

## MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #122 on 19 April 2022 (WebEx virtual meeting)

### Introductions, Minutes, Next Meetings, Due Outs (Fischer/Stanick)

- Went over meeting logistics, holding to break return times
- RRF 121 Minutes approval
  - Motion from Kirk Hanson
  - Second from Mary Stefanski
  - No discussion, approved as written
- Next Meetings:
  - August 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> Tuesday & Wednesday
    - Bass Ponds for field visit
  - December 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Tuesday & Wednesday
    - Prairie du Chien City Hall or Driftless Area in Lansing;
- 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 (Stanick)
    - *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 (Stanick)
    - *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)

- Jim Fischer highlighted some WI DNR hiring actions
  - Jordan Weeks mentioned they're in the process of hiring technicians
- Jack Gleason - MN DNR
  - Staff returning to the office
  - Staggered implementation
  - Mike Davis retired – Kate Holkam: new mussel specialist out of Lake City
- Patrick Phenow - MN DOT
  - Beginning of return to office is this Friday, staggered roll-out
  - All mask mandates and distancing lifted
- Kirk Hanson - IA DNR
  - No staffing changes, HREP Planning & Design
- Mary Stefanski - USFWS
  - Tim Yeager retired, position to be announced soon
  - Pools 4, 5, 5A, 7, 8 invasives species treatment for flowering rush
  - Pool 9 letter of intent; bankline fishing letter of intent
- Bob Stanick USACE
  - Change of Command
    - COL Swenson coming to MVP from West Point
- Audubon Dale Gentry:
  - Been in position since September
    - Planting trees
    - Bird monitoring in La Crosse, ongoing this summer
- UMRBA – Andrew Stephenson
  - Natalie Lenzen coming onboard as Operations Manager

## Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMMR) (Angela Deen)

- Funding update
  - At \$33M level for several years
  - FY23 - \$55M
    - May change in house and senate bills
    - Would double our CT award capability
- 7 current projects
  - 4 in construction 3 to finish this year
- Feasibility for Big Lake HREP has kicked off, Reno getting close to wrapping up
  - Big Lake will be in 3 phases

- Robinson Lake is not being planned at this time
- Reno meeting scheduled for end of May
  - Set of alternatives will be in lower Reno for future phases
- Lower Pool 10
  - Just finished feasibility
  - Planning and Specs planning to kickoff next week
  - Big project, over 4 miles
  - ~\$32M for whole project
- McGregor Lake
  - Big push this year
  - 55% complete with Option 2
  - If USACE gets extra workplan funds, we could finish this year
    - If not, split into phases
      - ~\$8M to finish
- Dedications
  - Friday Conway and Harpers Ribbon Cutting
    - Driftless Center
    - Not open to the public, but media is invited
- Bass Ponds
  - Looking at doing a dedication in late May, TBD
  - Trying to get COL J out to dedications
- Questions:
  - Andrew Stephenson asked for Lower Pool 10, why are you starting at the bottom?
    - Angela replied that the team prioritized to work on the areas that need the most work
    - Jon Hendrickson added “if we saw a river mechanics reason to guide construction, we'd use it”
      - It's about constructability and programming issues

## River Industry Action Committee (RIAC) (Lee Nelson)

- Running with smaller tows
  - Market driven
- Operationally we're normal, no updates needed

## Navigation Work Group Activities (Dan Cottrell)

- MOUs MOAs due-out
  - Received several from USCG can share with anyone who's interested
    - No real way to change things
  - 1966 CG MOU with USACE
- (Dan, please provide notes)
  - JF: Concerns about number of trips CG makes; buoys off place
    - DC: We looked to see if there's a way to get funding or agreement that we could manage buoys we asked CG if they were interested in hiring us, they said no
      - These MOUs and MOAs don't really point to anything that can change things
    - LN: USCG resources for buoy tenders are very old
      - Undertaking a rebuilding, hopefully see a new one by 2030
      - Have not had a tender here since Sept
      - Hoping to depart Dubuque today

- RRF would not be asked to lead, but maybe endorse
- IA DNR off channel concern – tasked to the NWG at the Dec 2021 RRF
  - Held meetings with IA and industry separately
    - Iowa DNR is collecting data on mussel concerns
    - Industry looking at fleeting/mooring areas
    - May 18th next meeting
    - KH & LN participated in the meetings
      - KH: Thanks for facilitating it, good meeting
        - Good path forward
      - LN: Ditto
- DC said he will provide another update about the future meetings

### Water Level Management Task Force (Neil Rude / Mary Stefanski)

- Mary: Last meeting was Mar 29th
  - Waiting for structured decision-making report hopefully in May, will provide framework for things to move forward on tasks
  - Report 53 is basically complete.
  - March 8th gave a WLM task force briefing
- Big news MN DNR Neil Rude is now the Chair
  - Mary has had it since 2010
  - Thanks Neil!

### Recreation Work Group Activities (Kevin Berg)

- Programmatic EA regarding beach nourishment
  - Sara Strassman: How to address NEPA requirements for beach management process?
    - Do we stick it under beneficial use?
    - Kevin Berg: echo that, no real insight to how to change that
- UMRCC Creel survey
  - No definite timeline on rollout
    - Delays in staffing
  - Changes in vessel types, how have they changed compared to earlier studies done
- Jim Fischer asked about due outs?
  - Revisit using creel survey data, help define
  - Provide questions to UMRCC for add'l information
- Blackhawk park - Potential use of dredge material this season
  - Is approved CMMP placement site
  - An opportunity to receive FY23 funds to relocate vault toilet on upper loop of campground
  - Our vision is to get rid of it, build a new unit nearby with potentially a shower
    - To do that we'll need dredge material
  - Wanted to bring up since there has been no placement at BHP in the last several years

## Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Jordan Weeks)

- Jordan began 2 year chair at meeting on Feb 2nd
  - Talked about several topics
  - Elliot gave an update
    - Mentioned the FWWG NESP projects :(listed in ranked order)
  - Had a presentation by Chuck Theling on different ways to manage sediment and alternative dredging options
  - Dave Potter provided and update on HREP performance.
- KH added: The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)
  - Starting to develop proposal to look at non-game fish species sampling protocol
- Next mtg Aug 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - La Crosse, assuming in person

## Beneficial Use Work Group Activities (Zach Kimmel)

- Chipping away at charter
- WRDA Sec 125 updates:
  - Sec C implementation guidance, has been distributed
  - Guidance being reviewed
  - FY24 DMMP requests in, max \$20k
  - Sec A: Federal Standard, don't have a timeline on approval
- BUWG meetings,
  - Last met in DEC
  - Topics included Regional Sediment Management (RSM), and Engineering with Nature (EWN); both briefed BUWG
    - DEC meeting was fairly Corps centric, would like to foster a more balanced approach with other agencies.
- Path forward:
  - Zach has changed positions, so Dan DeVaney will be interim chair
- Jim Fischer asked where WRDA updates originate from
  - Zach replied they're routed from HQ, don't have supplemental guidance timeline
    - Sec A should be sooner, unless they wait and sign together
- Jim Fischer asked Zach if he looked to Great Lakes dredging team?
  - Zach replied he'd done quite a bit of outreach, Baltimore has a 217 agreement, hoping to get diff state agencies
    - For the first meeting it was intentional to have it Corps centric
    - Moving forward we'll include more interested entities
- Kirk Hanson asked if there was any movement with non-standard estate /HQ?
  - Zach said he had just answered a large volume of questions for clarification to HQ
    - Hope to have answers finalized and ready to submit
    - HQ seems willing to find solutions

## Continuing Authorities Program Update (Nick Castellane)

- CAP Section 204
  - Pigs Eye Islands
    - Funded, CT awarded, reviewing submittals
- CAP Section 1122
  - Upper Pool 4 – Pierce County Islands
    - Going through design
    - Plan has been updated since this slide
    - Timetable is super tight
  - Rylee Hince asked if any work will start this season?
    - Zach said bulk of work will be next season
  - Jim Fischer asked when the invitation for bids going out?
    - Nick said they're going to try to solicit in July
      - Public review: don't know schedule, can get back
- Sara Strassman asked if RRF should make it an agenda item, do we endorse through RRF?
  - Steve Clark: we can discuss further, different from UMRR projects
    - State permits will be acquired by WI DNR
  - Zach added that Pigs Eye wasn't endorsed
    - Should be prudent to discuss what projects we endorse
    - With CAP and specific project sponsors, is it the same as others?
    - Jim Fischer: something worth visiting
  - Bob Stanick: What needs to be endorsed and what doesn't, looking for words of wisdom
    - Paul Machajewski: look at history of endorsement, find path forward
  - Jim Fischer asked if it should be a due out to Kirk Hanson
    - Kirk said we should figure it out, have to think on it
  - Steve Clark added we endorse big projects and UMRR, but CAP are different
    - Can investigate this and verify as due-out
    - Sara Strassman: RRF has interest in utilization of dredged materials under different authorities
  - Steve Clark: if it's easier to permit with endorsement, we can do that, no opinion either way
    - Jack Gleason: will have to check internally, have issue with endorsements where MN DNR is regulating
      - Default mode is to not endorse projects that MN DNR is regulating
    - Steve Clark: it's been made clear that endorsement doesn't have any legal weight, many agencies end up endorsing projects that they regulate
  - Andrew Stephenson: distinction between singular or groups of projects, especially UMRR
    - Background research on when/how projects have been endorsed
    - Milestones in planning?
    - Kirk Hanson added that the UMRR process is codified; for CAP, don't think rules or expectations are known
  - Steve Clark asked Nick if he will pull together an internal meeting to discuss RRF endorsement and what should be endorsed when and by whom

## Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) (Kim Warshaw)

- New to the program, picking up where Zach Kimmel left off
- Corps has received a lot of program dollars
  - Hasn't filtered down yet
  - Currently five approved Ecosystem Restoration projects in NESP
- Pool 2 wing dam notching
  - Planned on having USACE M&R do the work, currently unable, awarding CT this year
- Wacouta Bay Pool 4
  - Project Delivery Team (PDT)) being formed, determining if PPA is needed
  - Riley asked if USACE will be including any community partners in kickoff
    - Kim answered that the meetings will be internal first, then include partners
- Andrew asked how many additional projects need endorsement by RRF
  - MVD approved Wing Dam Notching, Wacouta Bay, Johnson Island, Systemic Forestry, Systemic Bankline Stabilization
  - Need to figure out what the next round of fact sheet approvals is (Swift and Dead Sloughs, Lake Onalaska Science, etc.) looking for 3 in June, 3 more in August
  - At what level does NESP as a regional program have discussions as to advance future projects - is that at the RRF level where St. Paul prioritizes or what does that look like?
    - Zach mentioned that his gut feeling is that there will be some discussion at the regional level as to which projects to advance for the next round of NESP fact sheet approvals by MVD, but will likely move all the remaining projects forward that were endorsed by each of the district river teams
  - Jim Fischer: Are those kick off meetings entirely Corps or partners?
    - Kim: Corps PDT
    - Jim: will there be a formal request to partner?
      - Kim: have the programmatic team, we'll figure out how we're going to engage w/partners
- Tribal Partnership Program Sturgeon Lake Project
  - Ecosystem restoration of Buffalo Slough
    - Eagles are nesting, waiting on fines placement and planting trees, hopeful this season

## Channel Maintenance Program Update (Stanick, Cottrell, DeVaney, Machajewski)

- Dan Cottrell – Channel Conditions
  - Generally conditions are pretty good
    - Chippewa River delta has built unusually
      - Lower Approach to Lock and Dam 2
        - Not a lot of room for them to maneuver
      - Head Of Lake Pepin still a concern
        - As is placement of that material
  - St. Paul Small Boat Harbor dredging this year
    - Hoping to make it out to full extents
      - Likely do dredging in two phases - to have bases covered
  - Sampling and borings needed:
    - Red Wing below the bridge
    - Richmond Island
    - This year

- St. Paul Small Boat Harbor
      - Wacouta Light reach
    - Remainder to be ponar samples
    - Owe the agencies a meeting
      - One of the challenges with borings is expense
        - Used to do it in-house, no longer have that capability
        - Looking to do it through a CT this year
  - Greg Genz: The lower approach to Lock 2, we, commercial industry and the Corps never had to dredge before the Hastings power plant was built
    - Dan said it's hard to prove cause and effect
      - So many things are changing all the time
      - Jon Hendrickson: Dan and Greg are both right, started having problems after hydro plant
- Dan DeVaney – Placement Site Actions
  - Review of Placement Site Activities Schedule
    - Pigs Eye Project will be pulling a lot of material off Pine Bend, will be meeting with the contractor prior to the start of work, looking to start 15 June, 200K plus cy.
    - Lower Boulanger same as above, doubtful that they will get to the site this season
  - Alma Marina and Homer shaping done in house, Buck Creek and Wabasha Gravel pit were done with contract.
  - Pool 2 DMMP – still working toward property acquisition.
- Paul Machajewski – Unloads & DMMPs
  - Pool 5 Rolling Prairie
    - Finalizing site plan internally, Draft to OSIT Spring/Summer.
  - Site Unloads
    - IDIQ contract for unloading
      - Terminated for convenience
      - Hoping to readvertise and award this summer
      - Unload up to 100key per site
    - Pool 5 - Above West Newton
      - Would probably take material to West Newton Chute
    - Pool 8 - Above Brownsville
      - Take material to Brownsville
        - Brownsville essentially empty
  - Major Unloads as done historically will be much less frequent due to IDIQ contract
    - Reads with UP4 1122 project is about the biggest one
    - Maybe Corps Island & McMillan
      - But both have been unloaded recently
  - DMMPs
    - Forum endorsement process
      - 1 Scoping w/ Public and Agencies
      - 2 Corps develops alternatives
        - Landowner coordination (close hold due to private negotiations)
        - Discussion of certain alternatives (i.e. bedload collector/sediment by-pass)
      - 3 Internal reviews within Corps
      - 4 Public review

- Try to get draft out 2 weeks ahead to partners
  - 1 week to landowners if they're noted
  - If no significant changes, then
  - 5 RRF endorsement
  - 6 signing of FONSI
  - Paul asked to share this process in writing, possibly post on the DMMP website
- Discussion about WRDA Section 125 and expanding capabilities for material use
- Overall opinion from Steve Clark is that things aren't really going to change
- Pool 4 DMMP
- Finalized the draft TSP
  - Finished internal reviews
  - Close to having draft 217d complete, need to start vetting internally.
  - DMMP public meeting was held 13 APR, about 25 ppl attending 1/10 of the original meeting.
    - We seem to have public support of the updated plan, 217d and other alternatives
  - WI asked for an extra week to review
  - Schedule
    - DRAFT to
      - Agency partners 08 MAE
      - Landowners 16 MAR
      - Public 21 MAR (30 day review ends 19 APR)
      - RRF Endorsement spring
      - FONSI prior to Col Jansen leaves (JUL)
    - Reads EA
      - 30 day Public Review 28 FEB – 29 MAR)
        - COE reviewing comments
      - FONSI prior to Col Jansen leaves (JUL)
- Pool 6 DMMP
- Need ability to get sand off the river, City of Winona engaged helping by encouraging use by local businesses.
    - Looking at barge off-loading in the Winona Commercial Harbor.
    - Continued use of Technology Park
  - Homer
    - Trucking contract unloaded site NOV – DEC (completed prior to Christmas) to Mathy Pit on CR 15 (~5 miles away); ~55kcy
    - Since the unloading by truck Winona roundabouts const. needs 40-50 K cy
    - Minimal complaints
    - DMMP Schedule
      - Internal reviews now
      - Draft out in June to Agencies
      - Draft to public late June/early July
      - Public meeting after 4<sup>th</sup> of July
      - August Endorsement at Forum (RRR 123)
      - September FONSI
- Pools 9 & 10 DMMPs
- Adding 25% to historic dredging numbers for planning
  - Genoa power plant offline
    - Ongoing remediation may present long-term placement opportunity

- Awaiting Low Hazard Exemption determination from WDNR
- Investigating potential Bedload Sediment Collector – Upper Iowa River
  - River bottom collection unit augers sand to conveyor for upland placement
- Investigating potential Sediment Bypass System – McMillan
  - River bottom collector discharges down the thalweg in area of greater transport potential
- Pool 9 – Draft report Fall / Winter 2022
- Pool 10 – Draft report Fall / Winter 2023

## UMR Dredge Volumes vs Annual Discharge (Jon Hendrickson)

(Refer to slides distributed in agenda email)

- Upward trends in annual discharge
  - Not statistically significant for the time period
- Lower plot is annual thousands cubic yards / year
  - Just for reach 3
  - Doesn't seem significant
    - Dredging based on discharge, just doesn't work
- Lower Pool 4 - but what about the Chippewa?
  - Same story, basically no relationship
- Pool 6 had best root squared data
  - Really no good indicators
- Why doesn't it work?
  - Sediment loads are affected by hydrology and hydraulics
- USGS monitoring of Chippewa River
- Jim Fischer: Paul had noted adding % for DMMP formulation, is 25% accurate?
  - Jon: think that's a pretty good number
    - We're pretty sure things will get wetter
    - Approach is to predict high but reasonable
- Greg Genz noted: If you look back historically, we had a wider river
  - After that, we started running out of places to go with it
  - Jon: You're right, dredging is completely different compared to then
    - We dredged wider, we also drew the pools down further, dredged to greater depth
    - Greg: And we used up all the placement capacity
- Andrew Stephenson: Should we be looking at dredging volume in the year following the flows?
  - Jon: good comment
    - We looked at it, hasn't been done for just this Forum
    - When we realized we didn't have a good correlation, we looked at neighboring years
      - Nothing really worked
      - Could shift it a year, but it still doesn't really work

## United States Coast Guard Auxiliary (Christopher Ware)

- District 8 Division Commander, in IL
- Do everything else the USCG does except law enforcement
  - All volunteers
    - 40,992 full timers, enlisted and full-time staff
    - Military and Law Enforcement
  - Can be called up in case of DoD need to deploy

- 21,000 civilian auxiliary, full volunteers
- 33CFR 5.03 aux was created for:
  - Promoting safety and rescue
  - Promote efficiency in the operation of motorboats
- 3 of 4 are recreational boater safety based
- Must be ordered to do something, not spontaneous volunteers
  - The Auxiliary cannot perform any Military action or Direct Law Enforcement
- Clergy Support of 50 Chaplains for Active Duty
- Provide their own boats/planes/vehicles, not paid, only reimbursed
- Honor Guard
  - Kind of unique, where active duty come in for 2–4-year stint and gone
    - Aux sometimes 30years plus
- Marine Observation Mission (MOM)
  - Taking surveillance
  - Accident
  - Looking for people - rescues
  - Found polluters dumping chemicals in the Mississippi from a barge
    - Within a day the EPA & DNR were out there and arrested parties
  - Work with NOAA a lot
  - If you need something, say something!
- Sea Scouts 14-19y/o
  - Teach all seamanship
  - Can join USCG as an E3 instead of an E1
- Sara Strassman: If folks have an idea that they want help with, do they reach out to Aux directly or go to the USCG and they filter it down?
- Chris: Suggest connecting locally
  - Education and safety, we'll get you a local contact flotilla
  - Dredging - Marine safety in twin cities

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

- Other – Dan Cottrell showed two different surveys of Chippewa Delta to show material migration
  - All data is available via eHydro
- Future Topics
  - 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
  - eHydro data website
- Due-Outs from this RRF
  - NWG
    - Get more information on Truman Hobbes – La Crosse RR
    - IA DNR / Industry discussion - report out
  - BUWG
    - Dano - get other state agencies involved
  - Leave time on agenda for RRF endorsement of CAP projects
  - Nick Castellane - schedule a Corps meeting to discuss endorsements
  - Paul - put together separate sheet for DMMP endorsement
  - Dan Cottrell to brief Bob Stanick on Akerman's cut

- Future Topic:
  - Jim Fischer: DMMP thing
    - Suggest that we provide a read-ahead
- Zach Kimmel: Excited to get back to face to face Forums
  - Even with reduced numbers, def worth it
  - Jim Fischer: yes,
- Partnering Statement to next RRF

Robert Stanick  
Co-Chairman, RRF