

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #120 on 24 August 2021 (WebEx virtual meeting)

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

- Introductions
 - Introductions were made and logistics for the virtual meeting were provided
 - Megan Moore introduced Jack Gleason as new area hydrologist supervisor replacing her. Jack will be taking over as RRF voting member for Minnesota.
- Minutes
 - Tapp asked for any changes to RRF 119 minutes, none
 - Jim Fischer motioned to approve, Kirk Hansen 2nd, no discussion
 - *RRF 119 Minutes approved as written*
- Next Meetings
 - Jim Fischer noted that WDNR has returned to a mix of office and telework. The situation is fluid and there is a chance of going back to more restrictive measures. He suggested staying virtual
 - Tim Yager agreed. Noted that in Federal Buildings all must be masked, and with case numbers continuing to rise, not conducive to holding group meetings
 - Steve Tapp agreed, things unlikely to change much by December
 - RRF 121 will be held as a virtual meeting on Tuesday, December 7th, 2021
- 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)~~
 - **Completed: Contact made and they agreed to speak at a future 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)
 - 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 (DeVaney)
 - Still pending
 - 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: Awaiting Master Plan
 - NWG will review MOU and MOAs between USACE and USCG and provide a summary of agency roles and responsibilities at the next meeting (Cottrell)
 - Still pending: Dan Cottrell mentioned that Stephanie Moore (USCG) has a line on a blanket MOU, but he hasn't seen it yet.
 - ~~Reach out to Chuck Theiling and see what he's been considering for moving material from Wabasha into Wisconsin by rail (Machajewski)~~
 - **Completed: Information was provided to RRF members via email when save the date information was sent**
 - Corps will revise the DMMP endorsement process steps after following up internally, then send to RRF members for endorsement (Tapp)
 - Still pending

- Corps to consider more dialogue with OSIT regarding channel conditions (Tapp)
 - Still pending
- Corps will draft language that RRF agencies can share with tournament organizers to improve safety when boating near dredging operations. (Cottrell)
 - Still pending

Agency Activities – (All)

- Agencies were asked to provide activities prior to the meeting to save time. Activities were received from the Corps and FWS and they will be provided as a part of the minutes. The following discussion also took place.
- USACE: Steve Tapp
 - Vacant Deputy Operations Chief temporarily filled by Chris Atkins
 - Operations asked ERDC to help with navigation outreach. This effort will improve our knowledge of how vessel traffic is moving before and after it reaches the District and how our dredging operations compare with other Districts throughout the country. This effort will help us stay better informed and help us tell our story on the importance of navigation to the region and the nation.
- WDNR: Jim Fischer
 - Staff changes will be in Agency Activities
 - Sara Strassman began full time Mississippi River Planner position on 16 AUG
 - Contact for MVP & MVR dredging and beneficial use
 - WDNR had been asked by FWS to waive herbicide application fees, but they were unable to do so
 - Tim Yager voiced frustrations that they can't just treat invasive species
 - Jim Fischer: We're trying, being told no. Legal opinion is that it is written in the rules, no work-around, acknowledge agency frustration.
 - Sara Strassman (from the chat): On the Corps update, it says the Goose Island stabilization happened this summer? I think we were planning for that work deferred until next summer.
 - Zach Kimmel: Not complete yet, next summer. Suggested Goose Island and C8 Sill projects dates changed to 2022 in Agency Activities (corrected)
- USFWS: Tim Yager
 - Other staffing changes
 - Fulltime wildlife conservation officer in La Crosse now, Dustin Shelling, also a field training officer and will have other USFWS officers training with him in the future
- IDNR: Kirk Hansen
 - Water quality specialist position filled by Ashley Johnson; LTRM now fully staffed
- UMRBA: Andrew Stephenson
 - Lauren Salvato expecting a baby boy next week and will be on maternity leave
- MDNR: Megan Moore
 - New Parks & Trails Supervisor Bob Storlie
 - Bob will be contact for any boat landings along the river
 - About to fill another hydro position in the north metro

Water Level Management Task Force, (Stefanski)

- Held one meeting since the last RRF (Aug 18)
- Have been providing feedback on UMRBA draft documents Andrew will be discussing
- Photo stations completed Aug 3-4

- Pool 5 Above Weaver Landing: Middle left photograph is of first drawdown in 2005, lower right photograph is 2021, now it is pretty much all rice; Weaver is full of submersed vegetation and looks amazing
- Pool 5 Weaver boat landing: 2013 rice started to come in, pretty much solid rice now
- Pool 6 Station 15: Started taking photos in 2007, drawdown in 2010; Now it's a new great peninsula
 - Steve Tapp & Mary Stafanski had some discussion on whether drawdown was the impetus to peninsula development
 - Steve Winter noted he watched a tree lodge in there and sand develop downstream of it
 - Kirk Hansen noted he's observed several islands show up after 2019, and islands joining together, fun to see the river do river stuff
- Discussion:
 - Steve Tapp asked if the task force has written a charter?
 - Mary replied that they have not, waiting to see how the draft UMRBA documents turn out, but it's a goal for the task force.

UMRBA Planning Assistance to States – WLM (Stephenson)

- Take-Aways
 - Longer-term datasets have provided more robust analysis
 - Analysis suggests that costs per average annual habitat units (AAHUs) are lower for WLM practices when compared to HREPs completed through UMR program
 - Drawdowns in any pool can have cost effective benefits
 - WLM Regional Coordinating Committee (RCC) desires to keep ecologically 'good' pools 'good', bring degraded pools back to 'good' condition
 - Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Agreement
 - Original goal was to develop and plan for systemic WLM implementation for UMR
 - Goals have changed due to Ideker Farms et al federal ruling and 2019 flooding
- NESP Report 53 update
 - Updating sections from 2004 report on acres exposed, success rate, dredging required
 - Added new considerations of ecosystem benefits and ecological goals
 - Pools added in both MVP & MVR, scenarios altered to 0.5' increments
 - Changed definition of success rate from 60-day continuous drawdown between 1 May & 31 Aug to 90 days continuous from 15 May through 15 Sep
 - At Lock and Dam 5, because of hinge-point control, later season success decreases
 - At Lock and Dam 19, late season success increases
 - Developed methodology on dredging needed using GIS tools, previously no method
 - Ecological Goals and Objectives
 - Dabbling Duck Migration Model being used to quantify ecosystem benefit analysis
 - Results – Pool 2: Drawdowns less costly compared to HREPs; large difference
 - Results – Pool 8: Low cost per AAHU
 - Results – Pool 5: Model doesn't show much until a 2' drawdown, because of good existing conditions
 - Limitations
 - Data set availability and assumptions – vegetation data
 - Length of lasting benefits and climate change variables
 - Ability to incorporate several variables
 - Held structured decision-making workshops hosted by Pat Heglund
 - Preliminary Conclusions

- Build WLM into resource management guiding documents
 - Make an SOP for categorizing the ecological condition in each pool
 - SDM final report undergoing participant review, all conclusions preliminary
- Discussion:
 - Steve Tapp: You said the goals changed after Ideker Farms ruling? What was the ruling and why did it lead to a change?
 - Steve Clark: The ruling suspended drawdowns, division won't allow drawdowns of pools for ecological purposes; was found to be outside of Lock and Dam authorization
 - Steve Tapp: Were questions of ecological triggers answered?
 - Megan Moore: We tried to come up with some triggers, just don't have data for it. Conclusion was to collect more data to define those triggers.
 - Jim Fischer: WDNR has provided comments on the draft report
- Andrew Stephenson acknowledged funding for the workshops was provided by UMRR

Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMMR) (Zach Kimmel)

- Covering UMRR, Angela Deen is on leave
 - Several UMRR projects recently visited by COL Jansen & MAJ Wilkins
 - Lots of interest/encouragement for restoration work
 - With four active projects, it's most projects we've had in construction at once
- Reno Bottoms - Angela Deen is PM
 - In planning, feasibility study in progress, end of OCT goal for TSP
 - Loss of trees from inundation, defining scope has been challenging
 - Potential features: tree planting, shoreline protection, thin layer placement, invasive species control
 - Team using new Habitat Evaluation Procedures (HEP) model to evaluate cost/benefit of features
- Lower Pool 10 - Tom Novak PM
 - Feasibility study currently in DQC review
 - Goal is concurrent reviews beginning 10 SEP, hoping to submit report NOV
 - Large study area, looking at sequencing construction over several years
- Bass Ponds - Tom Novak PM
 - Construction is ongoing, anticipate having a dedication in October
 - Currently installing handrails and metal decking at the water control structures
 - Observing more wild rice than in the past 20 years or so, good sign for the project moving forward
 - Hoping to have a dedication in October, probably a small group due to continued COVID concerns, will probably have some web-based interaction as well
- Conway Lake
 - Construction began May 2020, 90% complete
 - Long-lasting eaglet fledging on FP29, delayed progress spring/summer
 - Final grading recently completed and contractor tentatively demobilized
 - Permanent seeding at B13 will take happen this fall, mobilize back for that
 - Willow seedings didn't take well, may have to re-plant
 - Looking to award a tree contract this fall
 - R&D work ongoing, funding through the DOER
 - Soil sampling, create baseline data
 - If tree mortality rates are high, find causes if soils are problem
- McGregor lake
 - Awarded the base and option 1 in Sep 2020
 - Includes most all work on F14 tail, F15, and F16 along with some rock work

- Contractor is a little over halfway done with the base and option 1 now
 - Approaching the end of granular work: over 200K cy of granular has been utilized in partnership with the Corps' Nav program to this point
 - Material dredged by the contractor has come from the McMillan, East Channel, and Hovie Island cuts
 - R2 rock has been stockpiled, to be completed after fines placement
- Exploring program's availability to award options 2 and 3
- Harpers Slough Repair
 - Initially constructed in 2017
 - 6 islands – repairing 3 (W2, M2 and M5)
 - 5 rock sills – repairing 2 (W1 and M4)
 - 3 emergent wetlands – repairing 1 (Wetland 2 by island M2)
 - Repair contract was awarded on May 19, 2021 to Water Works Dock and Boat Lifts, Inc. for \$2.35M
 - Initially the contractor was hoping to wrap up most all work by the end of this season, ran into some delays in the early going (equipment stuck)
 - Estimate that the project will now be complete by the end of next season
 - Complicated project with lots of moving parts, contractor is working to recover as much material (rock, fines, granular) as they can from the initial project to improve efficiencies and reduce cost
- Other Items:
 - Pool 8 sill repair, hoping to go next year
- Discussion:
 - Andrew Stephenson: UMRBA will be distributing a partnership survey, finalizing distribution list
 - UMRR report to congress being prepared
 - Linda Loomis: When will the trail be opened at Bass Ponds?
 - Kimmel: should be open this fall

Section 204 / 1122 (Zach Kimmel)

- Pigs Eye 204 - Nate Campbell is PM, also Continuing Authorities Program manager
 - Contract awarded in late June to LS Marine for \$14.7 million
 - 6 islands, shallow wetland, and wetland features
 - Ramsey county is the non-federal sponsor of the project
 - Construction next summer through 31 OCT 2024
 - Awaiting work plan, expecting submittals this winter
- Discussion:
 - Steve Tapp: we were hoping this would have happened sooner, Pigs Eye will help restore capacity on Lower Pool 2 islands, currently full, Channels and Harbors would like to see construction ASAP
 - Kimmel: Fish spawning restrictions will delay beginning until late June
 - Jack Gleason: we can have a discussion with fisheries managers, it's their call
 - Tapp: appreciate that, if things get pushed out we really won't see any relief until late season

- Kevin Stauffer: Fish spawning is situational, something we've done in the past to allow work. Pigs Eye out of my area, but know that exceptions sometimes happen
- **Due-Out**: Follow up with MDNR regarding spawning restriction for Pigs Eye 204 to see if the contractor can begin work earlier. (Kimmel)
- Pierce County 1122
 - Design has been on hold as we work with WDNR to finalize the PPA
 - WDNR signed the PPA on 2 AUG 2021
 - Corps executed the PPA on 20 AUG 2021
 - Plan to begin Plans and Specifications next month and have design completed by the end of FY22
 - Jim Fischer: \$3M funding for cost sharing in Governor's budget

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

- Pool 2 wing dam modification project
 - Only NESP project that MVP has at this time
 - Modify existing wing dams to create channel border fish habitat
 - Rock will be relocated, nothing added or removed
 - Plans & Specs by end of FY21, moving through permitting steps
 - Should start next year pending funds, hoping for new start for NESP
 - Construction in-house with Maintenance & Repair Crew
- NESP program level activities
 - Working to establish capability, potential of \$45M
 - Largest projects are L/D25 on Navigation side and L/D22 fish passage on Ecosystem side
 - FWWG developed list of 9 prioritized projects
 - Looking at advancing list with interagency support
 - Big thanks to Stephen Winter
- Will be requesting RRF endorsement of projects, Stephen Winter will discuss first
- Discussion:
 - Steve Tapp: What is the timeline on fact sheets for potential projects?
Kimmel: FWWG is hoping by Sep 10, but no defined timeline

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Stephen Winter)

- Selection of Potential NESP Projects
 - Notice provided on 18 MAY to FWWG members to create list of NESP projects
 - 25 JUN workshop, each agency brought 5 projects to table
 - 9 were similar enough to be combined into 3, workshop ended with 19 projects
 - Agencies then ranked the 19, then top-ranked 10 were voted in favor of bringing to RRF
 - After list of top 10 projects announced, USFWS determined they could not support 10th ranked project, list dropped to 9 as follows in priority order
 - 1. Wacouta Bay (Pool 4)
 - 2. Systemic Forest Restoration (Multi-Pool)
 - 3. North-Sturgeon Lake (Pool 3)
 - 4. Johnson Island (Pool 6)

- 5. Swift and Dead Sloughs (Pool 11)
- 6. Trempealeau NWR Island Construction (Pool 6)
- 7. Lake Onalaska Phase II/Sedimentation Science Needs (Pool 7)
- 8. Upper Reno (Pool 9)
- 9. Systemic Bankline Stabilization and Natural Levee (Multi-Pool)
- Discussion
 - Steve Tapp: Thanks for all the hard work to put the list together
 - Can RRF endorse? Should we send out for review?
 - Jim Fischer: I think we're ready, but with agency processes, these are tight deadlines
 - really appreciate Stephen Winter's leadership on this
 - Tim Yager: Think the USFWS is ready to endorse; was presented to UMRBA as though MVD had already approved, seems ball is already rolling
 - Kimmel: RRAC has already endorsed theirs, MVS as well
 - Upper 3 districts are in process of approving, MVP fact sheets not ready yet
 - RRF endorsement would be prudent moving forward
 - Steve Tapp: How about MN, IA, NPS?
 - Jack Gleason: MDNR good to go on endorsement
 - Kirk Hanson: Good to go
 - Nancy Duncan: we're good to endorse
 - Steve Tapp: motion to endorse the list presented?
 - Jim Fischer: motion to endorse
 - Kirk Hanson: second
 - Steve Tapp: any discussion? (none)
 - Any objections?
 - *Hearing nothing, list of 1-9 potential NESP projects as shown above in priority order are endorsed.*
 - Discussion:
 - Jim Fischer: One thing now that we endorsed the list, Stephen Winter can you give more clarity why #10 was dropped?
 - Tim Yager: There was a 3 way tie for the number 10, couldn't fully support Probst Lake, after seeing Root River project fall off, couldn't continue to support the Probst Lake project
 - Jim Fischer: Concern that RRF should see the entire list from the FWWG, then if the RRF wants to drop a project, it could at that level.
 - Tim Yager: From experience, if a project makes it on the list that goes to the RRF, it typically stays there.

Beneficial Use Work Group Activities (Zach Kimmel)

- Kickoff meeting 14 APR, big turnout
 - Next work group meeting delayed until DEC due to busy schedules, wanting charter done and waiting for WRDA 125 guidance
 - Working on admin tasks
 - 75% draft charter

- Challenge due to two districts, but will have one charter covering both districts from a regional perspective
- Bre Popkin sent out a doodle poll, please fill it out, meeting is going to be virtual
 - Will kick out a draft agenda so folks can consider ideas

Navigation Work Group (Dan Cottrell)

- 2 Due-Outs pending from last RRF: MOU / MOA and language for fishing tournaments
 - (MOU / MOA due out addressed during Intro/Due-Outs)
 - Drafting of language to submit to DNRs for submittal to fishing tournaments
 - Jim Fischer: POC would be Sara Strassman
 - Kirk Hanson: For Iowa, just send it to me, I can get it where it needs to go
 - Dan asked if the FWS wants to look at it, do you issue permits?
 - Tim Yager replied that the states issue the permits; Dan asked if he wanted to see it anyway, Tim said yes.
 - Bryan Peterson: To the states, is there a way we can get feedback on when these are happening? For Locks and Dams, help ensure they're staffed properly.
 - Kevin Stauffer: They're posted online for the state, can look at adding a provision to permits stating to inform lock masters if event is occurring in multiple pools. We'd rather put it on tournament organizers to notify.
 - Bryan: We try to send Lockmasters to tournament kick-off meetings, don't always know when they're happening. Is there a way USACE could have more lead time?
 - Kevin: For MN the application period for 2022 will start in September, most are in place by January. Can try to remember to send the list to USACE.
- Truman-Hobbs RR Bridge funding discussion
 - Sara Strassman asked with Fed transportation bill if La Crosse RR bridge could get funding
 - Patrick Phenow can check, but that type of funding wouldn't flow through freight office, will find out and report back
 - Due Out: MnDOT to look at transportation bill to see if there's funding to address La Crosse RR Bridge issues (Phenow)
 -
- Sara Strassman: Contacted USCG Aux, they will not make it, add to DEC RRF agenda

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

- Steve Tapp –
 - Busy season, but channel is in good condition
 - Drought conditions creating lots of questions on how it's impacting our ability to maintain the channel
 - It hasn't had much of an impact
 - Locks and Dams were built to maintain low control pool elevations
 - Channel structures performing as designed, some areas better with normal flows
 - O&M budget:
 - We received the budget and were surprised, \$103.4M for Miss River, most for Locks and Dams maintenance work
 - Channels & Harbors received \$18.1M
 - No funding for land acquisition or material rehandling, usually reliable package
 - Community Project Funding (formerly Ear Marks)

- City of St. Paul submitted a \$500K request for St. Paul Small Boat Harbor dredging, approved by the House Appropriations Committee, one step closer to funding when bills are signed into law later this year
 - St. Croix Boat Launch was going to submit a request, but will likely go through CAP 107 program
- Our permit with WDNR is expired, operating under extension through 25 July 2023
 - MDNR permit expires in December 2022
- WRDA 2020
 - No news, guidance was still expected by end of August
 - More of a focus on DMMP process and beneficial use
 - Corps HQ mentioned standing up a “Tiger Team” on beneficial use, aim for 70% beneficial use of dredged material across the country (currently 40%)
 - Will include stakeholder engagement for coordinating regional 5-year DMMPs
- CMMP refresh update
 - CMMP is living document, we update some portions annually
 - This update is to eliminate old language, old equipment references, etc.
 - Thinking of adding interactive map using GIS to make it easier to access information
 - We’re not changing how we operate, just updating information
 - Major changes will lead to new EA, we’re not there yet, writing new EA is a large effort, resources just not available right now
- Discussion:
 - Megan Moore: CMMP update went fast, these updates will mostly be what?
 - Steve Tapp: updating of tables with sites that have been endorsed
 - Steve Clark: making sure all definitions are up to date
 - Megan: wasn’t it emergency language?
 - Steve Tapp: That was endorsement a couple RRFs ago
 - Don’t know if that language will be included in this refresh
 - Sara Strassman: What about sediment evaluation procedures?
 - Steve Tapp: Not at this time, changing those may trigger EIS
 - Steve Clark: That might be ok, we’ll have to discuss
 - Sara: What about mitigation?
 - Steve Clark: We’ll probably have to address that
 - Jim Fischer: We’ve extended our MOU 2 years how does that fit into CMMP rewrite?
 - Steve Tapp: There’s quite a few things tasked to me before I leave, don’t know if it’ll be finished by the time I’m gone, team just got started
- Dan Cottrell – Channel Conditions
 - Summary of the dredging schedule to this point
 - Goetz left the district; don’t think we need them back from an operational standpoint
 - Went through the schedule and contract plants 1-5
 - Discussion point – do we need to do Dredge Notices for HREPs?
 - Sara Strassman: Plants 4 & 5? Have been tracking just for total volumes
 - Zach Kimmel: From my perspective, I’m comfortable with whatever CH wants to do
 - Dan Cottrell: For now, going to stay the course and continue to publish only on the dredge schedule.
 - Other note: Boulanger Bend Lower Light EA went out for review in July, it’s awaiting internal approval
 - Location is right descending bank below where the Boulanger Bend Tow Head Light was taken out last year, hoping to dredge when placement capacity allows

- Discussion:
 - Sara Strassman: Will Dredge Goetz be back this year?
 - Dan Cottrell: We hope so for the winter maintenance, but likely won't dredge
 - Steve Tapp: Kansas City District has requested Goetz dredging on the Missouri River, it's a work in progress, but plan to be back in Fountain City for the winter
 - Sara Strassman: You said the budget didn't cover material rehandling?
 - Steve Tapp: Correct. Package requested was \$4.6M, but it was not funded. No big jobs identified in FY22 but would need to re-prioritize other work if we're going to do any re-handling.

- Dan DeVaney – Placement Site Actions
 - Review of Placement Site Activities Schedule
 - Red Wing Commercial Harbor reshaping effort to fine material containment cell
 - District dredging priority at Head of Lake Pepin
 - Material assumed to be mostly fines, placement site capacity not available
 - Utilizing M&R crew to clean-up and reshape cells to restore capacity
 - Grand Encampment placement site reshaping/restoration
 - Dredge Goetz crew mobilized 5 MAY – 18 JUN to pull material back inside containment berms to reestablish bench and berm along Wisconsin side
 - Accomplished as much as they could without site being unloaded
 - Fountain City 1 Placement Site Stabilization
 - M&R crew mobilized 7 MAY – 10 JUN
 - Construction of 30' bench and rock vanes
 - OSIT meeting held, and all agreed the work looks good
 - Brownsville Containment Beneficial Use
 - River Point project in La Crosse, Gerke Excavating main contractor
 - Beneficial removal of ~200,000 cubic yards of material
 - Hauling by truck, 25 trucks doing 11 cycles a day

- Paul Machajewski – Unloads & DMMPs
 - Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Contract awarded to Legacy Corp.
 - Base year plus 2 option years
 - Identified as Contract Mechanical Plant 4 this year
 - Dakota Island partial unload to Trempealeau planned
 - After unload, headed to MVR for channel dredging
 - Next major site unloads – none planned
 - Pool 4, Reads Landing material will go to Head of Lake Pepin (Upper Pool 4, Pierce County Islands) – 400,000 cubic yards
 - Lower Pool 4 will likely be unloaded using Section 217 agreement
 - Discussion:
 - Sara Strassman: What's the feasibility of incorporating beach nourishment into IDIQ unloads
 - Paul Machajewski: Issues include access dredging, minimal quantity, contractor set up for small jobs (adds costs/reduces production), etc.
 - Pool 3 Tribal Partnership Program
 - First TPP project in our Division, and only the second in the nation
 - Stabilize shoreline
 - Will begin next week
 - Dan Cottrell: how long?
 - Paul: 3 years, but only granular this year

- Plantings are included in the 3-year window
- Zach Kimmel: I wanted to comment on beach nourishment
 - Partial unload contractor is good use because unlike channel dredging, the urgency is less
 - If it were more efficient to just bring the final barge-load, that could work
 - Paul: The mobilization and access of the offload is again where the problems are
- Fisher Island Stabilization
 - Similar to Fountain City 1 site stabilization
 - Construct a bench, 10 rock vanes
 - Based on OSIT feedback in 2020
 - Designed and permitted this summer
 - Hoped that rock from another project could be incorporated, but it didn't meet spec, so it'll be all new rock
 - Project prioritization is pushing it off until next year
- Rolling Prairie
 - Team is working on development plan
 - Focus on central 40 acres
 - Use 10 acres to start with, scrape off topsoil, build in a gravel road for removal, place material, and bring topsoil back.
 - Share DRAFT plan & schedule at DEC OSIT meeting
 - Another one on M&R list, may not get to it this year
- DMMPs
 - Pool 4
 - Meeting with City of Wabasha staff bi-weekly on Sec 217 Agreement and Operations/Site Management Plan
 - DRAFT Plans submitted to Wabasha at end of JUL, awaiting their comments
 - DRAFT DMMP, non-217 solutions per dredge cut
 - Chippewa Delta and Reads channel cuts to Wabasha Gravel Pit via pipeline "A"
 - Crats, Teepeeota Point, Grand Encampment
 - Place material on temp island as done historically
 - Offload to private property in southern part of Pool 4 via pipeline "C"
 - Frequency would be 2 back-to-back years once per decade
 - Private property owners have asked to remain anonymous
 - Site use being evaluated (NEPA, ops feasibility, beneficial use, etc.)
 - Beef Slough to Alma as done historically
 - Schedule
 - Internal DRAFT reviews this fall (217 & Operations Plan)
 - DRAFT to stakeholders & public FEB 2022
 - NEPA review & public meetings MAR/APR
 - Finalize report, RRF endorsement, FONSI JUN 2022 (prior to COL Jansen leaving)
 - Sara Strassman: How about the beneficial use from Wabasha Gravel Pit? Are you working with Chuck?
 - Paul: Like any alternative, we've got to run the cost benefit analysis against the 217 agreement
 - Jim Fischer: Is the city of Wabasha aware of material going to Great Lakes?
 - Paul: Yes, we've brought it up
 - Sara Strassman: Would you reduce the size of the Reads Landing site if not needed?
 - Paul: Doubtful due to uncertainty of future events and difficulty in finding new sites

- Pool 6
 - Reformulating plan from FEB 2020 DRAFT release
 - Meeting with City of Winona Task Force bi-monthly, working with local companies on beneficial use opportunities
 - Need barge unloading facility downtown in/near commercial harbor
 - City considering continued long-term use of Latsch Island & possible expansion
 - Trempealeau Refuge islands also being considered, pending cost & construction evaluations
 - Hydraulic pipeline access via Refuge pump station TBD
 - Homer unload trucking contract
 - Material to Mathy's Yeadke Quarry on CR15
 - Up to 50K CY
 - Coordinating with Winona County
 - Anticipate work to begin in NOV 2021 and last 2-3 months
 - Homer access safety improvements
 - Working with CP Rail and MnDOT on crossing arms and turn lanes
 - Schedule
 - Internal DRAFT reviews this winter
 - DRAFT to stakeholders & public SPRING 2022
 - NEPA review & public meeting SUMMER 2022
 - Finalize report, RRF endorsement, FONSI AUG/SEP 2022
- Pools 9 & 10
 - Public Scoping Meeting JUN 2021
 - ~40 members of public attended
 - Lots of McGregor Lake HREP project questions
 - Thanks to Wendy & Kirk attending to take HREP questions
 - Evaluating pits in Iowa and Wisconsin
 - Pool 9, Genoa Power Plant; awaiting Low Hazard Exemption from Dairyland Power and WDNR. COE doing desktop HTRW & preliminary Real Estate coordination with Dairyland Power.
 - Pool 10: Frenchman's Campground & Bowline Bay/Bergman/Indian Isle suggested by landowners during scoping meeting; sites to be evaluated this fall
 - Schedules
 - Pool 9: DRAFT to stakeholders & public NOV 2022
 - Pool 10: DRAFT to stakeholders & public OCT 2023

Recreation Work Group Activities (Sara Strassman)

- RWG hasn't made a lot of progress since last RRF, next meeting is TBD
 - Sara is the liaison for Wisconsin with Miss River Parkway Commission
 - Great River Road now has All-American Road designation
 - Preparing to kick off routing meetings in Buffalo County to plan bike path
 - Building a pollinator strategy along the road/route
- Beneficial Use and Beach Maintenance
 - Request OSIT in Pool 7 to revive pre-permitting to allow future unloads of Dakota Island to take advantage of sites along barge route
 - Have yet to see the final Master Plan from St. Paul District
 - Hoping to evaluate a few sites with nourishment potential to combine with beneficial use
 - Jon Shultz: Will get you a copy of the Master Plan.

- Discussion Item
 - Identifying Boating & Beach Recreation Data Needs
 - Steve Tapp: Is the data useful enough for the effort? What does it tell us?
 - Jon Shultz: Came from MVR and they really didn't have beach plans, so can't really speak to it
 - Megan Moore: MDNR recognizes the need for this data, but not sure if this is the right stuff, maybe Steve is right
 - Sara: Maybe let folks reflect on the information and get some feedback on what the data means to folks
 - RWG Chair
 - Jim Fischer: To the point about waiting for Kevin's replacement to assume RWG Chairperson: Sara also doesn't have the bandwidth to maintain, can we relieve Sara of some of those responsibilities?
 - Jon Schultz: Sara has fulfilled role as chair, USACE should have taken over chair position spring 2021
 - Steve Tapp: USACE should take it over
 - Due Out: Steve Tapp will contact Randy Urich to discuss RWG chair (Tapp)

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

- Future Topics
 - The usual
 - USCG Aux, try to schedule again for RRF 121 - Sara Strassman
 - Separate topic for WRDA, should have something by December
 - USAF Disposition study
 - IA DOT – see if they would present re: Blackhawk Bridge replacement in Lansing
- Due-Outs from this RRF
 - Follow up with MDNR regarding spawning restriction for Pigs Eye 204 to see if the contractor can begin work earlier. (Kimmel)
 - MnDOT to look at transportation bill to see if there's funding to address La Crosse RR Bridge issues (Phenow)
 - Steve Tapp will contact Randy Urich to discuss RWG chair (Tapp)

Steve Tapp
Co-Chairman, RRF

RRF #120 Agency Activities

24 August 2021

Agency Activities – Corps of Engineers

- Personnel changes
 - New St. Paul District Deputy Commander MAJ Rob Wilkins replaced LTC Patrick Sullivan
 - St. Paul District Deputy Chief of Operations Division John Menniti has taken a new job. The process to fill the vacancy has begun; Chris Atkins from Nashville District was selected to temporarily fill the position for the next four months.
- Government Maintenance & Repair Crew work
 - Successfully cleaned the tubes at the Onalaska spillway
 - Completed stabilization project at the Fountain City 1 placement site
 - De-watering at Lock and Dam 6 during winter 2021-2022
 - Miter Gate Changes at Lock and Dam 2 in July
 - Bank line stabilization at Goose Island in Pool 8 in 2022
 - C8 Island sill repair in Pool 8 in 2022
 - Island stabilization in Sturgeon Lake (Pool 3) this summer as part of a Tribal Partnership Program project with the Prairie Island Indian Community
 - Completed removal of two daymark lights at Minneiska (Pool 5) and Brownsville (Pool 8) for the USCG
- Outreach to stakeholders with ERDC support is ongoing. We are interested in further discussions with any agencies/growers/non-profits etc. that are interested and have not yet had that opportunity to talk.
- There have been a few high-level visits to USAF associated with our disposition study – MG Spellmon, and acting ASA for Civil Works Jaime Pinkham
- Several open houses this summer at our Locks and Dams with high turnout
- Endangered Mussel survey in pool 2 at Hidden Falls, propagation effort appears to be successful
- Resolving boundary encroachments in pool 10, Bagley WI to ensure adequate stewardship over the riverine environment in that area

Agency Activities – Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

- Staffing/Personnel
 - Headquarters – Have selected for the vacant Administrative Assistant position (vice Collins). Awaiting HR approval to announce (may have that approval by the 24th and will announce at RRF).
 - 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. Welcoming Dana Schelling as Visitor Services Specialist.
 - La Crosse District – GS-11 Fish and Wildlife Officer, Field Training Officer filled by Dustin Schelling. Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist position filled by Jacob Hernandez.
 - McGregor District – Vacant District Manager position (vice Jones) filled by Kendra Pednault. Kendra is returning to the River, previously the deputy manager at La Crosse.
 - Savanna District – Bill Davison (Maintenance Mechanic) retired, replaced by Wes Cowell. Vacant Biologist position (vice Strickland) filled by Angie Dedrickson.

- Continuing to telework for HQ staff. District staff are reporting to offices under strict distancing, sanitation protocols. Offices are intermittently open. Masking required in counties with substantial or high COVID transmission.
- Winona District - boat ramps at Weaver Landing (Pool 5) and Indian Slough (Pool 4) replaced with new concrete ramps. Working on appropriate use and compatibility determination to assess transport of dredge material (i.e. pipeline placement) across Refuge lands.
- La Crosse District working on dock trespass issues and Root River dike breach issues. Developing management plans for newly acquired tracts in Houston County, MN and La Crosse and Trempealeau Counties, WI. Repairing flood damaged roads and boat landings from 2019.
- Trempealeau NWR: New parking area on the DU donated Galstad Tract. working in partnership with Buffalo County, and Ducks Unlimited. Dedication is planned for August 14, 2021.
- McGregor District working on new bridge/bridge realignment on Lansing Bridge, STH 82.
- 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, nation-wide permits, Refuge compatibility determination, etc.
- HQ working on building, power line 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.
- Released Closed Area report and evaluation which proposed removing closed area status from several locations and implementing no motor use in Harpers and sanctuary status at Elk River. Working with Iowa on concerns expressed by a commercial fisherman who would be potentially affected by the Harpers change.
- Surveyed flowering rush locations and secured funding (188K) to treat flowering rush. Secured permit from Minnesota for application of aquatic herbicide but unable to secure permit from Wisconsin ... several issues with Wisconsin application requirements and permit fee (\$1250). Planning to treat next year where (or when) we are permitted to do so.
- New invasive identified in pool 8 ... Brittle Naiad. Hoping we could treat that one as well, but in Wisconsin waters, so contingent on Wisconsin's cooperation with securing a permit.
- Another invasive carp treatment (modified unified method) being planned in pool 8 for this fall.
- Renewal of Refuge "Big Six" compatibility determinations (hunting, fishing, environmental education, interpretation, wildlife observation and photography coming soon.

Agency Activities – National Park Service, Mississippi Nat'l River and Recreation Area Updates

- Schematic design for the NPS River Learning Center at the site of the Watergate Marina in Pool 2 is funded and will be beginning in the near future. More to come on that.
- State endangered Cricket frogs have vanished from their established site by the Swing Bridge in Pool 2. Gary Casper believes that is due to the year when it flooded off and on all summer (2019?). 2020 recordings show no sign of them at that location now, although their populations remain good at Pig's Eye Lake and a new population has been found by Holman Field. A Cricket frog work group will be starting up this fall to try and get a better handle on these frogs, with members from multiple agencies invited.
- Sonar side scan imagery and depth information for much of the riverbed of Pool 2, part of Pool 1 and part of the Lower SACN will soon be available for use on the USGS – LaCrosse website, providing bathymetry data for areas where none previously existed. That LCCMR partnership grant was just closed out and work on getting that imagery finalized and uploaded for use is ongoing. USGS contact for that project and data is Jenny Hanson.
- Work is continuing with the Applied Silviculture for Climate Change multi-partner project in Pool 2, looking at replanting tree species where floodplain forest has been lost to EAB, including species native to more southern portions of the Midwest such as sycamore, catalpa and swamp

white oak. There is currently about 80% survival of the planted trees, which are protected by fencing and have needed regular watering this summer. NPS has acquired 2022 grant funding for the Conservation Corps of Mn and IA crew to continue carrying the load in the field on this project.

- The NPS along with partners including Miss Park Connection, the U of MN and others has submitted a LCCMR proposal to look at beaver populations and impacts on floodplain forests in Pool 2, specifically looking at cottonwood due to regeneration issues with that tree. We were invited to present and will be hearing whether we got that funding soon, hopefully by the end of this week.

Agency Activities – MDNR

- Staff changes: Megan Moore is now the District Manager for Central Region. The Mississippi Coordinator Position has not been filled yet and the various teams/work groups and committees will be temporarily filled by various individuals. For the RRF, Jack Gleason (john.gleason@state.mn.us) will be the MN State Rep. Jack is the supervisor of south district area hydrologists. Among his many talents is his extensive knowledge with public waters rules and regulations. Megan will still serve on a few committees for a little while longer, so if there are questions on appropriate contacts for certain teams or issues, you can reach out to Jack, Megan or Neil Rude.
- We are close to filling the Area Hydrologist position in north metro covering Anoka and Hennepin Counties.
- MNDNR has a new Parks and Trails Supervisor in Rochester. Replacing Jess Althoff is Bob Storlie (bob.storlie@state.mn.us)
- The MN, WI, USGS and USFWS are planning a fall Modified Unified Method (MUM) during the end of October to search for additional invasive carp.
- Staff attended the kickoff for UMRR-LTRM implementation planning as well as the Report to Congress planning effort.

Agency Activities – WDNR Office of Great Waters – Mississippi River Unit

- Staffing:
 - LTRM Science Lead, Deanne Drake, is resigning for opportunities in North Carolina. Her last day in office is August 25th, 2021.
 - La Crosse and Black River Falls Wildlife Supervisor, Scott Walter, resigned in July to start a position as the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Executive Director. The Wildlife program will begin recruitment soon.
 - Warden Matt Gropi transferred to the La Crosse station on August 1. He has been a Conservation Warden since 2008 and most recently working as a Recreation Warden (also out of the La Crosse office) and covered 10 counties in the WCR. Prior to getting hired as a Warden, he enlisted in the Army Reserves at the age 19 then served in Iraq in 2004. Warden Gropi served in Iraq in 2004 and Afghanistan in 2008-2009. I also went back to school and graduated with an M.S. in Organizational Leadership from Concordia University in May of 2017. He holds a B.S. in Resource Management and a Minor in Environmental Law Enforcement from UWSP, and an M.S. in Organizational Leadership from Concordia University.
 - Welcome (back) Sara Strassman to the Mississippi River Planner position. Sara started her new permanent role on August 16, 2021. Sara will continue to be WDNR contact for MVR and MVP dredging and beneficial use.
- Flowering Rush:

- WDNR Mississippi River and APM program staff spent considerable time working with FWS Refuge to process applications for herbicide treatment. In response to a request from the Refuge to waive the \$1200 application fees, WDNR Central Office (CO) Staff told Sabrina Chandler that WDNR Legal Services confirmed we have no ability under the current rule to waive fees. CO staff also told Chandler that they would consider changes in the rule revision currently underway. However, that could raise concerns with other stakeholders if WDNR creates preferential waivers. The APM program depends on fees to run the program.
- Section 1122 PCI -- \$3M included in the Governor's budget for cost share on that project.
- COVID
 - We returned to full field work schedules in spring, and a transition from telework to office began on July 6 for staff working in state office buildings. The LTRM staff assigned to UMESC continue to conduct all field work, but remain under a maximum telework status for other duties because USGS remains limited to 25% maximum occupancy.
 - With the rise of Delta variant, masking is again required in all office spaces, and on August 23, 2021, the DOA announced that all workers must submit their vaccination status to Human Resources no later than September 9, 2021.