

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #121 on 7 December 2021 (WebEx virtual meeting)

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

- Went over meeting logistics, holding to break return times
- RRF 120 Minutes approval
 - Motion from Kirk Hanson
 - Second from Tim Yager
 - No discussion, approved as written
- Next Meetings:
 - April 19th Brice Prairie
 - August 23rd & 24th Tuesday & Wednesday
 - Bass Ponds for field visit?
 - December 6th & 7th Tuesday & Wednesday
 - Prairie du Chien or Driftless Area in Lansing; can decide in future meetings
- Due Outs carried forward from previous meetings
 - 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 – next meeting coming up, being discussed as a part of the creel survey*
 - 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)
 - *Will remain pending during DMMP formulation*
 - 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: Discussion forthcoming*
 - NWG will review MOU and MOAs between USACE and USCG and provide a summary of agency roles and responsibilities at the next meeting (Cottrell)
 - *Update coming at April meeting*
 - Corps will revise the DMMP endorsement process steps after following up internally, then send to RRF members for endorsement (Tapp)
 - *Still pending – passed to Robert Edstrom and Paul Machajewski with Tapp retirement*
 - Corps to consider more dialogue with OSIT regarding channel conditions (Tapp)
 - *Still pending – passed on to incoming C&H Chief, share at April meeting*
 - Corps will draft language that RRF agencies can share with tournament organizers to improve safety when boating near dredging operations. (Cottrell)
 - *Still pending – hoping to draft language over winter and have it out by nav season*
 - Follow up with MDNR regarding spawning restriction for Pigs Eye 204 to see if the contractor can begin work earlier. (Kimmel)
 - *Will reach out to partners once there is a work plan, premature to discuss yet*

- MnDOT to look at transportation bill to see if there's funding to address La Crosse RR Bridge issues (Phenow)
 - *No new details, looking into it*
- Steve Tapp will contact Randy Urich to discuss RWG chair (Tapp)
 - *Will be chaired by Kevin Berg*

Agency Activities – (All)

Agencies were asked to provide activities prior to the meeting to save time. Activities were received from the Corps, NPS, USFWS, WI DNR, and the LMRWD; they will be provided as a part of the minutes. The following discussion also took place.

- USACE: Steve Tapp
 - Chris Atkins selected as Deputy Chief of Operations
 - Bryan Peterson retired - Kristin Moe is new Navigation Business Line Manager at MRPO
 - Tapp retiring at end of December
 - Kristin Moe hopes to make a decision late next week on C&H Chief selection
 - Climate adaptation and resilience action plan has been released
 - WRDA2020 Section 125c
 - Still waiting to hear from division for guidance for part c
 - No guidance on the other parts of 125
 - Not a lot to go on, but guidance is out there
 - Dan Cottrell added that Zach Kimmel is back at the MRPO, temporary detail as Chief Navigation Support vice Moe
- NPS: Nancy Duncan
 - Jon Anfinson replaced with Tucker Blythe as Superintendent
 - Tucker says this will be his retirement park
- USFWS: Tim Yager
 - Casey Bryan has filled the Trempealeau Refuge Manager position
 - Jason Shell replacing Sherry Collins as Administrative Officer

Highlights from the submitted activities

- Held kickoff meeting for new office being built in Luster Heights, Iowa
 - Culturally significant site
 - Fed Agencies are all on CRA
 - Budget restrictions because of CRs
 - Water quality specialist position filled by Ashley Johnson; LTRM now fully staffed
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: Jack Gleason
 - New area hydrologist for Hennepin and Anoka Counties: Wes Saunders-Pearce
 - New area hydrologist for Ramsey and Washington counties: Dan Scollan.
 - Still working from home for most staff
 - Future uncertain
 - Return to office put on hold indefinitely
 - Hoping to create Miss. River policy position
 - Neil Rude to return to Lake City as Asst. Area Fisheries Supervisor, had been in detail as MR Habitat Coordinator
 - Lucas Youngsma Area Hydro

- Took part in the Sturgeon Lake TPP site visit
 - Now engaged with Aux gates/ fish passage
 - Block invasive carp from jumping pools
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources: Kirk Hansen
 - One big thing coming up - hosting Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference Feb 13-16
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
 - Working on a memo to finalize Soil Reference Values, should be finalized by the end of calendar year
- Upper Mississippi River Basin Association: Andrew Stephenson
 - Lauren Salvato has returned from maternity leave
- Friends of Pool 2: Greg Genz
 - 2021 was a bad year; used to see empty barges coming upstream to load, now seeing loaded barges coming up and going back down empty
 - Was the worst year in recollection, however, Corps' channel maintenance not the cause
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Jim Fischer
 - Been asking for Miss. River (regulatory) specialist for a while, now hired
 - Crystal VonHoldt - out of Green Bay, not planning on moving to the area
 - New habitat engineer - in Madison Office of Great Waters
 - Alex Chapla, will start in January
 - WI DNR still mostly remote working
 - No external meetings without approval
- Steve Tapp's Retirement: Jim Fischer
 - Jim presented Steve with letter of appreciation from RRF Agency Partners
 - Several RRF members spoke up with kind words
 - Jim remarked that he couldn't think of a better person to co-chair with
 - In Steve's time in Channel Maintenance:
 - 26,000,000 cubic yards dredged
 - That's 8,000 Olympic swimming pools, 3,500 blimps, fill the Astrodome x17
 - New goal: 210 times that amount of material; fill the Grand Canyon, ha
 - Jim presented Steve with an hourglass as a personal retirement gift
 - Steve remarked his first Forum was RRF24
 - Still a lot of distrust back then
 - Attended every Forum from then on except one
 - Has been a lot of change over the years, don't always see eye-to-eye, but work through it

Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMMR) (Angela Deen)

- Lots of turnover, Katie Opsahl and Ben Nelson backfilling while Zach is on detail @ MRPO
- 7 active HREPs
 - 4 almost complete (Bass Ponds, Harpers Slough, Conway Lake, and McGregor Lake)
 - 3 in planning (Lower Pool 4 Big Lake, Reno Bottoms, and Lower Pool 10)

- Lower Pool 4 Big Lake
 - Feasibility kicked off in November
 - Reno Bottoms
 - Still formulating alternatives
 - Floodplain forest focus
 - Lower Pool 10
 - Almost done with design, draft report with MVD for review
 - Could award CT in FY23 if McGregor is finished, otherwise FY24
 - TSP features utilize ~200k cy of granular
 - Bass Ponds - almost complete
 - Supply chain issues holding up progress
 - Beavers have been busy, looking forward to aluminum stoplogs
 - Hoping to have dedication next spring
 - Conway lake
 - ERDC soil blending sampling conducted with Andy Meier and Aaron McFarlane
 - Analyzing data from the samples, incorporate results into future projects
 - 98% Complete - dedication to come, possibly Earth Day 2022
 - McGregor Lake
 - Fish structures marked
 - Option 3 has been awarded
 - Option 2 expired
 - Best case award Option 2 in spring
 - Harpers slough repair
 - Nearly complete, only a couple weeks of work to finish in the spring
 - Then turn it over to the FWS
- Kirk Hansen asked with McGregor Option 2 being rebid, will it be a quick process?
 - Angela said it should be faster but would still need DQC and BCOES

RIAC Spudding Discussion (Steve Tapp)

- Steve received a phone call that:
 - JF Brennan (JFB) unloaded material at Bellevue Sand & Gravel and left equipment spudded down adjacent the channel
 - IDNR wrote a letter to JFB asking for background information for what they were doing there
 - JFB completed work and demobilized; then received violation notice from IDNR asking for permit application, complete mussel survey's, etc.
- Industry wanted to bring this up to the RRF as there's concern about this repeating itself as spudding adjacent the channel is very common practice throughout the river
- Discussion:
 - Jack Gleason (MNDNR) - asked for a bit more description regarding spudding; doesn't believe that spudding would trigger any sort of Public Waters Permit requirement, the issue would be more on the blocking of navigation than changing the cross section of the riverbed
 - Kirk Hanson (IDNR) - in a normal construction permit a private company completing construction in which the river bottom will be disturbed, there will be a permit requirement, in this case they were off the channel and into a side channel in a sensitive area where the IDNR had recent mussel data
 - Zach Pontzer (JFB) - they're required to transit throughout the UMR the entire season for construction work; if transiting from MVR to MVP for example they'll need to spud down in

- a location that doesn't impact navigation among other things during crew change or at the end of a workday while transiting (this isn't typical project work where a permit will be collected)
- Steve Tapp- distinction between whether a permit will be needed for a typical move as marine equipment transfers throughout the district rather than a specific project
 - Kirk - current understanding is that IA would not require a permit for spudding down during transit from A to B
 - Zach – asked how is Industry supposed to understand the restrictions, they will not know where the mussel beds are?
 - Kirk - hasn't been involved with this issue very much but will reach out to regulatory folks; if we provided a map of sensitive areas to Industry would that be helpful?
 - Steve - there are so many areas out there that it may not be as easy as seems on paper, probably requires a bit more discussion as part of the NWG
 - Paul Machajewski - IENC might provide opportunity for sensitive areas to be marked
 - Jim - believe NWG discussion is a good next step, typically anything that's placed permanently or temporarily on the river bottom requires a permit (even monitoring buoys require a permit) – Due Out
 - Lee Nelson – RIAC
 - I called Steve, communication is a big part of this, or lack of in this case
 - Spudding is better than nosing in, no engines running and further disturbance
 - Maybe some of us could get together with clarifying points at future meeting
 - Steve - Lee brings up a good point that there are potential damages incurred when barges are pushed up against the shoreline
 - Jim will bring back to WDNR regulatory folks and get back with the RRF

Navigation Work Group (Dano DeVaney for Dan Cottrell)

- Due-out to talk about MOU/MOA with USCG –
 - Dan Cottrell just received that background information, hasn't had time to review it and engage the NWG; will likely occur in April
- Grand Encampment Grounding AAR completed
 - Grounding 3-6 Jun 2021
 - Estimated delay cost to Industry - \$700k
 - Tows were unable to pass for 4 days
 - Contact Dan Cottrell with any follow-up questions

Recreation Work Group Activities (Sara Strassman)

- Next meeting coming up next week, 13 Dec
 - UMRCC Creel survey input
 - Reevaluate aerial surveys
 - Steve Tapp - We discussed at last meeting the usefulness of this data at Forum level
 - Haven't had the time to review, don't know if others have either
 - More valuable to be shared upwards through each channel?
 - Jim Fischer - Inclination is to leave it to agencies
 - If folks here today that know they've got needs, let us know
 - Sara - Agree, UMRCC process works
 - Steve - Right, let it play out and stay aware
 - Bring feedback to RRF for awareness
 - Jim - Glaring omissions should be easy to spot

- Chair rotation to Kevin Berg or other USACE
 - Work plan 2022
 - Asking for ideas for what to do
- WI Mississippi River Parkway commission
 - Increasingly interested in teaming up with RWG
 - Currently having routing discussions for Miss. trail bike system
 - Buffalo, Crawford, Trempealeau, then Grant counties, in order
 - National scenic byway grants coming in early 2022
- 2021 fishing and boating info
 - Nice jump in 2020, COVID related
 - Still holding high for 2021
- Greg Genz asked Sara if she knew where the University of MN wake study was
 - Sara didn't have any info, will ask at RWG meeting

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Stephen Winter)

- Fine-tuning fact sheets
 - 9 sheets for 9 projects
 - Some minor review – Zach Kimmel lead the charge
- Upcoming meetings:
 - Feb 2nd, Aug 2nd
 - If anyone has topics for FWWG, pass on to Stephen Winter
- Steve Tapp asked if Stephen would do some brainstorming at Feb meeting, bring back to RRF some ideas to work on
 - Sara Strassman added that maybe FWWG could consider some of the spudding discussion questions

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

- Dual purpose program, nav and eco
 - FY22 funding
 - Remains uncertain
 - Potential of a construction new start
 - \$45M earmark request
 - Waiting for additional feedback with Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, won't know until ~mid-January
- Current projects
 - P2 wing dam modification project
 - Plans and Specifications approved
 - Waiting for Construction General money to proceed
 - Aiming for 2022 construction
 - Other projects outside district
 - Fish passage Lock and Dam 22
 - Feasibility report at MVD for approval, design continues to move forward
- Future projects – MVP focused
 - Fact sheets, thanks to all involved
 - RRF endorsed, 9 projects moved forward

- Hope to have those approved by Division soon
- Systemic efforts
 - Holding pattern, no money to devote to team
- Partnering side
 - Reoccurring meetings, UMRBA been heavily involved
 - Workload discussion, we acknowledge hurdles to overcome, available bandwidth
- Other
- Brad Perkl, Archaeologist for the Corps, proposed a potential bankline stabilization project in Pool 10 at Effigy Mounds National Monument
 - Brad has been coordinating with the NPS on shoreline stabilization efforts in this area for some time
 - This could be a project that may fit within some of the systemic efforts under NESP
 - Bringing it up here as something that was proposed as a potential future opportunity
 - Tim Yager - if need any input from the FWS as to the importance of protecting that site just let him know, happy to support any effort to protect the resource
 - Jim - thought that cultural protection was in the language would that be a good fit versus being a shoreline stabilization?
 - Zach - Yes, could be advanced under either, think we'd move forward in a way that aligns with efforts being advanced to get this done sooner rather than later
 - Paul Machajewski brought up fleeting/spudding/mooring, anything NESP could do
 - Zach - We have not talked fleeting, will bring it up at next meeting

Section 204 / 1122 (Zach Kimmel)

- Pigs Eye 204 - Nate Campbell is PM, also Continuing Authorities Program manager
 - Contract was awarded to LS Marine in late June for \$14.6M
 - Non-federal sponsor is Ramsey County
 - They just put in for more CPLP money
 - Construction starts next year, complete by OCT 2024
 - Waiting on work-plan
 - Had partner kick-off meeting, will reengage after workplan
 - Fisheries restrictions until June 15th- don't know what contractor's timeline is
 - Jack Gleason (MN DNR) - Reminder that the permit the Corps requested doesn't include any barge access
 - If work plan includes excavation in Pigs Eye Lake, permit will require review
 - Zach - Contract was solicited that way, without access dredging
 - Suspect it will be hydraulic placement
- 1122 Pierce County Islands
 - MAJ Nick Vottero PM & Tom Novak PT as annuitant
 - Pre- District Quality Control review right now
 - In September had design phase kickoff
 - Aiming for final set of specs in June
 - Advertise in July, award in September
 - Construction timeline 3 years, will be Sept 2026 before it's complete

- Tim Yager noted Jim Fischer deserves congratulations for getting the Project Partnership Agreement signed
- Jim Fischer - Appreciate that
 - WI DNR Legal initially thought it was impossible, but we worked through it
- Zach added an additional plug for Section 204 / 1122 projects
 - Very happy our project was selected
 - If there's opportunity, please let him know, always looking for new ideas/projects

Beneficial Use Work Group Activities (Zach Kimmel)

- Held BUWG kickoff meeting on 4/14 – great turnout
- Have an 85% of the BUWG charter drafted, will have one charter that will span both districts
- Next WG meeting will be held on 12/16
 - Topics include Regional Sediment Management, including the approved St. Paul District proposal; Engineering With Nature; Hydro-Geomorphology of the River System
 - We initially intended to have a WRDA Sec 125 IG update, however, we're going to defer that update to the next meeting; HQ is still working through IG for Sec 125(a) specifically
- Reach out to Zach if you'd like to be added to the BUWG distribution list and/or if you're interested in participating in our next WG meeting on 12/16
- Steve Tapp mentioned he was glad to see the group stood up before leaving, noting beneficial use will be a big deal going forward

Upper Saint Anthony Falls Disposition Study (Kristin Moe)

- Purpose
 - Is there a federal interested in owning and operating USAF L/D?
- Timeline
 - June 2015 - closed to Navigation
 - Study started 2018
 - Late 2020 - draft report completed
 - Dec 2020 Water Resources Development Act of 2020 signed and authorized conveyance of land to the City of Minneapolis
- Alternatives considered
 - Recommended - 1A – Full Disposal, offering a monetary incentive to the new owner to agree to a direct transfer
- Draft report on hold, waiting on City of Minneapolis to submit proposal for conveyance
 - Once that happens, draft report will be updated with specific land tracts

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Tapp, DeVaney, Machajewski)

- Steve Tapp – Overview
 - Overall channel conditions are good, some challenges at Head of Lake Pepin
 - Underwent Programmatic Value Engineering Study with MVR, MVS
 - Tonnage as mentioned before, is down
 - Pleasantly surprised for Navigation funding
 - Big increase to L/Ds
 - Hoping to not go through the whole year under continuing resolutions
 - Expenditures for 2021 came in around \$21M
 - Closer to average

- Increasing trend lines for all expenditures
 - Quantity, dredging, and dredged material management
 - Reflect change in focus towards DMM
 - Costs per cubic yard are relatively flat on 20 year
 - 10 year has been increasing
 - Unloading is factored in there as well
 - Long transport cost drives them up
 - Still working on addressing concerns raised in 2014 season, taking it seriously
 - Trying to reach out more than we do now to find partnerships for bene use of material
 - Channel Maintenance Management Plan refresh, Tom Novak PM
 - Evaluating the document and what to change, not as far along as hoped
 - Hope to share more in April meeting
 - Jim Fischer - Wondering if it's possible to use predicted discharge (climate driven) to predict dredging costs
 - Steve - Believe Jon Hendrickson has gone through some of that data, we can ask him for next RRF
 - Jim - Could be useful for data driven recommendations for budget proposals
 - Sara Strassman - With the CMMP being updated, any ability for PM or team to have check-in meeting with Agencies before April RRF?
 - Steve said he'd touch base with Bob Edstrom, will be handing things off.
- Channel Conditions – Dano DeVaney for Dan Cottrell
 - 20-year average dredging is ~970K cy annually
 - 4/12 - HREP mechanical contract plant kicked off channel dredging at McMillan in Pool 10; 4/19 CM2 at Pine Ben; 4/21 CM1 at Beef Slough; 5/4 GZ at Crats Island
 - 2022 planned CM activities - Pool 3 and Upper Pool 4 CMS; continue environmental review for dredging area below HOL Pepin
 - Rylee asked to expand on dredging at HOL Pepin; Dano mentioned that we have four existing cuts at HOL Pepin, and we were able to clean things up within two of the cuts, however, need additional NEPA for the remaining two
 - Asked about capacity at Red Wing Commercial Harbor, Dano said roughly 20k cy
 - Material placed from HOL Pepin will be used beneficially in Red Wing as part of a building demo
 - Rylee asked about contaminants - Dano said all sampled and everything came back clean
 - Would like to explore a proposal from industry to restore a set of wing dams in a specific reach to regain efficiency,
 - Paul Machajewski thought maybe this was below Red Wing bridge
 - Greg Genz - will be important to include the City of Red Wing in future discussions as they've had discussion at the Red Wing Commercial Harbor with regard to bridge updates
 - Placement Site Actions – Dano DeVaney
 - Fisher Island Stabilization - construction likely next year using M&R
 - Dakota Island - partial unload to Trempealeau site, ~50k cy
 - P2 DMMP Implementation - several offers to acquire land in Pool 2 which have all been declined, PDT is exhausting all non-fee acquisition options
 - Team is meeting weekly
 - Pool 2 O&M Island - still on hold as of right now
 - Cricket Frog listing devices have been picked up, still being analyzed by independent contractor
 - USACE awaiting permit from MDNR

- Likely another BCOES review of this project as it's been beyond six months
- Pool 3 Sturgeon Lake Island Erosion – Tribal Partnership Program
 - Beneficial Use of 11k cy of material to enhance the shoreline of the existing island
- Brownsville - over 190k cy of granular removed by Gerke Excavating for elevating River District project in La Crosse above floodplain
- Blackhawk Bridge will be replaced
 - Will impact Lansing Hwy Bridge bene use momentarily
 - Tim Yager - worked on project until Kendra arrived, will be shifting the bridge alignment to the north which will require 5.5-6 acres of additional floodplain forest; will be working with IA DOT and WisDOT to put together a mitigation plan
 - Moving to the north will create a little bit of additional space for the Big Slough Parking lot and possibly the placement site (IA DOT signed the FONSI recently)
 - Believe construction is around 2023 timeframe
- Long Term Planning – Paul Machajewski
 - Site development pool 5
 - Internal corps team still working on Rolling Prairie site development
 - Plan was to share with OSIT before the end of year
 - Will be early 2022 instead
 - Planning on wetland restoration
 - Site plan for first 10-acre placement
 - DMMPs
 - Pool 4
 - Pursuing a Section 217 agreement
 - DMMP site selection moving forward parallel to 217
 - Tiered approach
 - Material may end up going to Rolling Prairie
 - Hope to have draft DMMO out for agency review ~ Feb; 2 weeks prior to going public
 - NEPA completed March/April
 - Sara Strassman mentioned she'd been working with Chuck Thieling (ERDC) to get past WI's solid waste requirements
 - Moving toward an option for the river sand once material has been tested
 - Pool 6
 - Homer unload
 - 8 November through next week (Dec 15th)
 - Still working on site improvements for RR crossing
 - DMMP schedule is a little behind from hopes
 - Internal reviews this winter
 - Pool 9
 - Hoping Genoa power plant will be part of our solution
 - Actively pursuing locations in upper Pool 9
 - Submitted Statement of Need for bedload sediment collector application study
 - Pool 10
 - Frenchman's Campground
 - Looking for some fill on North and South properties
 - Had discussions on wetland impacts
 - May be some options under Continuing Authorities Program
 - Comes with cost-share, so staying cognizant of that

- Wisconsin and Iowa pit inventories
 - Still looking at possibilities to aid reclamation
- Sara Strassman - Should FWVG see these bedload collector proposals?
 - Due-out

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

- Future Topics
 - The usual
 - Try to get USCG Aux again for April
 - WRDA 2020 update
 - USAF Disposition Study
 - Sara asked if someone could speak on OSE calculations (other social effects) as part of cost-benefit analysis; Steve Tapp said we could try to find someone to look into this
 - Industry update to be potentially included at each of the RRF meetings
 - Lee will plan on providing an update at the April meeting
 - Potential to update org charts for each of the respective agencies
 - Include the update as part of agency activities (updated org charts)
 - Jon Hendrickson – speak about predicted discharge data at next RRF
- Due-Outs from this RRF
 - NWG - tasked with looking into permitting situation that took place in Bellevue when JFB was spudded down outside the channel, how do we move forward?
 - Agencies - provide updated org charts with agency activities for April RRF mtg
 - FWVG - to discuss bedload collector / bypass issues
 - Dano - reach out to IA DOT on specs for the Blackhawk Bridge replacement and need for material

Robert Stanick for Steve Tapp,
Co-Chairman, RRF