

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #99, April 22, 2014

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #98 were distributed 18 April 2014. Comments are to be provided to Zach by 31 May 2014 and minutes will be provided for endorsement at the next RRF meeting. Tim Yager had one comment that the FWS received a petition to list the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act and the service is still researching whether listing is warranted
- Next RRF meetings: August 19-20, 2014, two options: Wabasha/Grand Encampment site visit; Prairie du Chien/ Capoli Slough site visit; December 2-3, 2014, St. Paul, MN

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- The first tow of the season went through Lake Pepin on 16 April and no ice was present
- The Minneapolis locks were closed due to high water and reopened on 21 April
- A good video about the Miss. Headwaters (Harnessing The Headwaters -- First Dams on the Mississippi) is available on the St Paul District website
- Paul Kosterman retired so his project manager work has been redistributed
- Al Van Guilder is preparing to deploy to Afghanistan and Dan Cottrell will take over Al's duties, Zach Kimmel will take over for Dan, and Kurt Brownell will be assigned many of Zach's duties during the deployment

Agency Activities- FWS (Tim Yager)

- Clyde Male retired on 3 April and Connie Rose has been detailed into his position for 30 days
- Nancy Abbott left La Crosse and it is hoped to refill her position
- Tim is working on the habitat management plan with J.F. New and he will hopefully complete it soon. This is a step down from the CCP
 - Will share objectives with partners and meet in May to fine tune
- The Winona District is still working on the Weaver bottoms railroad oil spill that occurred in early February and there are lots of booms and pads
- Kevin Forester's job is currently being advertised

Agency Activities- MnDOT (Dick Lambert)

- The final report for the Ports and Waterways should be completed in the next month or two
- Patrick Phenow is transitioning into Dick's position

Agency Activities- MDNR (Kevin Stauffer)

- They are trying to revitalize the Mississippi R. team and get more people involved. Bill Huber is taking over Corey Hanson's duties on this team

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- The results of CWD sampling from last year's hunt confirmed a positive near Harper's Ferry (Pool 9). In IA counties adjacent to CWD areas 500 deer per county were sampled. This gives a 99% chance of finding a 1% infection rate

Agency Activities-EPA (Larry Shepard)

- Working with St Louis District on a supplemental EIS regarding training structures
- Working with Kansas City District on bed loss issues in the Kansas River and Missouri R.
- Kansas City District will do EIS, not EA to address commercial sand and gravel dredging on the Kansas River
- The final EIS was completed for the Keystone pipeline but deadlines have been pushed back due to State Department political issues
- Ken Westlake reported that there is no likely action from the GLMRIS report, but a third permanent barrier is being worked on in the Lockport/Joliet area and berms were called out for the Maumee/Wabash basin

Agency Activities- Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance (Rylee Main)

- Looking at both L. Pepin as well as upstream issues
 - Student starting in May to do MN R. sediment modeling
- Had a meeting to discuss strategies for upper L. Pepin restoration
 - LPLA/Audubon to take the lead on the project and ID options
 - Hope to have a PAR by the next RRF

Agency Activities- IWLA (Olivia Dorothy)

- There will be a Mississippi R. conference with 1/2 of the Mayors from river towns on 15-17 October 2014 in Moline, IL. It is open to the public
 - Contact Olivia to submit a poster or presentation for the conference
- IWLA is partnering with Oar Northwest for rowing the Miss. each fall
 - Will also incorporate education dissemination as part of the event
 - Will launch this year from Lake Itasca

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- Ken Johnson (Water Division Administrator) will retire in May and Russ Rasmussen (current Deputy) has been appointed as new DA
- John Sullivan has retired and they are trying to fill his position by the end of June
- Cale Severson filled John Nelson's old position
- Brenda Kelly has been detailed to the FWS in Montana until the end of May

- A request was put in for two LTEs but there is presently no funding
- Continuing to work with UMRBA on a clean water monitoring strategy and trying to kick-off a pilot study
- MN and WI have a spill response agreement to share contractors
- WI hosted the March 2014 UMRCC meeting in La Crosse
- FRAC sand is very high profile in WI
- There are lots of Confined Animal Feeding Operation applications in the central sands region of WI and increased requests for high-capacity wells
- Sara is helping incorporate the UMRBA water quality monitoring plan into the DNR statewide monitoring plan
- Jim asked that the RRF minutes format be changed in some way to highlight action items
 - Steve Tapp admitted that he dropped the ball on that item and that an attempt will be made to get due-outs to the group soon after the meeting

Agency Activities- UMWA (Greg Genz)

- LD26 is down to just the small chamber
- The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District is working on a formal agreement with a site manager for the Cargill site
- USAF will close within one year of passing of WRDA with present language in the bill
- The Pool 2 channel maintenance study needs to move forward as the restrictions on tow size are having impacts

Navigation Work Group (Dan Cottrell) Handout on bridges

- Haven't met in several years
- The Winona bridge is moving quickly, hopefully this summer. Dan showed the bridge video. Properties are being acquired and maybe early construction work will begin using a design-build process
- A letter was sent last fall to *MnDOT* requesting that they remove sediment caused by the Hastings bridge construction
 - This has been addressed as well as remnants of old piers and the area will be surveyed week ending 2 May
- Greg Genz pointed out that there is a RR bridge on the MN River near Savage that needs work
- The Corps will follow-up with MnDOT to see if more beneficial use can be promoted for their projects
 - Jim Fischer will contact WisDOT
 - Greg Genz mentioned that most of the material in the Metro area is quarried and not from the river, so more education is needed there
- Sara Strassman stated that as part of the I-90 bridge work there will be recreational boat access issues on a slough east of the main channel. This will be blocked by a trestle that will be left open when not being used

Recreation Work Group (Tim Yager)

- The team has drafted beach plans for pools 7 and 8
 - A public meeting was held in late December 2013 and there was good feedback
 - Kendra Niemec is working on the final recommendations
 - Tim has transferred the duties of finalizing the plans and EA to Laurel Calrude (sp?)
 - The timeline has been pushed back a bit due to shifting roles
 - The RRF would like to see pools 1-4 included in the EA
 - The EA will be a partnership document (FWS/COE) to ensure the EA meets both agencies' needs

Flexible Uses of Dredged Material (All)

- The FWWG was going to look at what show stoppers might be for this and what planning process we would need to do to more efficiently use materials. An example is the proposed Mosquito Island work in Pool 6.
 - Elliott Stefanik stated that there has not been a meeting of the FWWG since the last RRF but he intends to lead discussion of big picture permit issues such as flood impacts at the upcoming meeting
 - The FWWG will report out on this at the next RRF
- Steve Clark commented that producing a programmatic EA for this should be struck from the agenda. A programmatic EA is neither the problem nor a solution. It is very ambitious to attempt this when we struggle to do it for just one area
 - Elliott responded that while the topic is on the list to be discussed at the next FWWG meeting, it is not to focus on the NEPA process; but rather big picture issues/problems

Lansing Island: Forest Restoration and Recreational Enhancement (Rich King)

- Red oak is one of the rarest communities
- The Forest plan recommends raising island elevations
- Goal is to preserve diversity and restore it where possible
- Rich sent a draft EA out for review on 14 March for proposed restoration work
 - Lansing and McMillan are included in this EA
 - Other potential areas are an old fish pond by Genoa and sections of islands in pool 11 with existing stands of oaks
 - Next will incorporate agency comments and then put out for public review and comment
 - WI DNR still needs to comment
 - Steve Clark stated that Corps EAs are decision documents so it may be difficult to partner with Rich's EA as presently written. Steve stated that the Corps can help draft the EA, especially if the Corps has a part in the actions described in the EA
 - Wetland issues are a major concern from a regulation standpoint. The 2000 FEMA floodplain map may not be the best map to use
 - The fish pond would be a 404 issue

- Flood impacts are becoming a large issue whenever fill is placed in the floodplain
 - Jon Hendrickson commented that if conveyance is decreased from the project footprint it might be increased in adjacent areas to balance the impacts
 - Rich stated that as the islands erode it increases conveyance and then that becomes the new baseline. Rich feels that the old footprint of islands should be used when planning these projects
 - Jon stated that oftentimes there is more conveyance due to erosion; but encroachments elsewhere in the pool reduce conveyance
 - Rich would like the EA to inform the public so he would like a broad discussion of the options
- Rich helped develop a poster showing elevations and flood duration along points on the Mississippi
 - It was identified that a flood duration of 10 days or less is desirable for red oak
 - Island elevation to achieve this varies by pool and location within the pool
 - Seven feet above pool should be able to accommodate all forest communities now in the river valley
 - By constructing projects with a gradual slope we can better learn what will survive at different elevations
- Paul stated that the Corps also needs a placement site in upper 9, so the Genoa pond might be a great place to put material, we may be able to account for the lost wetland habitat in the ponds
 - Steve Clark: if the Corps had an action at Genoa, then they'd address the 404 side for wetland impacts in house, if USFWS funding goes in alone, they need permits for 404
 - Griff: It would be an opportunity to do least-cost, env. Acceptable, if you did some pre-site work, you could place it directly with the Goetz, we do all of our material management through GREAT, but we're missing opportunities to utilize material for environmental benefits
MN: we have some interest in some places, from a state permit perspective, we still need the site info to help trigger the permit side reviews, they see potential
 - WI: similarly, we need to meet a balance of actions and be able to account for habitat rehab vs. impact and meet floodplain standards
- Mike Griffin and the IA DNR are in favor of these projects
- Larry Shepard would like to be on the distribution list to comment on the NEPA mechanics
 - Larry cautions against stating "we just need to get NEPA done." You have to get to FONSI to do an EA and this is difficult for a generic EA
 - If it is too generic and doesn't ID actions then another EA will have to tier off this one for individual projects
 - If a project falls outside the scope the you will need another EA
 - It is better to describe all potential actions in the EA to simplify executing the project(s)

- The MN DNR is interested in these ideas, permitting may be an issue
 - Steve Clark reiterated that the programmatic EA is not the issue, state permitting is. If we can get state permit issues resolved the Corps can write a programmatic EA
- The next draft of this EA should be completed prior to the next RRF meeting

Agency Update on Asian Carp (All)

- Jim Fischer reported that a DNR biologist was investigating a reported silver carp near Prairie du Chien. Jim asked whether we should change this topic to Aquatic Invasive Species to be more all encompassing and there was general agreement of its usefulness
- Kevin Stauffer said the MN DNR was collaborating with the USGS on larval fish sampling upstream of pool 9 with pool 6 being the target this year
 - Telemetry receivers deployment is being extended so much of the upper river should soon be covered
- Mike Griffin reported nothing new from the IA DNR
- The FWS reported that Ann Runstrom is their POC
- Greg Genz reported that funding is available to study putting in sound barriers at LD2 and 8
- Kevin Stauffer reported that Asian carp eggs found in pool 9 were silver or big head and definitely not from grass carp
- Greg reported that Stopcarp.org is pushing to limit lockage of recreational boaters to potentially slow the migration of Asian carp

EMP (Tom Novak)-Refer to power point

- No longer called EMP, now Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR). Please change on future agendas
- Budget
 - FY14: \$31.96 million (Senate), \$30.37 million (House)
 - MVP allocation \$7.13 million
- Follow-up to past projects
 - P8 tree planting on Willow Sprig(C2) and Softshell Islands (C4) for May 16
 - Pool 8, Phase III rock sill C8 repair
 - Part of rock sill has settled below waterline due to poor soils/water depth
 - Three additional borings/survey planned for May
- FY14
 - Construction
 - Complete Capoli August, project dedication September
 - Tree planting at Capoli next spring
 - Award Harper's Stage 1 September
 - Design
 - Harper's Slough Stage 1 and 2 P&S
 - Tom has a fact sheet he will send out

- Tom will send a request out April 23 requesting endorsement within 30 days
- Discussion followed on incremental costs/habitat units and how we need to maximize our dollars for these projects
 - Jim Fischer said this issue could hold up the approval endorsement from the WI DNR and they will likely address it with a letter. WI DNR does not feel that Alternative 5 fairly evaluated Island U and that they don't want to see U eliminated on biological grounds. They realize that the overall project may not be able accommodate all elements.
 - Steve Clark stated that options are not eliminated simply due to being greater than \$3,000/habitat unit. If enough other partners push for something this can be exceeded. Jeff Janvrin is the only person pushing for the two extra islands
 - Wisconsin letter may need to reflect the limitations in the models and incremental analysis as they pertain to the value assigned to the habitat features
 - Tom Novak stated that with adaptive management there are opportunities to reevaluate/add on to a project
 - Mike Griffin stated that IA DNR agrees with the present design and would like to keep the U Islands in the DPR; but not hold up the project
 - Rich King stated that USFWS supported the leg of U that buffers the site from the main channel
- Planning
 - Harper's- DPR approval
 - North Sturgeon: hope to combine effort with minor Pool 3 drawdown-Complete draft DPR
 - Conway Lake-Complete draft DPR
 - McGregor Lake-Complete draft DPR

Pool 2 CMS (Paul Machajewski)-Refer to power point

- Tom Novak is now PM for this project
- Preferred alternative is Boulanger Slough channel realignment
- Several outstanding issues remain
 - ER-1165-2-119-if maintenance can be more economically accomplished can alter the location of a channel
 - HQ USACE may need to review and approve
 - Current opinion is that navigation servitude applies and the Corps owns and maintains training structures and islands proposed for this project
 - Need more borings in contaminated areas in the lower end of the project

- These borings should be completed week of 2 May
- Borings will be sectioned, not composited
- Jim Fischer is concerned on the potential effects on WI waters of exposing contaminated sediments layers to ongoing resuspension
 - Jon Hendrickson noted that an analysis was done and it predicts a very small increase of mostly bed load, not silt. Dredging should be reduced, with some going to backwaters and some Lake Pepin
 - Steve Clark shares concern of increased sedimentation, however minor. While there are habitat improvements in this project, overall benefits will be counterbalanced by the negatives, resulting in a wash
- Mitigation for the project
 - Draft a mussel monitoring plan
 - Study options for habitat restoration due to increased downstream sedimentation from project in lower pool 2
- Funding
 - FY16 submission for three separate contracts
 - Islands & wing dams construction (~\$5M)
 - Dredging (~\$8.5M)
 - Rock sills & spur dike (~\$2.5M)
 - Steve Tapp reiterated it is unlikely to get funded in FY16 unless there is a big push to Congress from industry as there is a lot of backlog maintenance also in the funding queue
- The project would restore the channel to full authorized dimensions. Industry believes this would allow 15 barge tows. They are currently only moving 12 barge tows through the area and are at times restricted to 9 barges. The Corps has not been maintaining full dimensions and does not have resources to accommodate that level of dredging without impacting other areas of the district. A lack of placement sites in the area factors into the decision as well. Increased dredging in Pools 3 & 4 have better placement options
 - Greg Genz commented that industry fights to stay off of Freeborn Island and the sediment eroded from that island when going downstream
 - Wisconsin asked about the utilization of channel training structures to meet the project objectives. Jon H answered that West did model training structures, but that they were not effective at maintaining a wide enough channel through the bend, so it didn't sufficiently reduce the need for dredging
 - Greg Genz asked why the Corps couldn't account for the environmental enhancements that come from the project. Steve Clark answered that in the reach that is being disturbed, the channel habitat from the existing nav channel is just flip-flopping with the habitat in the slough that will be dredged. Steve says there is an increase in sedimentation in the backwaters, but it is small and it's a minor effect

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (Channels & Harbors)

- Dredging (Dan Cottrell)

- Robinson Rocks (Pool 2) was last dredged in 1977. Steve Clark is starting environmental documentation to dredge this area. A mussel survey and more dialogue will be needed since it has been a long time since this was last dredged. Zach will be doing the coordination for this
 - Sara Strassman would like to see the sediment analysis for this. She also stated that she would like to see infrequently dredged sites characterized to depth rather than a surface grab. Go to the bottom of the proposed cut or a little beyond
 - Jim Noren has given Dan a draft sediment sampling plan that will be added to an existing St. Louis District sampling contract
 - Dan does not believe that this contract does core samples
 - Steve Tapp commented on distributing this plan to the partners for comments
 - Jim Fischer feels the greatest potential for contaminants are in areas where there is slow accretion
- Hovie Island (Pool 10) may also need dredging and environmental review and sampling is also needed here
- Jim Fischer asked how dredging frequency is computed, as Wisconsin is interested in getting some perspective on how quickly the sediment has accumulated in these emerging dredge areas
 - Jon Hendrickson stated that for modern dredging, averages almost always use 1981-present
 - The CMMP currently calculates from 1970 to present
- Placement Sites (Zach Kimmel)-Handout
 - Placement site activities are based on one M&R work crew
 - Sites are filling rapidly and when hydraulically placing material at sites near capacity, most the material settles close to the drop structures
 - Swallow inspections have been started by Kurt and we are working with contractors to knock down sheer faces
 - Kurt is working on kiosk panel designs for FC1, Brownsville, West Newton, Buck Creek, and Spring Lake. There are already structures at FC1 and Spring Lake and the plan is for M&R to construct additional structures needed and install panels sometime this year
 - The boat ramp at West Newton Chute is complete
 - Kurt will be working on a plan for stabilizing the Fountain City 1 site this summer
 - Pool 6-Zach is working with Paul to find a long-term solution. There is a current agreement with the City of Winona for placement at the Winona Small Boat Harbor Site. In order to place material at the Winona Commercial Harbor site, we need to establish a new agreement and identify a home for the material prior to placement
 - Mary Stefanski mentioned that the Winona bridge work may need material, Zach has been in contact with MnDOT in regards to utilizing material for the construction
 - Upper SAF and Pool 1 placement sites have been emptied out
 - Southport acreage has decreased significantly

- The agreement for use of the Koch site has expired and the City of Hastings is reluctant to renew as they see it as an eyesore.
- Zach is working with Ames to continue to offload material from Dakota Island. They plan to begin excavating on April 28 through August for the I-90 project. Zach will also follow up with Ames in regards to testing material from the channel and from Above Brownsville
- Working on getting the hydraulic process working for Mississippi Gardens. A SUP with the FWS is needed for pipeline crossing.
- Long-term Planning-Paul Machajewski
 - Wabasha Gravel Pit-There is potential for a road to be built on the downstream side for FRAC a processing facility. The downstream portion could be leased to Wabasha and they would manage any road there. Any road would be built to the final grade of a full site
 - Grand Encampment-A contract was awarded in Nov 2013 to offload 500,000 yards. Black River Construction will do the work for \$7.3 million.
 - 14 February-pre-con
 - 29 April-pre-work meeting
 - 5 May-work begins
 - Should be completed by the end of the 2014 navigation season, although they have until January 2016. Materials will be hydraulically removed to a dewatering wheel adjacent to the site. Dewatered sand will be barged to the Alma placement site. Trucks will haul it to an abandoned quarry or agricultural land
 - Chapter 30 dredging and archaeological permits are still needed
 - Dredged Material Management Plans in progress for lower pools 4 and 5; and pool 6
 - Estimated 13 million yards for lower pool 4 alone in the next 50 years
 - Crats is almost full now, need to plan for this now
 - Plan to do an After Action Report for the Grand Encampment unloading process.
 - Focusing on options people favor that are the least costly and environmentally acceptable
 - Looking to have an on-site in pool 6 in November
 - Possible site downtown Winona with mitigation
 - Would potentially expand Mosquito Island mitigation proposal
 - Jim Fischer stated that Mosquito Island may not qualify as mitigation
 - McMillan Island is near capacity so need to award the contract this FY to move 150K yards of material to Buck Creek. It is hoped that we can use the additional 50K yards on a habitat enhancement project with Rich King
 - Wisconsin asked about Hovie Island, Steve Tapp noted that he has laid out cuts for years at Hovie that ended up clearing themselves throughout the season, but that there is a large channel split that may contribute to shoaling, that site does not have a closing dam
 - Making plans for placement below I-35 on the MN River

- Working with the Head of Lake Pepin initiative
- No longer have the Genoa power plant placement site, so are looking for a replacement

FWWG (Elliott Stefanik)

- FWWG hasn't held a meeting since previous RRF
 - Meeting scheduled for 28 May
- Elliott sent out Dredge Goetz capabilities to members for review and to give them a feel for it
- Programmatic EA, flood height, and other issues also still need to be discussed

WLMTF (Mary Stefanski)-Notes provided

- Water Level Management Task Force (WLMTF) held meetings on January 15 and April 15, 2014, the next scheduled meeting is July 1
- There was a ½ day symposium at the wetlands conference in La Crosse on water level management (February 2014), several WLMTF members presented
- Kevin Kenow submitted a manuscript on drawdowns for publication
- Ruth Nissen has completed summaries for past drawdowns
 - Dan Cottrell will post to the Corps / WLMTF web page once provided
- Volunteer Anna Frankowski is working on a WLM facebook page with guidance from Stephen Winter, Mike Kennedy and Kyle Herdina
- Gretchen Benjamin got a \$100K grant last year to do pre-drawdown monitoring in pool 3 and that has been completed
 - 67.2 million mussels, 18 species, 3 mussels/m²; predicted drawdown zone; 285,000 mussels, 6 species, 0.93 mussels/m²
 - Only submersed vegetation was found from samples taken at 289 sites
 - A cultural resource survey identified 21 cultural resource sites, 17 of which could be impacted/exposed during a maximum two-foot drawdown
 - Public meetings at Redwing and Prescott focused mainly on HREP and not the proposed drawdown

Workgroup Roles/Responsibilities (All)

- Jim Fischer stated that the main thing is for the work groups to do the leg work and report back to the forum
- Steve Tapp feels a hands off approach should be taken since roles are already spelled out on the website. Steve proposes having work groups discuss this and bring any questions back to the forum
- There was a general consensus to Steve's proposal

Other Topics/Issues (All)

- Steve Tapp mentioned that the next meeting will be the 100th. It was discussed how we might celebrate this milestone

- Wabasha meeting and tour of Grand Encampment offload
- Throwback meeting
- See if retirees can come
- Celebrate partnerships over the past 34 years
- The Corps will develop a plan and work with RRF agencies to pull it off
- Olivia Dorothy said legislators will not sign language for the Mississippi River Basin Initiative because navigation industry is opposed. Greg Genz agreed to investigate the source of the industry comments

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF