

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #91, August 23-24, 2011

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #90 were approved
- Next Forum: December 6-7, location to be determined

Agency Activities- MnDOT (Dick Lambert)

- 9% of staff retired by June 30th, currently uncertain of the replacement plan
- DOT's have been primarily focused on roadways, strategic initiative is underway to greater include consideration of waterways
- Bridge work has been extremely limited due to high water

Agency Activities- MPCA (Judy Mader)

- General fund took a hit, but it wasn't a huge part of the overall budget
 - Organization wasn't affected as much
- Underwent a three week shutdown

Agency Activities- USCG (Brian Zekus)

- Captain Byron Black replaced Hudson July 14th, 2011
- MSD office increased from 12 reserves to 20
- Next year there should be three full boat crews
- Captain Black has a maritime exercise on 9/27
- Marine casualties average at 30 per year, 2007-2009 (allisions, groundings, break-aways, injuries)
 - Last year there were 54
 - This year there are currently 55, 27 of which are groundings (5 more groundings relative to this time last year)
 - There have been 24 river closures thus far due to casualties

Agency Activities- LMRWD (Terry Schwalbe)

- First time since 12/15 there is a full board of managers- took Dakota County six months to find someone
- Excel is planning on repowering Black Dog Power Plant, tentatively scheduled to be completed 2016
 - Road access will provide the difficulty in completion

- Carver tressel to be removed by November 2011, high water caused a failure in the tressel

Agency Activities- UMWA (Greg Genz)

- Lock 3- has been a difficult year for everyone- 24th week of not being able to work
 - Lower embankment work and navigation improvement possibly starting this week- material from Corps Island will be used to finish the embankment
 - Lower embankment project currently has an estimated completion of January 2012- will be extended as work has been set back due to high water
 - Tom Novak commented that the lower embankment project schedule has shifted to January 2013
 - Pilots that know how to make the lock haven't had any problems

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- As of last Thursday (August 18th), WDNR is on a two year trial as an enterprise agency
 - Meant to provide the WDNR flexibility in fleet management and hiring
 - The change will require the agency to uphold to certain performance measures
 - For example, reducing overall expenditures this year and next by 2.5%
- Lost 1,000 people since 1995 (roughly 1/3 of their employees) state wide
- Organizational structure has changed to four districts that are straight line reporting to Madison
 - Mississippi River staff as part of the Western District report up through specialty
- Working on hydro-power review, deadline for response is 9/7

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- High water has been the biggest influence- there has been significant flooding in four of the five major river basins within the District
 - We have had 85 people deployed- depleted resources for planning and engineering throughout the district
- The LUAP has been completed- hard copies are available as well as electronic downloads through the web
- A news release has been put out on using the stingless wasp as a means to control the emerald ash borer
- River Works Discovery- educational outreach effort of National River Hall of Fame in Dubuque
 - Meant to teach about commerce, culture, and conservation
 - RRF supports approaching the outreach group to present to the forum
- Randy Urich is officially the Environmental Stewardship section supervisor
- Kevin Berg is the Mississippi River and Eau Galle supervisor

- Dan Krumholz is officially retired as of 8/17/2011
- There have been issues with swallow nesting throughout several designated placement sites- this can hinder both placement and beneficial use
- Paper navigation charts are at printing this week

Agency Activities- USFWS (Phil Delphey)

- Tim Yager replaced Rick Frietsche, as Rick retired
- Anticipating three new listed endangered species
 - Snuffbox- November listing, effective December
 - The spectaclecase and sheepnose listing rule has been delayed- planned publication date in the Federal Register is mid-April; listings typically go into effect 30 days after publication, so these two species would effectively be listed in mid-May
- Pre-DEIS for CapX2020 was drafted by USDA - Rural Utility Service (the lead federal agency involved with this project); FWS is a Cooperating Agency
- Spending a lot of time on hydro-power review for pre-application (due 9/7) and reviewing mussel studies

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Increased invasive species patrol- new staff working at boat landings with additional authorities provided to prevent the spread of invasives
- Possibility of implementing a barrier at the mouth of the St. Croix
- Tim Schlagenhaft is the designated POC for Asian Carp questions
- Dan Dieterman is still fulfilling the role of being the POC for RRF related issues and the MDNR voting member, this is foreseen to be a temporary role
- Dredge pipe is being stored by LW Matteson in lower pool 4, Bill Huber sent a memo for Matteson to remove the pipe by the end of August
 - Was left there after the Teepeeota Island unloading completed in November 2008

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- Passed boating while intoxicated law to match the motor vehicle requirement for alcohol content of .08
- Flooding in Dubuque due to 14” of rain in two hours
- New director and assistant director have been appointed
 - Went throughout legislative session without voting for or against any bills
- Mike Griffin is still the RRF representative

Navigation Workgroup Activities (Paul Machajewski / Dick Lambert)

- Mooring buoy below lock & dam 8- pilots recommended to move upstream ~1500’

- Been used ~5 times per year since its been in place the past two years
- To be replaced by a permanent cell- when the cell design is finalized the NWG will distribute to the RRF
- After the buoy is replaced the NWG will discuss with industry the best location for the buoy- most likely below Lock & Dam 7
- Bridge construction has been set back significantly due to the high water and contractors schedules
- Winona Bridge- MnDOT is pushing for bridge rehabilitation vs. bridge replacement
- Construction of the I-90 bridge forecasted to begin in 2012
 - Looking for 100,000 cubic yards of fill for the construction
 - An estimated 24 hour main channel closure will be needed for construction as well as a 48 hour closure in the east channel
 - Jim Fischer commented on the WDNR's preference in using barges instead of developing a haul road throughout bridge construction
 - Paul confirmed this is the preferred method
- Lansing highway bridge remains closed to date for inspection
- NWG is going to look into invasive species in the future, specifically the Asian Carp issue
 - Potential navigation impacts by invasive species control
 - Greg Genz stated that he supports stopping the spread of invasive species, but not at the cost of impacts to navigation- we need to find a way to stop the spread of invasives in Iowa
- Head of Pepin- need to determine what to do with contaminated material in the navigation channel
- Updating bridge profile data on the USCG light list- will discuss in the future

Recreation Workgroup Activities (Kevin Berg)

- Wrapping up the EA for beach planning efforts in pools 9 and 10
- Next RWG meeting to be held most likely as an OSIT meeting in pool 9- likely to be mid September or early October
- Receiving local pressure to update beach plans in pools 7 and 8
 - Lake Onalaska group is adding some additional pressure
 - Likely to lean on UWL and other resources to go forward with the planning in 2012
- Will try to do environmental work on a number of pools rather than one at a time
- Jim Fischer stated that locals are very happy that Crater Island is open again
- Need to go forward with recreational boating data, though it hasn't been a priority since the previous RWG

- Addressed the possibility of having another RRF agency provide a RWG chair representative

Recap of yesterday (Tapp / Fisher)

- Decision made to add Asian Carp to the December agenda

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Channels & Harbors)

- Goetz started off with limited equipment, lack of pipe and couldn't break for tows
 - This limited us to only dredge the left descending bank of the navigation channel
 - Digging to 11' in a lot of locations due to the various dredging needs and time constraints
- Dredge Dubuque was brought on this year to help with channel problems
 - There have been some struggles with equipment and operators
- Government mechanical crew could possibly be used at the St. Paul Small Boat Harbor for snag removal
 - We would like to keep this plant available for the rest of the year as they're the most flexible in the event of a dredging need
- Contract mechanical plants (1 and 2) have been dredging since May
 - Plant 1 has completed emergency dredging twice so far
 - Both plants will likely be dredging through October and into November
- Black Dog Power Plant- looking for upwards of 600,000 cubic yards of material
 - There is potential for dredge material to be utilized
- Boulanger Slough Channel Realignment- overall there is good agency support
 - Need to complete additional hydraulic analyses to determine where the material will settle if not pool 2
 - Tentatively there is a public informational meeting scheduled for 9/28
 - Seeking an RRF endorsement at the December 2012 forum
- Lower Pool 4 DMMP- still looking to acquire property for dredge material placement
 - Considering the Rose-Peterson property- ~350 acres being evaluated
- Reads Landing contract was advertised on August 9th
 - Estimated to cost \$4-5 million, anticipated to be awarded before the end of FY11
- Fisher Island- near the end of the excavation- completion date set for the end of November
 - Waiting on a bid for the removal of additional ~85,000 cubic yards
- Excavation schedule: Reads Landing- FY12, McMillan- FY12 (potentially), Pool 2 Sites- FY13, Lost Island- FY14

Environmental Management Program (Tom Novak)

- Excess funds of \$300,000 remain from the Pool 8 Islands- will be given back to Division as ARRA funds can't be re-programmed
- Capoli Slough- went on the street August 5th, the tentative bid opening is anticipated September 6th
 - Project will likely consume the remainder of the FY11 budget, the FY12 budget, and FY13 budget
 - Endorsement- Jim Fischer motioned, Phil Delphey seconded, yes votes were received from all agencies aside from EPA and NRCS (whom didn't vote)
 - FWS had a caveat of a section 7 review
 - Hope to award Capoli in September- if not funds will likely be removed/withdrawn
- North and Sturgeon Lakes- Tom Novak will be the POC for these projects, will determine who to assign the project to
- \$3.5 million dollars is available to be utilized over the next three years
- Dubuque, IA- EMPCC 25th anniversary September 28-29
 - 100,000 acre milestone
 - Rock Island is coordinating the celebration
- It was determined that when endorsements are done via email, if agencies do not reply by the suspense date with a vote (for, against, or request for more time), they will be considered as abstaining from voting

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Elliott Stefanik)

- There is a teleconference the beginning of June on Asian Carp activities- specific to the twin cities
- RRF determined that the FWWG should hold the responsibility of keeping tabs on the Asian Carp status going forward
 - Recommended to address breeding populations of Asian Carp and their locations
 - Specifics on location and population with a confirmation are needed, not a generic overview
 - RRF agreed to have someone address the Asian Carp issue at the next meeting as a separate agenda item
 - Dan Dieterman questioned if part of the action plan tied to changing recreational/commercial fishing regulations is appropriate for the FWWG
- Determined a priority list for HREP was not needed as we have enough projects on the list

Water Level Management Task Force Activities (Mary Stefanski)

- There will likely be a meeting in September to discuss going forward with the pool 3 drawdown

- Ruth Nissen has been updating pool 5, 6, and 8 reports
- Photo points were completed in pool 3,5,6, and 8
- Lower Mississippi River Habitat Partnership requested \$1 million for the pool 3 drawdown
 - Nature Conservancy and the Fish and Wildlife Foundation are funneling corporate sponsors to focus on pool 3
 - Jim Fischer suggested that the WLMTF consider developing and publishing criteria to identify when a drawdown might be triggered to help answer such questions
 - Mary proposed that a write-up be completed to support that position
- WLMTF agreed to list criteria that would trigger the need for a drawdown, to better support the endeavor

Hydro-Power Permits (All)

- Comments due to FERC by September 7th – Free Flow Power
 - WDNR- draft comments are coming together at the moment, review coordination will come out of Madison
 - FWS is drafting comments at the moment
 - Agencies agreed to share drafts before they file official letters as comments
- Symbiotics is proposing for the use of lock & dam 8 for hydro-power
- There will likely be an update from Kristen Michelson (UMRBA) at the December forum
 - Keep as an agenda item for the December forum

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF