

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #97, August 20-21, 2013

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #96 were approved
- Next RRF meeting: December 3-4, St. Paul, MN

Agency Activities- FWS (Tim Yager)

- Brian Pember took a position in Louisiana, currently there isn't a plan to backfill his position
- Cindy Samples has been out of the office since mid-June, she is doing very well
- Anticipating significant decline in the FY14 budget
- Have been working on the habitat management plan for several months
 - Current phase, focal resources of concern
 - Tim agreed to distribute a timeline for the habitat management plan to the RRF
- Lacrosse Office at Old Lester Avenue building is likely reorganizing into a tech center
 - eDNA lab and Fisheries will be in the building

Agency Activities- FWS (Tony Sullins)

- Anticipating listing of the Eastern Small-Footed Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat
 - White-Nose Syndrome has impacted their populations
- Tony is now the Regional Threatened and Endangered Species Chief
 - His office is currently at half strength
- Pete Fasbender is the WI/MN Field Supervisor and the new voting representative for the FWS on the RRF
- Stressed the importance of the River Resources Forum, stated that the leadership within the organization is phenomenal
 - Identified the forum as a high functioning and very important group

Agency Activities- LMRWD (Terry Schwalbe)

- Trying to come to an agreement with LS Marine on a contract for management of the Cargill East River placement site
 - Attorney involvement has slowed the process a bit and made things a little more extensive
- This will be Terry's last RRF meeting
 - Management plans to hire a consultant to replace Terry's position

Agency Activities- IWLA (Olivia Dorothy)

- Report with the Nicollet Island Coalition is now out

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Dan has been working on elevating the importance of the RRF to management
 - Recommended that the RRF sends a letter to MDNR requesting management involvement
- Nick Fronhauer (replacement for Tim Schlagenhaft) is getting up to speed on Asian Carp issues
- About half of Corey Hanson's time is available for work on the river
- MN has money to enter into an agreement with the COE on Hrep for North and Sturgeon Lakes

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- After three major floods, it now seems the bottoms has dropped out of the river
- There was another record flood on the Iowa River
- Capoli Slough held up well throughout flood conditions

Agency Activities- Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance (Rylee Main)

- No major updates, currently working on obtaining sources for funding

Agency Activities- Public Member (Bill Howe)

- Was on the original task force for the Lock and Dam 3 Project
 - 8 new species of minnows in a 48 hour window
- Believes we shouldn't stop the Lock and Dam 3 Project without a fish passage
- Feels we need to look at the migration patterns of fish

Agency Activities- WDOT (Sheri Walz)

- New budget was approved on 7/1/2013, all funding will be applied toward the improvement of waterborne shipping
 - \$5.5 million in Mississippi River and Great Lakes funds available through FY15
 - Can be utilized for a 80/20 cost share or a 50/50 cost share on COE funded projects
- Also working on marine highway designation- benefit would be U.S. DOT could then provide funding

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- Submitted prospectus to MVP for mitigation bank- it is currently out for public review
- FRAC mining has grown from 5 mines/processing plants in 2010 to 115 presently
- Governments budget included a walleye initiative- \$10 million in funding

- Expanded statewide integrated sediment team
- John Sullivan- light water monitoring at Lock and Dam 8/9
 - Well over 1.35 meters, which is the recommended visibility for growing aquatic vegetation
 - Plans to retire in the near future after 35 years of service
 - Currently plan to fill his position next April
- 32 vacant positions were cut statewide
- Dave Pericak took on a new position away from the river, Carrie Olson is filling his shoes as the UMR POC
- Sara Strassman was hired as the Mississippi River Planner

Agency Activities- WDNR (Sara Strassman)

- Updating the wildlife action plan in 2015
- I-90 state line debate may require supreme court ruling
- Issued a news release warning people of toxins that can be produced by blue/green algae, informing them of the dangers of swimming near areas exposed to blue/green algae

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- Col. Koprowski is on board as of June- currently plans to attend the December RRF
- MV Mississippi came through the District- attended the public hearing in Lacrosse
 - Friends of Pool 9 and Dresbach landowner spoke in regards to encouraging beach nourishment
- Civil Works had an exemption from furlough, though budgets were impacted
- Level of service study for the upper three locks is ongoing
- Winter maintenance is scheduled for Lock and Dam 8 this year
- Bid opening for the Lock and Dam 8/9 embankment contracts anticipated in late September
 - Construction completion estimated to be 2014
- Lock and Dam 5A had major gate damage earlier this season- an estimated \$1.4 million in damages
- Steve Tapp agreed to look into the limited liability for tows that have allusions with locks
- Jim Fischer commented that there may have been a lost opportunity for Upper Pool 9 placement tied to the Lock and Dam 8 embankment
 - Jon Hendrickson commented that it's difficult to justify beneficial use of dredged material as we did with the Lock and Dam 4 embankment as it's not as economical (cost of rock is cheaper than berm), but it's good to keep on the table for the future

Navigation Work Group (Paul Machajewski)

- Handout pertaining to bridge updates

WRDA Update (Olivia Dorothy)

- Izaak Walton League released a report on WRDA and the opportunity for restoration on the Mississippi River last week
 - Taking the report to Washington D.C. on 9/18
- Inland Waterways trust doesn't fund operations and maintenance though every other waterways trust fund does
 - IWW users board believes the fuel tax needs to be increased to 50 cents per gallon
 - Trust fund averages \$83.6 million in revenues and \$107.7 million in expenditures, not sustainable over the long term
- Current shortfalls in WRDA: need to account for realistic budget situations, need to account for operations and maintenance, need to account for decommissioning
- Conclusion: subsidies are harmful to the environment and unfair to taxpayers, restoration programs are underfunded, COE planning process is outdated

Fish & Wildlife Work Group (Elliott Stefanik)

- Held a meeting on 8/1/2013
- Discussed the use of sand for habitat purposes
- Hrep prioritization- Tom Novak thought that it would be beneficial to select the next Hrep project for planning
 - Distributed Hrep project matrix and discussed prioritization
- Steve Tapp mentioned the potential of using the dredge Goetz on EMP and/or Hrep efforts
 - WDNR would need to adjust MOU to reflect this
- Mary Stefanski stated that there is possibly funding available for Pelican work
 - Proposed island (sand) placement with channel material
 - No capping with fines needed, no stabilization effort, just placement of sand on a base to 2-3' above low control pool
- MDNR stated that there is too much emphasis on stabilization as opposed to attempting to do something more natural
- Programmatic EA discussion should be added to the December RRF agenda

Recreation Work Group (Tim Yager)

- Half of the Pool 7 beach OSIT meetings have been completed
- The second half of the Pool 7 meetings will take place Thursday, 8/22/2013
- Tim Yager is working on a programmatic EA for the beach management plans for Pool 4 through Pool 10
 - This encompasses seven possible actions on a given beach ranging from no action to beach nourishment
 - Steve Tapp commented that it would be nice to include Pools 2 and 3 in the plan as well
- Recommended a plan with at least 3-4 possible alternatives

Water Level Management Task Force (Mary Stefanski)

- Projected drawdown for Pool 3 is now 2016
- Synthesis paper is currently out for review
- A pool-wide shallow shore survey was completed for mussels in Pool 3
- A stakeholder tour took place throughout Pool 3 on 6/18/2013
- Photo points are ongoing- Brenda Kelly and Dan Dieterman are working on Pool 3, Mary's office is working on Pool 6
 - Brenda Kelly already completed photo points for Pool 8
 - WLMTF OSIT to look at Pool 3 will take place on 8/27/2013, with a follow up meeting anticipated in the September/October timeframe

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Channels & Harbors)

- \$3 million we thought Division was going to take away remained within the District
- MVD has been requiring requests for all dredging this season
- MVR funds for the dredge Goetz were really tight until recently
 - Came up with an additional \$1.5 million to fund the dredge Goetz throughout FY13
- Very unusual year as far as flows, three significant spikes in water came through
- Diamond Bluff and Head of Raft Channel are two critical areas that require dredging
- Jon Hendrickson will look into flows at LSAF lock after hydropower turbine in auxiliary chamber was installed
 - Per Lee Nelson 20-25% of the tows that pass through the LSAF lock go aground
- Rich King presented the question of using material from the Lansing Island placement site for forest restoration and recreational enhancement purposes
 - Friends of Pool 9 has agreed to partnering and funding equipment, providing volunteers, etc.
- Currently working with Superior Sands to develop a road through the Wabasha Gravel Pit placement site
- Grand Encampment excavation is currently scheduled for bid opening on 9/6
 - Potential to use material for FRAC purposes has decreased
 - Extended completion timeframe from November 2014 to November 2015
- New site developments needed in the Minnesota River, Pool 6, and Upper Pool 9
- Schedule of excavations:
 - Grand Encampment, Crats Island, Lost Island, Lower Pool 2 Sites, McMillan Island
- Completed a lot of site visits this season to monitor sites for bank swallow nesting, etc.
- Removed 30,000 cubic yards of material from Pine Bend, material went to Grey Cloud Island
- Site Stabilizations- Fountain City 1 site stabilization is an RRF priority, however, funding isn't available so the efforts have been delayed due to funding
- Pool 6 placement issues- worked with the Winona Port Authority, City of Winona, CD Corp and several users to enable placement throughout the dredging season

- Paul Machajewski plans to schedule an OSIT meeting in the fall to discuss additional placement site locations for material in Pool 6
- Ames Construction is removing ~250,000 cubic yards of material from Dakota Island (as long as it continues to meet project specifications) for use at the I-90 / Dresbach Interchange Project

Pool 2 CMS- Boulanger Bend to Lock and Dam 2 (Paul Machajewski)

- Preliminary draft was distributed to the partners the end of April
- Schedule:
 - September- distribute the final report to the partners
 - November- hold a public meeting
 - December- possible RRF endorsement
 - More likely via email or at the April RRF
- FY14 funding looks favorable, potential to award a contract
 - Project costs estimated between \$10-12 million
- Paul agreed to distribute the preliminary report to RRF members that hadn't received it upon request

Environmental Management Program (Tom Novak)

- FY14 Presidents Budget is ~\$32 million, would double the MVP budget for EMP taking it to ~\$7 million
 - Projecting robust EMP budget from FY14-16
- Construction:
 - Capoli Slough Islands Stage 1- 85% complete as of July, constructing 8 islands
 - Capoli Slough Islands Stage 2- 30% complete as of July, constructing 5 islands
- Planning:
 - Harpers Slough- wrapping up final report appendices, seeking RRF endorsement at the April forum
 - Lock and Dam 3 Fish Passage- looking into the use of EMP funds to finish the report
 - Tom seeking MVD consensus to finish report and obtain funding to do so
 - Since the project was initiated under EMP, prefer to finish under EMP funds
 - North and Sturgeon Lakes- trying to get a team together for the Hrep component
 - Land ownership, real estate issues, and local sponsorship issues continue
- Planning and implementation matrix schedule
 - Harpers, North/Sturgeon Lakes, Conway Lake, Pool 10 Islands, McGregor Lake, Weaver Bottoms, Lake Winneshiek, Bass Lake Ponds, Clear Lake, Lock and Dam 3 Fish Passage
- FWWG meeting will cover prioritizing EMP in November

Lock and Dam 3 Final Update (Tom Novak)

- Contractor's last payment is being disbursed
- Project is complete, seeding and planting is finished

Agency Update on Asian Carp (All)

- WDNR (Jim Fischer)
 - One Asian Carp was reported in Pool 10 this summer from a commercial fisherman
 - Banned the harvest of bait fish from the Mississippi River and its tributaries
 - Issued a permit to the Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center to enable Asian Carp Research
- IDNR (Mike Griffin)
 - On 7/1/2013 a rule was enacted to drain the livewell prior to leaving a body of water and drain the boat before leaving the water
 - All bait has to be disposed of on land, not in the water
 - Fish have been found in most tributaries of the Mississippi River
 - Fish have worked into the Iowa Great Lakes- MN helped out with placement of an electric barrier
- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)
 - Nick Fronhauer is the new Asian Carp coordinator for MDNR
 - Working on new Asian Carp capture protocol
 - Two weeks ago a Silver Carp was confirmed at Lock and Dam 5
- IWLA (Olivia Dorothy)
 - Lobbying for the closure of USAF lock
 - Lobbying in support of senate WRDA bill that would put the FWS in charge of invasive species response, including Asian Carp
- COE (Elliott Stefanik)
 - Reviewing barrier to Lock and Dam 1 sometime in September
 - 95% design submittal is scheduled to go out in the spring of 2014

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF