

## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #119 on 20 April 2021 (WebEx on-line meeting)

### Introductions, Minutes, Next Meetings, Due Outs (Tapp/Fischer)

- Introductions were made and logistics for the virtual meeting were provided
- Passing of RRF Members
  - Dick Lambert (MnDOT)
    - Long time river rat and RRF member while working for MnDOT
    - Always very helpful in resolving issues and a big proponent of beneficial use
  - Willy Fernholz (WDNR)
    - Jim Fischer noted he didn't have much overlap with Willy, but he was legendary in the dept., battled with the Corps prior to the GREAT Study and was a big contributor during that effort.
    - Willy would battle with the Corps and get together after hours to reconcile with a cold beverage
    - Come a long way as far as partnership goes, both will be missed
- RRF118 minutes submitted for approval
  - Jim Fischer motioned to approve as written, Kirk Hansen second
  - No discussion, all ayes, approved
- RRF120 meeting dates, locations discussion
  - Most agencies will likely be max telework still, schedule as virtual
  - Tuesday, Aug 24<sup>th</sup> picked
    - Possible on-site to a project location for those able to travel
- RRF121 meeting dates, locations discussion
  - December 6<sup>th</sup> picked, will refine date/location during RRF120
  - Mary Stefanski lining up Brice Prairie Visitor Center for possible on site gathering (optional)
  - Suggested 2 half-days, start later Monday for traveling
- DUE OUTS carried forward from previous meetings
  - RWG to contact USCG Aux and ask if they could make a presentation at the December RRF (Strassman)
    - Agreed to move to April 2021 RRF, but there was a conflict, so Sara will check on availability at the August 2021 meeting
  - RWG to discuss merits of completing a broad analysis regarding recreational usage on the river now, to include potential for doing another aerial study (Strassman)
    - Sara Strassman will touch on that during RWG, leave it on as still pending
  - ~~BUWG schedule a kickoff meeting (Kimmel)~~
    - Completed: Kickoff meeting held last week
  - ~~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~~
    - Completed: Kickoff meeting held last week
  - COE to forward 2014 Dredging Season AAR to the RRF upon completion (Tapp)
    - Still pending
  - COE to provide one-page write-up for RRF endorsement of Prairie Sand & Gravel (TBD)
    - Some discussion on the need due to the Corps initiating the Pool 10 DMMP, but decided it was still needed
    - Still pending

- ~~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)~~
  - Completed: Per our discussion during the NWG agenda item, the Corps will reach out to law enforcement as needed and promote awareness through social media
- 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 (Strassman)
  - Still pending (waiting on changes in master plan)
- ~~WDNR will help write a Statement of Need for bankline evaluation (Strassman)~~
  - Completed: Sara provided an email with ideas on 4 December 2020 and Steve submitted Statement of Need on 16 December.
- ~~NWG will gather any new information on the status of the La Crosse RR Bridge and report back (Cottrell)~~
  - Completed: Dan provided an update during the NWG agenda item
- NWG will review MOU and MOAs between USACE and USCG and provide a summary of agency roles and responsibilities at the April meeting (Cottrell)
  - Still pending. Dan Cottrell reached out to USCG and is waiting for proper POCs
- Reach out to Chuck Theiling and see what he's been considering for moving material from Wabasha into Wisconsin by rail (Machajewski)
  - Still pending. We will leave this on the list until Paul has a summary to report. Sara Strassman is looking at barriers (other than cost). No updates on rail transport side, but there is interest from RR. Decided to have BUWG discuss and report on it at the next meeting.
- Corps will revise the DMMP endorsement process steps after following up internally, then send to RRF members for endorsement at the April 2021 meeting if completed in time (Tapp)
  - Still pending.
- Corps to consider more dialogue with OSIT regarding channel conditions (Tapp)
  - Still pending
- ~~Corps to update emergency (weekend) dredging POC list (Cottrell)~~
  - Completed: Agencies have been notified and will keep Dan Cottrell informed.

## Agency Activities – (All)

- Activities were provided beforehand and will be provided as a part of the minutes
- Discussion
  - Steve Tapp: Introduced newly hired Channel Maintenance Coordinator, Dan DeVaney, who has permanently filled the position Zach Kimmel vacated.
  - Tim Yager: Sherry Collins (Admin) going to regional office, big loss to the refuge
  - Jim Rand: Explained rescue boats being pulled from MVP Locks & Dams
    - Had a couple near-misses with staff conducting rescues
    - Determined that we're not staffed or trained properly on rescue within restricted areas
    - Discussion
      - Jim Fischer: Can understand decision. Are the gate ropes still there?
      - Jim Rand: Yes, adding throw bags and other mitigating measures as well
  - Patrick Phenow: Forgot updates - will send update to add to minutes
  - Megan Moore: Lucas Youngsma replacing Taylor, Taylor is hydro in south metro
    - Carp removal happened recently in Pool 8 using modified unified method
    - Dealing with cricket frog issues, wondering how DNR & Corps will reconcile
    - Tim Yeager: Nice work on carp effort, nice outreach
  - Emily Schnick: No updates

- Jim Fischer: They are working on extending the exiting MOU with MVP by 2 years rather than executing a new 5-year MOU. Lots of changes and moving parts to consider and this would also get MVP on the same schedule as MVR.
- Jim Fischer: Still partial hiring freeze. Gratitude to Sara Strassman, she's still temporary and doing a great job trying to keep up with all the projects.
- Sara Strassman: Echo concerns of placement site impacts from cricket frog mitigation efforts on the Pool 2 O&M Islands. Lots more discussion to come
- Kirk Hanson: No written activities provided.
- Kevin Stauffer: to everyone (from Webex chat; 9:33 AM)
  - "I'll just add that our invasive carp crew and commercial fisherman went back and seined multiple sites last week. An additional 3 silver carp were removed, and I believe two were observed jumping the seine."

## Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMMR) (Angela Deen, Zach Kimmel)

- Angela Deen - Portfolio of HREPs, Most projects in 9 & 10
  - Reno Bottoms – Planning phase
    - Second round of modeling completion coming
    - 6-24" fines placement to prevent further loss
    - TSP milestone is Fall 2021
  - Lower Pool 10 - Planning phase
    - Tentatively Selected Plan approved
    - Traditional island building, 34 distinct features
    - 200,000 cubic yards of beneficially used dredged material
    - Working to finish report and get reviews done to start Plans and Specs in Fall
  - Harpers Slough repair
    - Bid opening today at 2:00
    - Hopefully award contract in May
    - 30,000 cubic yards rough estimate granular for repair
- Zach Kimmel continuing:
  - McGregor Lake
    - Highlighted information sign placed at Sturgeon Slough landing
  - Conway Lake
    - Largely construction complete this season
    - Tree planting scheduled May 6th
    - 1,000 trees
- Angela Deen continuing:
  - Bass Ponds
    - Going well, great conditions
    - Need to complete grading and riprap
    - When not muddy, will finish construction access roads
    - Have some construction zone signage, hope to get rec trail open this summer
  - Others
    - Earth Week
      - UMRR communications & outreach team has a social media campaign
      - 5 approved fact sheets
    - If FY22 budget looks good, kickoff lower pool 4 Big Lake HREP
- Discussion
  - Sara Strassman - Lower Pool 4 Pierce County Islands kickoff, still thinking virtual?
    - Angela Deen - nothing scheduled yet, probably be virtual. Maybe socially distant site visit, see what fall looks like

- Andrew Stephenson: Communications team discussing UMRB's 35th anniversary
  - Jim Fischer - WDNR comms team tagged yesterday, was it shared by DNR social media folks?
  - Andrew, not seeing it, might be good to touch base with PAO
  - Discussion of sharing USACE post or making their own?
    - Will be doing After Action Review on communications outreach, meeting in May

## Section 204 / 1122 (Zach Kimmel)

- Pigs Eye Lake 204
  - Nate Campbell is project manager, also Continuing Authorities Program manager
  - Working to award contract next month
  - Features will be dependent on cost
  - Anticipated construction summer 2021
  - Granular borrow from Pine Bend & Lower Boulanger, ~370,000 cubic yards
  - Fines borrow coming from Upper Boulanger, 15,000 cubic yards
- Pierce County Islands 1122
  - MAJ Nick Voterro is project manager, Tom Novak currently filling in
  - One of 10 projects selected nationally
  - Wisconsin DNR is sponsor; PPA awaiting WDNR signature
  - 2-4 years of construction, contract award FY22
  - 530,000 cubic yards total, 400,000 CY granular coming from Reads Landing placement site
  - Fines will come from access dredging
  - Architect/Engineer firm will be awarded plans and specs development
  - Wisconsin budget discussion
    - Jim Fischer: Still \$3M in governor's budget
    - Riley: Republican party wants to scrap governor's budget, but looking ok so far to be added back

## Water Level Management Task Force (Mary Stefanski, Lauren Salvato)

- Mary Stefanski
  - Task force meeting on March 8th
    - Great representation
    - Shared fall 2020 photopoints
      - Good discussion focusing on backwater
  - Could do a sediment budget, but expensive and takes a long time. Will look into the one done for Weaver Bottoms to get an idea of what you get and what it looks like.
  - Refuge and Brenda Kelly will complete photopoints this year
  - Keep working in unison with UMRBA

## Upper Mississippi River Basin Association 2020 Update (Lauren Salvato)

- Formed Water Level Management (WLM) regional coordinating committee
  - Working on Planning Assistance to States (PAS) agreement in effect through FY 2021
- Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) Report 53 Updates
  - 2004 Report Selections
    - Pools 5,7,8 & 9 looking at 1-, 2-, 3-, & 4-foot drawdown scenarios
  - 2019 WLM Task Force added:

- Pools 2, 3, 5, 5a, 6, & 10 looking at .5' increment drawdowns to 2 feet
- Definition of Success Rate changed
  - Previous: 60-day continuous drawdown period, occurring between May 1 and August 31
  - New: The optimal event is at least 90 days of drawdown at the prescribed pool reduction level defined by planning experts within the growing season (May 15-September 15)
- Acres exposed data remains unchanged but reflects the new success rate definition
- Dredging required
  - Updated methodology from cut-by-cut method
  - GIS combining and dissolving dredge cuts, good tool
- Ecosystem benefits
  - Utilizing the Dabbling Duck model makes it comparable to HREP projects
- Questions:
  - Steve Tapp: NESP Report 53, Will we see an update by end of the fiscal year?
    - Lauren Salvato – Yes. This will not have a typical RRF review. It will probably have FWWG and WLMTF review.

## Flood Sediment and Drought PAS Update (Lauren Salvato)

- Main purpose
  - Organize resources and answer questions
    - Ensuring stakeholders are informed
    - Created multiple ways for collaboration and feedback
- Developed all feedback into 'Keys to the River Report'
  - Draft went out to 60 stakeholders
  - Public comment period coming up on May 25 quarterly meeting
  - Report should be complete then
- Jim Fischer: UMRBA call yesterday to discuss. Trying to balance getting this done, but not move too quick to ensure broad feedback.
- Questions:
  - Sara Strassman: For the evaluation of dredge cuts, will that info be shared?
    - Lauren Salvato - yes

## Beneficial Use Work Group Activities (Zach Kimmel)

- Had joint (MVP & MVR) BUWG kickoff meeting last week, April 14th
  - Had hoped meeting minutes & roster would be complete, but not there yet
  - 40 people on the line, including both RRF co-chairs
  - Good representation from DNRs and DOTs
- Focal points
  - Background on creation of BUWG
  - Maximize the beneficial use
  - Highlight success stories
    - Ensure we had the right people at the table
- Meeting scheduled with Breann Popkin to discuss a path forward
  - Going to keep combined efforts
- Meetings will be separated between administrative and technical topics
- Next meeting will engage Engineering With Nature, Regional Sediment Management
- Will engage RRF chairs
- Steve Tapp: Thought it went well
  - DOT participation was insightful, encouraging
- Jim Fischer: Agree. Appreciate Zach's and Bre's efforts

- Good mix of people, USACE RE maybe should've been there
- Lot of folks needed background info
- Good, broad prospective; regional approach warranted
- Zach Kimmel: There's opportunities to engage more at a local level
  - Those are folks that are users, may be aware of projects we're not
  - Think of different ways to improve reach
- Steve Tapp: RE is making progress with non-standard estate (NSE)
- Sara Strassman: BUWG - nice to get it kicked off
  - Nice to be able to track progress. Suggested a collaborative space for people to share progress on efforts related to beneficial use.
- Jim Fischer: Lots of moving pieces, would be nice to have one place to check in
- Andrew asked what's known about WRDA 2020 Section 125
  - Steve Tapp: Going through listening sessions
    - Current schedule for HQ implementation guidance out by AUG 2021
    - Lots of discussion on Federal standard and how benefits are measured
  - Sara Strassman: Are there listening session notes?
    - Steve Tapp: Haven't seen any.
  - Zach Kimmel will cover implementation guidance at BUWG meeting
    - Steve Tapp will review in depth at December RRF

## Recreation Work Group Activities (Sara Strassman)

- Next meeting will be in May
- Several due outs still pending due to staff time to work on it
- Participated in 17 FEB joint meeting with FWG on Engineering With Nature discussion
- Recreation Survey Coordination
  - Possible efficiency in workload for RWG and Rec more broadly to add questions to surveys already being conducted UMRCC
- Specific to RWG
  - How has boating use and activity shifted?
  - How has beach activity changed since prior surveys?
- Steve Tapp: It might help if we learn how the data is used? What's the goal, what are agencies looking at? Policy changes? Creating more landings?
- Megan Moore: MDNR is considering removing the category of 'rough fish' and go to identifying specific species
- Jim Fischer: Maybe we could summarize, show folks how we use that data.
- Andrew: <https://www.fws.gov/economics/divisionpublications/bon2017refuges.asp>
- Zach Kimmel: 10 years ago, when he started, wrote a paper on 9' channel and benefits
  - Can get you a copy, could be a good reference
  - Sara Strassman - yes please!
- Sara continued: Pool 9 & 10 OSITs coming up?
  - Paul Machajweski - from DMMP perspective, will look at opportunities
  - Steve Tapp - looking for beach plans?
  - Sara Strassman - yes, waiting for master plan, beaches could be substantial change
  - Tim Yager - understanding master plan was finalized?
    - Steve Tapp - very close to being signed if not
    - Master plan will probably guide beach planning going forward

## Navigation Work Group (Dan Cottrell)

- 3 Due-Outs from last Forum

- La Crosse RR bridge
  - Feedback from USCG in St. Louis: Design for new bridge was approved in 2009. There has been no Truman-Hobbs Act funding since 2010 and none is expected.
- MOUs and MOAs between Corps and USCG
  - Keep in minutes as due-out
- Safety zones for dredge Goetz
  - Started in 2017 at RRF109 when problems were observed in Pool 8 at Crater Island
  - The Goetz doesn't have many jobs and we haven't heard if this is still an issue. Is the juice worth the squeeze?
    - Zach Kimmel - can recall doing outreach prior to placements and avoiding setting up over weekends. Are those measures enough to alleviate concerns?
      - Dan Cottrell - yes, they'll continue
      - Steve Tapp - good idea to engage public affairs office (PAO)
    - Jim Fischer- may not be worth the squeeze, challenging to get everyone together
      - Maybe we just wrap it up and emphasize intentional outreach to local law enforcement
      - Can USACE do a press release?
        - Steve Tapp - PAO has really increased social media outreach and will continue to do that
    - Jim Fischer - wasn't there a bass tournament at the time too?
      - That will continue, people from out of town competing
      - Check with states if tourneys are around, are participants informed?
    - Sara Strassman- RWG has a list of talking points to give to states to give to organizers, could add info on dredging operations
    - Steve Tapp - if we can engage with those folks, that would be great
    - Tim Yager - do you have guidance?
      - Dan Cottrell - there's USCG regulations on how their supposed to be signed
    - Tim Yager - we've had good success having state regs listed in tourney rules
      - Steve Tapp - a few bullets to an organizer would be beneficial
      - Sara Strassman - she can add it to what's already being sent
    - Kevin Stauffer - happy to pass that info on to organizers
    - Megan Moore - seems signage has increased, seen more compliance as a rec boater
    - Dan Cottrell - haven't heard of any problems, maybe that's a partly because the Goetz spent a lot of time in MVR recently
    - Zach Kimmel - good to make note that danger isn't just during tourneys
      - Good to increase awareness all around
  - Show due-out on safety zones as complete
  - Due Out: Corps will draft language that RRF agencies can share with tournament organizers to improve safety when boating near dredging operations. (Cottrell)
- Greg Genz - Truman-Hobbs Act funding focuses on hazards to navigation
  - Political pressure can get it
- Paul Machajewski - Blackhawk Bridge is on the list
  - Greg Genz if it's on the list, we should find out how they're doing it

## Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Stephen Winter)

- Not much activity
  - Feb 17th meeting
    - Dave Potter HREP monitoring presentation
    - Burton Suedel hosted a discussion on Engineering With Nature

- Lot of interest, lot of people thinking about that stuff now
- Next meeting Aug 3

## Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Tapp, Cottrell, DeVaney, Machajewski)

- Steve Tapp - In general a normal winter and not much runoff
  - Sill a lot of sediment to clean up, but keeping site capacities in mind
  - Good funding for unloading and HREPs over the past several years and some opportunistic beneficial use projects that have helped with capacity
  - Reviewed FY21 budget numbers, still have not seen FY22 President's Budget numbers
- P2 DMMP – Working on implementation
  - USACE couldn't accept counteroffer from PAS, high number indicates just unwilling to sell and we're not optimistic about acquisition in fee
    - Met with the landowner on 25 March and we're still trying to find a win-win solution
  - Megan Moore – Aggregate Industries starting an Environmental Assessment for mining in water
    - Steve Tapp: We are aware of the proposal by Aggregate Industries. They indicated they have 5 years left before mining reserves at Lower Grey Cloud Island are gone. We will keep the RRF informed when new information is received regarding the proposal and progress on the EA.
- Pool 2 O&M Island:
  - Currently working through EA/EAW process with the MDNR
  - The impasse now is related to agency positions on potential impacts to the state listed Blanchard's Cricket Frog
  - If we can't work something out, this project may come to an end and we would likely revisit rock placement on the embankment for protection
- Dan Cottrell - dredge schedule updated yesterday, let Dan know if you want to receive the Channel Condition Report
  - Head of Richmond Island - believe we must do sediment sampling and mussel surveys here because it hasn't been dredged since 1982
  - Pine Bend - started dredging today
  - Beef Slough – will begin dredging either today or tomorrow
  - Grand Encampment - lot of material, where would that be headed if there was a need to dredge?
    - Dan clarified that he lays out cuts to historic limits on condition surveys so the volumes are inflated; believes he could bring it down to 65-70K CY
    - Dan DeVaney mentioned most likely pump to Teepeeota Point
    - Steve mentioned maybe upper cuts to Teepeeota Point, but downstream cuts may be pumped to Grand as Teepeeota may be too far
  - Boulanger Bend Lower Light - LeeAnn Glomski working on an EA to dredge the opposite side of the channel
  - Lower Pool 2 Channel Management Study - Dan working on analyzing to see what can be done as far as Phase II to see what we have available vs. what the plan says we were proposing to have available
  - WYACONDA is making their second trip 2 May and it will include the Kinnickinnic area on the St. Croix River.
    - Dan C mentioned that the following email and phone number can be used to let USCG know about buoys that are off station:
      - Email: SUMRWaterways@uscg.mil

- Phone: (319) 520-8556
  - Sediment Sampling Meeting - Jim Noren/Dan C will look to set that meeting up in the next month. Sara asked for a list of sample sites prior to the meeting.
- Dan DeVaney – Placement Site Activities
  - Grand Encampment - working to re-establish containment berms; The Goetz is mobilizing equipment to shape in advance of dredging/placement
  - Lansing Highway Bridge - re-shaping completed after winter bene-use removal
  - Possible unload from Dakota Island up to Trempealeau
    - Sara asked about capacity at Trempealeau, Paul mentioned looking at 100K CY as a high end
- Paul Machajewski – DMMPs & Unloads
  - Mechanical Unloading IDIQ Contract – Awarded contract to Legacy Corporation
    - They are currently providing submittals, no pre-construction meeting scheduled yet
    - Considering unload at Above West Newton or Dakota Island
    - Megan Moore - how would west newton unload happen?
      - Paul Machajewski – using the Mechanical Unloading IDIQ Contract
  - Major unloads
    - Reads Landing to Head of Lake Pepin (Pierce County Island project)
      - At least a year out (FY22)
  - Pool 3 Prairie Island Indian Community Tribal Public Partnership (PIIC TPP)
    - Big accomplishment getting a TPP signed. This TPP is a first of its kind in MVD and only the second in the country.
    - Project includes forest floodplain restoration (similar to HREP)
      - Adding about 12" to the island, both granular and fines
      - Fine material coming from marina dredging and granular coming from main navigation channel dredging
    - 8K CY granular, 12K CY fines, 1,600 tons of rock
    - Will utilize Sturgeon Lake boat landing for rock staging and plan to work Mon-Thur to keep landing open for weekends
  - Site Stabilizations
    - P5 Fisher Island
      - Close to having final design completed based on July 2019 OSIT
      - Draft design sent out in March and currently incorporating changes
      - Final design this summer
      - M&R not likely to construct this year due to workload and other priorities
      - Plans & Specifications approved in July as per Zach Kimmel
      - Megan Moore - who from MDNR was involved?
        - Paul Machajweski – Dan Dieterman
        - Kevin Stauffer - Dieterman was involved, but not many details
      - Sara Strassman- have the revised plans come out?
        - Zach Kimmel - no substantial changes
        - Zach Kimmel will forward plans again to Sara Strassman
      - Sara Strassman – will there be planting?
        - Zach Kimmel - planting will occur post-work
  - P5 Rolling Prairie
    - Acquired as part of the Pool 5 DMMP
      - Meeting monthly with OSIT group

- Features
  - Wetland restoration/preservation
  - Prairie restoration and dune creation
  - Look to bring 150k - 200k cy there this year, either unload or channel dredging
- DMMP Overview
  - Pool 4
    - Caroline Gregerson has taken over as the new Administrator for the City of Wabasha, replacing Chad Springer
    - Collaborative management with Wabasha, working towards Section 217 agreement
    - We've heard the city wants to develop a port, that's all on them
    - For DMMP, we're still developing our plan
    - Plan would then be the federal standard, least costly, environmentally acceptable alternative
    - Putting together draft 217 agreement as a conversation starting point
    - Working on operations plan for unloading operations so they don't interrupt channel maintenance requirements
    - Sara Strassman - how will 217 effect the FS?
      - Paul Machajweski - 217 is running parallel to DMMP, don't know yet how that will shake out
  - Pool 6
    - Very similar to Pool 4
    - Released draft report, didn't go well, looking for solutions
    - Talking with City of Winona on potential 217, parallel with DMMP, like Pool 4
    - They have local interest, so some motivation
    - Looking to Wabasha, but circumstances are different
    - In short-term:
      - Homer placement site
        - We were hoping material was already moved, but we keep getting delayed
        - Working out RE with contractor
        - Contract was advertised, not yet awarded
        - County board has been opposed to us moving material from the site
        - Working on access safety improvements, most likely next year
      - Continuing to use Dick's Marina and Homer, still trying to find a solution
        - Could be with the city, either with or without 217
  - P9&10
    - Hoping for in-person meetings and input from public
    - Will try as much to incorporate HREP practices/use
    - Low hazard exception question to Sara Strassman regarding Genoa Power Plant
      - Sara Strassman: a contractor has been hired by Dairyland, but nothing received yet. Trying to get permitting rolling and figure out who needs to be involved
    - Paul Machajewski - is there a database inventory of pits?
      - Sara Strassman - yes, mostly county permitting
      - Paul Machajewski - Trying to identify opportunities for pit reclamation
      - Kirk Hanson - don't know how that works in Iowa, so he will get back to Paul
    - Paul Machajewski - Looking at possibility of a bedload collector
      - Case studies for smaller scope, but there could be potential
      - P10 is a unique opportunity, vet it at this level
        - Sara Strassman - if its lower Pool 10, WDNR will have concerns

- Paul Machajewski - MVR has planning input on DMMP, so they are aware of our intent to look at this
- Steve Tapp - it's a new conversation, would have to coordinate with MVR and every other agency
- Megan Moore – asked if we could have a speaker come to the RRF when this is further along
- Paul Machajewski - the bedload collector company is working with WDNR over by Green Bay and we can have a presentation once we learn more about the product

## Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) (Zach Kimmel)

- Authorized in 2007
  - \$1.717 billion could be available for ecosystem restoration
  - \$2.026 billion for navigation improvements
- Was dried up for the last decade
  - Trying to reinvigorate the Weaver Bottoms project
  - Potential for FY22 or beyond
- Program team is working through suggestions for implementation guidance
- Pool 2 Wing Dam Modification Project
  - Only project being carried forward
  - TSP identified 30 wing dams for notching back then
    - NOW- reduced scope to 23 total, 17 with single notch, 6 with double notch
  - Get it shovel ready for FY22
  - Still a lot of uncertainty on funding, all hopeful that with adequate funding lots of improvements could be made
- Andrew Stephenson - P&S approval by MVP, do you need to go to MVD?
  - Zach Kimmel - no, all district approval for the Pool 2 Wing Dam Project

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

- Future Topics
  - USCG Aux available - Sara Strassman
  - NWG discussion about MOU/MOA – Dan Cottrell
  - Upper SAF Disposition Study
- DUE OUTS From RRF 119
  - Corps will draft language that RRF agencies can share with tournament organizers to improve safety when boating near dredging operations. (Cottrell)

Steve Tapp  
Co-Chairman, RRF

# RRF #119 Agency Activities

20 April 2021

## Agency Activities – Corps of Engineers

- Personnel changes
  - New Chief of Engineers: Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon filled behind Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite
  - New Channel Maintenance Coordinator: Dan DeVaney filled behind Zach Kimmel
  - St. Paul District Deputy Commander LTC Patrick Sullivan will be leaving this summer to command an Army Engineer Battalion or one of the nine USACE Districts that are commanded by Army Lieutenant Colonels
- Government Maintenance & Repair Crew work
  - Successful de-watering at LD4 this past winter
  - De-watering at Lock and Dam 6 during winter 2021-2022
  - Miter Gate Changes at Lock and Dam 2 in July with planned closures of 4-12 hours
  - Bank line stabilization at Goose Island in Pool 8 this summer
  - C8 Island sill repair in Pool 8 this summer
  - Island stabilization in Sturgeon Lake (Pool 3) this summer as part of a Tribal Partnership Program project with the Prairie Island Indian Community
  - USCG requested removal of two daymark lights this year at Minneiska (Pool 5) and Brownsville (Pool 8)
- The Corps and National Park Service are in the process of renewing the Park Service Real Estate Permit to continue providing visitor services over the next five years at the Upper St. Anthony Visitor Center.
- Andy Meier will be presenting a virtual poster at Mississippi River Research Consortium (MRRC) “ASSESSING THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF LIGHT-SEEDED TREE SPECIES IN UPPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER FORESTS, POOLS 3-10”
- The Mississippi River Master Plan is getting final signatures and is expected to be completed very soon.
- Rescue boats previously at the St. Paul District locks and dams have been removed from service.

## Agency Activities – Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

- Staffing/Personnel
  - Headquarters – Supervision of Fish and Wildlife Officers transferred to Patrol Zone Captain (Carl Lantz) in February. Upper Miss Districts in Patrol Zone 302, supervised out of Neil Smith NWR (Iowa).
  - Winona District – Approval to fill the vacant Fish and Wildlife Officer position, but lack of funding will “push” this hiring out past a year. Deputy position will remain vacant for a while.
  - Trempealeau – Approval to fill the vacant Manager position. Awaiting advertisement of position.
  - La Crosse District – Jeff Butler (Audubon Forester) hired to replace Andy Beebe. Casey Brian will be joining (transferring) La Crosse as the Biologist (replacing Erin Adams). Bruce Henry will be relocating to La Crosse as the Regional Forester. Working on confirming

- selection of a GS-11 Fish and Wildlife Officer position to be located at La Crosse. Approval to advertise for the vacant Private Lands Biologist position.
- McGregor District – Brandon Jones departed for Texas (Laguna Atascosta NWR). Wendy Woyczik is acting. Approval to advertise for the vacant District Manager position (very soon).
  - Savanna District – Mandy Castro (Admin.) resigned. Alan Anderson (Wildlife Refuge Specialist) retired.
  - Activities
    - Continuing to telework for HQ staff. District staff are reporting to offices under strict distancing, sanitation protocols. Offices remain closed to the public.
    - Reduced funding available in 2021 due to increased costs of “shared” services.
    - La Crosse District working on dock trespass issue.
    - Winona District will be replacing the boat ramps at Weaver Landing (Pool 5) and Indian Slough (Pool 4) this summer.
    - HQ working on Cardinal to Hickory Creek transmission line lawsuit. Several groups suing USFWS, Rural Utilities Service and Corps over NEPA, issuance of rights-of-way, nationwide permits, Refuge compatibility determination, etc.
    - HQ working on building, powerline and float structure trespass issue below L/D 9. We’ve been working with Rock Island regulatory to determine compliance with existing Section 10 permit. Rock Island regulatory indicated they would be contacting St. Paul Operations for feedback. Also working with Iowa sovereign lands office.

### Agency Activities – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

- Lucas Youngsma is now serving as the Lake City area Hydro, replacing Taylor Huinker, who moved to the South metro area Hydro position. Lucas is also serving as the interim north metro hydro until that position can be filled permanently.
- Minnesota DNR has been partnering with state and federal partners to remove invasive carp from Pool 8 using a modified unified method (MUM)
- Evaluating the habitat needs and potential avoidance measures of the MN state threatened Blanchard’s cricket frog continues to be discussed between MNDNR and the Corps. We are still hoping for an amicable resolution in the near future.

### Agency Activities – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

- A two-year extension of the WDNR-USACE MVP Dredging MOU will be issued, allowing continued placement activities at approved sites. The extension will afford additional time to complete needed revisions and updated language to the MOU and CMMP. It will also place MVP and MVR on the same renewal timeline, allowing for future efficiencies in the update process for both instruments. The previous MOU expired in December 2020.
- The Mississippi River fisheries staff participated with MN DNR, USGS and USFWS in an Invasive Carp sampling exercise on Pool 8 called the Modified Unified Method or MUM. The operation yielded 31 invasive carp captured and removed from the system.
- Trempealeau Boat Landing – A sign has been placed at the south ramp indicating that it’s temporarily closed due to sedimentation. The Parks program is working to get the situation resolved. Contact for the boat landing is Terry Boone, Area Parks Supervisor, 715-688-9871.

- Flowering Rush – Andrew Schneyer will continue to be our POC [\(608\) 785-9012](tel:6087859012), [Andrew.Schneyer@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Andrew.Schneyer@wisconsin.gov)
- The Bureau of Law Enforcement has been converted to the DNR's Public Safety and Resource Protection Division. This makes our Chief Warden a Division Administrator and our two Deputy Chiefs, Deputy Division Administrators. Future changes will be implemented that will create bureau structures within the Division.
- Mississippi Flyway Waterfowl Protection Officer of the Year: Warden Trevor Tracey
- Sampling for PFAS of regulated facilities discharge encountered push back from the Wisconsin Manufacturer's and Commerce late on March. They filed a lawsuit against the department on 03/29 requesting a restraining order to keep staff from continuing sampling industrial dischargers. They claimed the potential for reputational harm and the restraining order was granted on 03/30. DOJ and the department's attorney attended a hearing on 04/02 where they made the agreement where the department would continue sampling, but all samples sent to the lab and any results published would be anonymous and not able to be tied to any of the facilities. Sampling resumed on 04/06.
- An Interim Area-Wide Health Advisory for PFAS in drinking water was issued on French Island/Town of Campbell. Temporary emergency bottled water (NR738) is provided to residents if they choose. Sampling is being conducted to determine levels and extent. You can follow, or subscribe to updates, at this DNR link: [PFAS CONTAMINATION IN THE TOWN OF CAMPBELL AND FRENCH ISLAND](#)