
- Kevin Stauffer mentioned that the initial goal was to get the projects to the UMRCC for their February meeting
  - Steve Tapp asked if the FWWG could put together a prioritized list of HREP's to the RRF along with the fact sheets for email endorsement, goal is for Kevin to provide that information within the next week for RRF endorsement prior to the UMRCC February meeting; goal for RRF endorsement is late-January
    - Andrew Stephenson mentioned that read-aheads for the fact sheets are generally requested four weeks in advance for review prior to the UMRCC meeting

*UMRBA Flood Risk and Sediment Management PAS (Stephenson)*

- Water Level Management PAS
  - PAS is ongoing through FY20, WLM regional coordinating committee is working on three main projects: NESP report 53 update, establishing ecological goals and objectives, establishing an outreach and communication framework
  - Was a request from the RRCT for the FWIC to prioritize pools throughout the Rock Island District for WLM
- Flood Risk and Sediment Management PAS
  - Developing a report called Keys to the River, goal is to have draft report completed in August of 2020
    - Issue area teams working session was held September 30 – October 1, 2019
    - Working to prioritize known opportunities – high leverage actions that have regional consent and identify more complex questions and issues needing further exploration
  - Clarify issues, develop actions, address complex questions pertaining to flooding, sediment and drought management
  - Held various public events to engage in discussion regarding the subject matter
    - Attendance varied from 20-60+ attendees from various interest groups
    - Common feedback was that status quo is not acceptable and we need to holistic and systemic approach to providing solutions
    - Format for public events was appreciated and helpful albeit it was unusual in that there wasn't a formalized agenda, rather solicited feedback from the public
  - September 30, 2019 UMRBA hosted Mr. Dalton, USACE Director of Civil Works
    - Discussed development of a HEC-RAS model for the entire UMR, effort will be funded in stages

*Water Level Management Task Force (Stefanski)*

- Last met on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, next meeting anticipated in February 2020
- Charter Discussion
  - Brenda Kelly (WDNR) continued the charter establishment discussion by distributing a survey asking each Task Force member to list their five most important goals of WLM over the next five years
  - UMRBA efforts – Lauren Salvato attended the last Task Force meeting and provided a summary of UMRBA efforts to date
    - She and Aaron McFarlane (COE) led an exercise with the team to utilize the *Interim Report for the Upper Mississippi River – Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study July 2004* (Report 53) to list the opportunities and constraints to WLM
- Drawdown Trigger
  - Topic will be brought to the LTRM Science Meeting in January
  - Kevin Kenow (USGS) shared the Johnson et al 2010 *An Adaptive Management Approach for Summer Water Level Reductions on the Upper Mississippi River System* as a reference document for continued discussion

*Other Topics/Issues, Due-Outs, Future Agenda Topics (All)*

- Other topics:
  - USAF Disposition Study
    - Kevin Wilson mentioned that there have been a series of public meetings, the report will likely be compiled sometime in the spring of 2020
    - Nobody has expressed interest in taking over the lock, so the Corps will likely continue to maintain
    - LSAF and LD1 disposition studies will begin in August 2020 and will be more complicated than the USAF disposition study
- Future Agenda Topics
  - USAF Disposition Study (identify the best POC)
  - Corps' O&M Budgetary Process (Steve Tapp)
  - Engineering With Nature (Burton Suedel)
  - Minnesota River Basin Interagency Study (Nate Campbell)
- Due-Outs: From RRF 115
  - Partners to provide Zach Kimmel with at least one POC to be added to the Beneficial Use Work Group; Zach to schedule kickoff meeting once work group representation is identified
  - Corps to provide survey data to the RRF pertaining to the Pool 10 thalweg placement from 2019 and present a recap at the April RRF
  - Corps of Engineers to present on budgetary process at the April RRF
  - ~~Zach Kimmel to coordinate with Mary Stefanski to reserve a meeting space for the August RRF near the Bass Ponds HREP; Completed: Zach coordinated with Mary to reserve meeting spaces for the RRF 116 and RRF 117 meetings~~

- Kevin Stauffer to provide RRF chairs project fact sheets and ranking for RRF endorsement with a target date of mid to late January
- COL Jansen and Chris Erickson agreed to look into Sec 729 studies completed throughout the enterprise so that we can apply lessons learned to the development of the Keys to the River Report and potentially a future Sec 729 study in the St. Paul District (Flood Risk, Sediment Management, and Drought PAS)
- Steve Tapp will email the RRF proposed language for emergency dredging for RRF endorsement consideration
- Due-Outs: Carried forward from previous RRF meetings
  - COE to forward 2014 Dredging Season AAR to the RRF upon completion (Tapp)
  - MnDOT to reengage in discussions pertaining to modifying fill specifications for construction projects (Phenow)
  - COE to provide one page write-up for RRF endorsement of Prairie Sand & Gravel (Kimmel)
  - 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)
  - ~~○ Agencies discuss need for adding a Forest Management Work Group to the RRF and come up with ideas on how it would work. Reference “Resolution for Establishment of RRF Technical Work Groups” document in the CMMP. (All); Completed: Decided not to add work group during due-out discussion as this issue will be addressed by other regional groups~~
  - WDNR to schedule OSIT meeting in Pool 5 to inspect erosion areas (Strassman)
  - ~~○ COE to reengage Federal Railroad Administration with NWG/RRF (Cottrell); Completed: Dan contacted FRA and discussed NWG participation/involvement~~
  - RWG will develop a recommendation to the RRF regarding the need for a programmatic NEPA document to cover beach nourishment and other actions at sites identified in beach management plans
  - RWG to determine if it’s worth recovering the St. Mary’s user data, also need to determine the data needed to make recreation decisions on the river
  - ~~○ Dan Cottrell will obtain information from Matt Mackillop’s replacement regarding the AtoNs study and provide a report to the RRF at the next meeting; Completed: Angel Kwok, Matt’s replacement, provided an update at RRF 115~~
  - ~~○ Zach Kimmel to reach out to Burton Suedel to see if he is willing to potentially speak again at the RRF and if there have been more recent projects that may be applicable to the group; Completed: Zach touched base with Burton and he intends on presenting at the RRF 117 meeting~~
  - ~~○ Dan Cottrell will reach out to the USCG to discuss transferring funds to the COE to relocate buoys; Completed: USCG expressed that they will not transfer funds for the COE to relocate buoys~~
  - ~~○ Partners interested in receiving grounding reports to provide Dan Cottrell a list of individuals to receive grounding reports and which information they’d like to be~~

- ~~included (please assign one person from each agency to take the lead on this as to limit email traffic to Dan); Completed: Agencies provided Dan the requested information~~
- Zach Kimmel to schedule interagency workshop winter 2020 to discuss potential shoreline nourishment locations and other potential ideas for dredged material placement
  - ~~Steve Tapp will assess and update due out list; Completed: Steve updated the list and provided to the group at RRF 115~~
  - ~~Corps will follow up on schedule for Peterson Lake HREP modification; Completed: COE Maintenance and Repair crew completed the work in 2019~~
  - ~~Zach Kimmel will verify dates of RRF #115 and coordinate reservation with Mary Stefanski; Completed: RRF 115 held at MN Valley National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Bloomington, MN 3-4 Dec~~
  - Steve Tapp and Jim Fischer to draft a letter to the USCG on behalf of the River Resources Forum stressing the importance of buoy marking throughout the UMR
  - ~~Zach Kimmel will reach out to agency partners to identify at least one individual to be involved with the Beneficial Use Work Group, will also look to hold kickoff meeting in October/November; Completed: replaced by due-out above, “Partners to provide Zach Kimmel at least one POC who will participate in the Beneficial Use Work Group; Zach to schedule kickoff meeting once work group participation is identified~~
  - ~~Zach Kimmel will reach out to Megan Moore to see if she is able to provide presentation on climate change; Completed: Megan Moore presented on climate change at RRF 115~~
  - ~~Corps to provide rough cost estimate for constructing the LD2 O&M Island; Completed: Zach Kimmel provided the estimated cost for constructing the island, \$4.7mm, at RRF 115~~
  - ~~Steve Tapp to work with Jim Fischer to amend the existing MOU to include McGregor Lake; Completed: MOU was amended on 30 Sep 2019~~

Steve Tapp  
Co-Chairman, RRF