

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #123 on 23 & 24 August 2022 in Savage, MN and virtual via Webex

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

- RRF 121 Minutes approval
 - Motion from Jim Fischer
 - Second from Dan DeVaney
 - No discussion, approved as written

- Next Meetings:
 - Bob Stanick encouraged attendees to put some thought into Forum meetings
 - Will be sending out an email requesting comments on keeping Forum valuable for members
 - December 6th & 7th Tuesday & Wednesday
 - Prairie du Chien – Dano to coordinate

- Due Outs carried forward from previous meetings
 - COE to forward 2014 Dredging Season AAR to the RRF upon completion (Stanick)
 - Will be distributed with these minutes
 - COE to provide one-page write-up for RRF endorsement of Prairie Sand & Gravel (DeVaney)
 - COE to review EA, plan for Dec RRF endorsement
 - *Due out for December Forum*
 - 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 (Berg – not present to report)
 - Corps to consider more dialogue with OSIT regarding channel conditions (Stanick)
 - Discussion about what information folks are looking for
 - Agencies would like more information on existing conditions and what USACE is currently tracking as issues, wish to limit surprises
 - Stanick agreed to continue to work towards a solution
 - Corps will draft language that RRF agencies can share with tournament organizers to improve safety when boating near dredging operations. (Cottrell)
 - Will be sent out with these minutes
 - MnDOT to look at transportation bill to see if there's funding to address La Crosse RR Bridge issues (Phenow – not present to report)

Agency Activities – (All)

- USACE – Bob Stanick
 - Change of Command, COL Eric Swensen in, COL Jansen retired
 - Jon Hendrickson retiring end of September

- Wisconsin DNR – Jim Fischer
 - Staffing – Sara Strassman took a position with Trout Unlimited
 - Back to her roots working on stream restoration

- Kudos to her, still hurts to Wisconsin
 - Intent to fill asap, waiting on approval
 - Hiring LTRM field station supervisor
 - Going back to original structure
 - Take over field staff supervisory duties from, and report to, Jim Fischer
 - Recently did interviews, hope to have announcement at next forum
 - 4 new permanent AIS positions, replacing existing project positions
 - Will serve as regional aquatic invasive species specialists
 - Trempealeau boat landing was dredged by JF Brennan in June
 - Responsibility lies with parks, never entirely clear previously who was responsible
 - Is now clear that Parks will manage it, will try to find longer term solution
 - May return for additional dredging this OCT
 - Lots of public complaints, public says it's the tow traffic that's responsible for infill
 - 3 of 4 lanes open
 - Paul M noted he had been contacted by Travis Bursa, a member of the conservation congress
 - Jim F will pass on information to FWS & USACE for situational awareness
 - Office of environmental justice
 - Office of great waters is developing scoping tool
 - Milwaukee AOC to help develop case study on
 - LTRM staff sampled a 59" lake sturgeon - largest in database
- MN DOT – Patrick Phenow
 - Lots of personnel changes
 - Shelly Meier new Commissioner
 - No bonding bill this year to report on
 - MN DNR – Jack Gleason
 - Have been working the last year on getting a Mississippi River Coordinator position
 - Miss River Coordinator will be the MN DNR representative to the RRF
 - Neil Rude is now Mississippi River habitat coordinator
 - COVID restrictions are basically over, offices are open, many people working hybrid
 - IA DNR – Kirk Hansen
 - Staffing new people to work on NESP
 - Guttenberg staff working with DOT on Lansing Bridge replacement
 - Research crew doing sustainable rivers program
 - US FWS – Sabrina Chandler
 - Staffing
 - Tim Yager retired
 - Mary Stefanski backfilling
 - In a hiring freeze likely through calendar year
 - Struggling in general, no biologists in Winona or McGregor
 - Exception is Law Enforcement, they'
 - Other relevant topics of interest
 - Flowering rush - seeing more than anticipated, will be having more discussions internally about how much more effort is justified
 - Pool 8 might be the tipping point
 - Contractor on board right now treating some

- Pools 7&8 homeless camps acquiring and abandoning boats at encampments
 - Becoming significant issue
 - Dock trespass in La Crosse area
 - Causing navigation problems
 - Root River tract purchased
 - Levee was breached
 - Permits acquired for replacement of the levee, temporary fix
 - RR access issues
 - No legal access to refuge
- US FWS (as received)
 - FWS Staff vacancies abound at most of our field stations. We don't have the budget to fill any positions currently. Current vacancies that affect RRF are Upper Miss Deputy Manager, Winona District Assistant Manager, La Crosse District Biologist, McGregor District Federal Wildlife Officer.
 - Working on a levee repair on the Neibling Tract at the Root River in the LaCrosse District. Waiting for zoning permit approval with the County. Expect that the week of September 5. (Update: Permit was approved)
 - New Headquarters planning for McGregor District is moving forward with the acquisition of the Luster Heights site near Harper's Ferry Iowa. Demolition of buildings and site prep has been completed. Design of new infrastructure is ongoing.
 - Continuing to have issues with non-compliant fishing float at Lock and Dam 9. Power pole supporting the meter for the fish float was uprooted. FWS and the power company have determined the line to be in trespass based on a recent court order so the line will need to be removed. FWS continues to ask the Corps to deny access across the spillway at this location as a result of the court order.
 - Working with Iowa and Wisconsin DOTs on the HWY 84 Lansing Bridge replacement. The bridge will be shifted and will impact refuge forest lands. Discussions on expanding the landing on the opposite side of the shifted new bridge are ongoing. This area is currently also used as a dredge placement site.
 - First year of closed area/no motor enforcement in Harper's Slough HREP area. Monitoring will be conducted as to waterfowl and boater use of the area.
- NPS – Alan Robbins-Fenger (as received)

National Park Service (NPS) Update for RRF 123 Meeting Notes – Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, August 2022

 - The park is working with the U of MN and other partners to conduct a beaver study of the corridor, specifically as they relate to restoration challenges of floodplain forests and climate change. This study is funded through June of 2023 through LCCMR, ENRTF and is following up on the initial beaver survey conducted by the park in summer 2021.
 - The NPS – Mississippi NRRRA just finished another season of bat and frog acoustic monitoring. We have found federally endangered long-eared bats, as well as the tri-color bats that may become federally listed in November, in the corridor. We continue to find populations of state-endangered Cricket frogs along the river, although those populations seem to move around to some degree. We plan to hire Gary Casper to do another concentrated survey for these frogs next summer.
 - The park would like to congratulate the ACOE on the Pigs Eye Island project becoming a reality. This project was being discussed back when the park was brand new (1988) and it is very rewarding to see it actually happening “on the ground”.
 - The park continues to work with partners on the 20-year ASCC (Applied Silviculture for Climate Change) project, with plots set up in Crosby Park, St Paul to look at growth and

- survival rates of different tree species adapted to slightly different climate ranges as well as those historically grown here, along with control plots. This will give us an idea of how to most successfully reforest these areas in the future. These plots are currently full of tall, dead hazard trees due to Emerald Ash Borer, so care needs to be taken when working in these areas as well as in many other floodplain forest sites within the NPS corridor.
- The Park just hired a new Outdoor Recreation Planner, Forest Eidbo, to replace our former employee who defected to the USFS. We hired Forest from the MN DNR; however, he had previously been a seasonal with the Park so is familiar with the river. Forest will be working on our Paddle Share program, continuing to work to get funding through ATP, and with a variety of other recreational programs.
 - Hope to get them into RWG
- Jon Shultz – USACE La Crescent Field Office
 - Hired one forester position and have made another selection, waiting for final offer
 - Pool 8 cultural repair at Goose Island
 - Lower Minnesota River Watershed District – Linda Loomis (as received and comments)
 - The LMRWD continues to receive a grant from the State of Minnesota to assist with the management of dredge material resulting from maintenance of the MN River navigation channel. The grant is \$480,00 per biennium. Money has been used to bring the dredge material management site at RMP 14.2 up to industry standards for temporary placement of dredge materials.
 - The LMRWD is close to finalizing a Corridor Management Project, where partners of the LMRWD were invited to provide thoughts about threats and opportunities in managing the Minnesota River within the LMRWD.
 - The LMRWD has completed an inventory and condition assessment of gullies and ravines within the LMRWD. The next step will be to prioritize the gullies and work with partners to stabilize those that pose the greatest risk of failure.
 - The LMRWD is working with the City of Eden Prairie to stabilize a failing bluff at approximately RMP 19.2.
 - The LMRWD is participating in the efforts of the City of Carver to bring its levee up to FEMA and Corps standards.
 - The LMRWD is participating in Scott County Plans to construct a recreational trail and associated river crossing in the City of Carver.
 - The LMRWD is participating in the planning process and will be permitting a recreational trail in Dakota County adjacent to the MN River from the Lone Oak Trailhead west to Cedar Avenue.
 - The LMRWD is working with MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) consultants to permit the MPCA's efforts to mediate the Freeway Dump and Landfill in the City of Burnsville.
 - The LMRWD is working with Waste Management to permit the expansion of the Burnsville Sanitary Landfill. State grant 240,000; 480 biennium
 - In-person comments:
 - Greg Genz noted - for those who don't know, these landfills are right on the water
 - Linda added that there is PFAS in the sites, among others
 - Greg G - there was a study of Scott County – 1,500 ravines going to the river?
 - Linda - don't know number offhand, but 600 just in Hennepin County alone on the north side of river

Continuing Authorities Program Update (Nathan Wallerstadt for Nick Castellane)

- Pigs Eye Lake
 - Awarded in June 2021
 - June 22 contractor started placing material
 - 113key so far
 - Moved onto second island
 - Hoping to move all granular this season
 - Place fines next year
 - 12% overall complete and on schedule
- Upper Pool 4
 - Good news
 - Bids were opened last week
 - Low bid is LSM \$21.9mil
 - Looking at funds on fed side for base & options
 - Will award this FY
 - Bids came in pretty good overall
 - Rylee asked- when will the CT be awarded?
 - Nathan - don't know yet, will work with DNR to figure out what everyone can support
 - Rylee - with bids that came in, will that make up the gap that was there compared to estimates?
 - Nathan - had \$20mil in various accounts, only have to make up last million or so, not too far off, probably a little short
 - Jim Fischer - you think there's enough for all the features? One or more dropped?
 - Nathan - dropped island 4, just were not going to come up with that money, but very close on other base and 3 options, may have to leave one option off to make it work
 - Jim - NESP Wacouta Bay - would they be able to pick up Island 4?
 - Nathan - NESP has cap at \$25m, if we try to add that to Wacouta Bay, may bust it
 - May behoove us to do WB as is and option Island 4 off at some other time, maybe in an Section 1122 scenario
 - Jim - understood. Know that we're pulling at low-hanging fruit to show program can work
 - Nathan - NESP is supposed to be cross-over nav ecosystem, seems to fit w/bene use and ecosystem enhancements

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

- Funding - \$35mil for ecosystem restoration
 - 4 MVP projects underway
 - 1 more project approved
 - 5 projects sent to MVR
 - All projects were endorsed by RRF
 - MVP starting to think about new Fact Sheets
 - Looking specifically at Island 4 Pool 4
- Pool 2 Wing Dam
 - First NESP ecosystem project going to construction
 - Advertised Aug 1st, opening 30th, hoping for award 30 Sep
- Pool 3 North and Sturgeon Lake
 - Project Development Team (PDT) working on the Project Implementation Report (PIR)
- Pool 4 Wacouta Bay

- PDT PIR design charette yesterday
- 18 months for PIR completion
- Systemic Forestry
 - Working with MVP Foresters
 - Planning Charrette 30-31 August
 - Nathan W added - having internal discussions about what a study might look like
- Upcoming Pool 6 Johnson Island
 - Will be forming PDT soon
- Still have additional RRF endorsed projects
- Comments
 - Andrew UMRBA - Sent to MVR - is that correct?
 - Kim - MVD might not have to approve
 - Nathan - not necessarily needed, getting feedback that MVD approval isn't needed for NESP
 - Steve Clark - trying to mimic CAP with delegated authority within district....don't need division approval
 - Nathan - correct - trying to streamline
 - Jim Fischer – for the 5 additional projects, the Lake Onalaska project
 - Got a call on the way up, wondering about status
 - Kim - still a fact sheet, no movement but still on the table
 - Fact sheet has not changed
 - Jim - is it in group 2?
 - Wondering what to tell the group, accurate answer
 - Kim - in group 3
 - Jim - any guesses on if or when it could happen?
 - Nathan - depends on funding, if we get another big push we'd go for it
 - Rylee - What kind of public involvement will there be re: Wacouta Bay? Used to be cost-shared, lots of strong feelings
 - Kim - Brenda Kelly brought that up
 - Brenda has the input received previously
 - Will move forward with standard review process similar to CAP
 - Nathan - we hear you; we are trying to figure out a way to engage multiple people on multiple projects
 - Don't know the best way, but we're trying and there will be outreach
 - Jim - to add to Rylee's Q: the call re: Onalaska, expressed concern about adequate public engagement
 - There is interest in greater engagement, don't know what that looks like, but good opportunity
 - Andrew UMRBA
 - Encourage you to use LTRM data as it's a LTRM pool

Channel Maintenance Program Update (Stanick, DeVaney, Machajewski, Van Guilder)

- Al VanGuilder – Channel Conditions
 - Went through dredge schedule to date
 - Greg Genz asked about the St. Paul Small Boat Harbor phase 2 dredging
 - Bob Stanick replied the EA went out yesterday for 30 day review
- Dan DeVaney – Placement Site Action Highlights

- Pine Bend – Pool 2
 - Offloading material in support of the Pigs Eye Lake HREP
 - Work progressing smoothly, using more material than anticipated
- Corps Island – Pool 3
 - Placed there 3 times this year, 74,588 cy total
 - PDT formed for shoreline stabilization
 - Will be combined effort with Pool 5A Wilds Bend
- Reads Landing – Pool 4
 - Upper Pool 4 Pierce County Islands 1122
 - Bid opening was last week
- Alma – Pool 4
 - Placed 37,131cy – site has good beneficial use removal
- Rolling Prairie – Pool 5
 - Still hope to pull back topsoil on Fitzy 40 yet this year for placement opportunity next year
- Above Fisher Island – Pool 5
 - Bankline stabilization contract out for bid right now
- Paul Machajewski – Long Term Planning
 - MOUs MOAs
 - WI DNR
 - Have begun initial coordination
 - Crystal from Green Bay office coming over to start discussions
 - MN DNR
 - Beginning coordination for general permit
 - Lucas Youngsma is looking at it
 - GP is set to expire DEC 31st, hoping to have it addressed by then
 - Greg Genz asked what are the terms on these?
 - Paul - about 5 years
 - Jim Fischer added we're on a 2 year extension right now
 - Looking forward to streamlining it
 - MPCA
 - Working on expired permit
 - Hang-up is Soil Reference Values
 - Greg added that PFAS went from PPM to PPB
 - IDNR – 404(t)
 - Need to discuss that further
 - New process that we're not used to
 - Kirk Hansen - we now have a 30 day waiting period
 - Codified in state regulations
 - Talking with MVR to make it a one-time request for certification
 - Maybe make it a 5 year
 - Steve Clark - who in MVR?
 - Kirk Hansen - Bethany
- Site Development
 - Rolling Prairie
 - Still working on draft land use plan
 - Wetland & sand prairie preservation/restoration
 - Hoping to get out to OSIT for review by late summer/fall
- Site Unloads

- Had IDIQ CT, was protested, terminated for convenience
- Readvertised, apparent low is contractor that previously had it (Legacy)
- Won't use it until next year (likely Pool 5 and/or Pool 8)
- DMMPs
 - Pool 4
 - Pool 4 Endorsement conversation
 - Patrick Phenow asked timeline from FONSI to when a 217 could be working?
 - Quick tangent on Reads Pipeline
 - Paul - we get the 217 numbers from Wabasha next week
 - FONSI gets signed, then PDT goes down the list of alternatives
 - 217 is first, if it's not the least costly, we'll move down the list
 - Pipeline A
 - COE team working on an acquisition and installation contract
 - Installation anticipated spring/summer 2023
 - Pool 6 DMMP
 - Draft report
 - Task Force w/City of Winona
 - Key new site is Port Authority Road downstream of Maritime Museum
 - Reach downtown and upstream sites (i.e. Fastenal, Airport Pit)
 - Agency and public review 14 JUN – 15 JUL
 - Open House 22 JUN
 - Evaluating and addressing comments
 - There is public interest in removing Homer East from the report
 - Sabrina- Fastenal – Evanson no longer in plan?
 - Homer East is still in report but maybe getting pulled?
 - Paul – yes, we're considering the options
 - Goal is DEC RRF Endorsement
 - Pools 9 & 10
 - Not much since last forum
 - Pool 9 - email from Genoa Power Plant, received their low hazard exemption
 - Looking into sediment collector (Pool 9) or bypass (pool 10) system

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Jeff Janvrin)

- Summer meeting Aug 2 in Prairie du Chien
 - Started with a tour of McGregor Lake HREP
 - Big Thanks to Jon Henderson & Wendy Woyczik,
 - Dan Kelner gave a great mussel relocation presentation
 - Had in-person talk
 - Faith Fitzpatrick USGS - McGregor Lake shore erosion
 - Lot of questions and follow up
 - Presentation from Kevin Hanson about mudpuppies
 - Been working on that for several years since the train derailment
 - NESP & UMRB
 - Started discussion on ways FWWG could increase efficiencies and effectiveness
 - No next meeting date
 - In July when FWWG POCs met they had a lot of presentation topics
 - A lot of opportunity for 'trainings'
 - Jim F anyone have anything to add?
 - Andrew UMRBA - Have expressed interested in the trainings

- With a lot of new staff coming in, timing might work out well
 - Jeff - It was discussed there will be a NESP meeting coming up, out of that will we have some additional direction
 - Once a fact sheet is approved, FWWG could provide more information/detail
 - Pre-charette data gathering can be done externally to aid in timing of projects
 - Jim F - working to address staffing gaps
 - Trying to transfer funds around for funding positions
 - Also - knowledge transfer is going to be important going forward
 - JH there are a lot of great engineers coming up
 - Can turn to them to do some of the trainings
 - Did a 1-hour webinar for H&H to help folks understand why & how modelling is done
- Jeff J asked if Kacie would be a good contact
 - Jon H - reach out to Kari Hauck

Water Level Management Task Force (Neil Rude)

- New chair from Mary Stefanski
 - See if I make it 10 years like Mary
- UMRBA
 - Recently completed the Benefits, Costs, and Risks report
 - Outlines priority actions for implementation
 - Both 2022 and 2004 reports are on the website
- Spoke to Lauren Salvato
 - Will have a WLM regional coordination call
- Next meeting TBD

Recreation Work Group Activities (Kevin Berg)

- No meeting this summer
 - Will reach out to the group this fall, hopefully in person
 - Maybe a fieldtrip to get back into the swing of things
- Looking at having material placed in Blackhawk Park this season
 - Our budget has \$ for a new vault toilet
 - Haven't placed material there for quite some time
 - Now that we have funding, key to get material in and execute the funding
 - Lots coming up in FY23
 - Will make note of PA for beach nourishment

Beneficial Use Work Group Activities (Dan DeVaney)

- Workgroup has not met since kick-off in December
- Continue to work on Charter
- Held a meeting with the Iowa Waste Exchange
 - State program to facilitate reuse opportunities
- Held a meeting with City of Superior, WI
 - Beach nourishment project in need of material
 - Local material not up to spec
- Discussion
 - Andrew UMRBA - Touched base with Bre and Zach

- To better identify how to make the testing information more congruent across districts
- Jim asked about an update of the non-standard real estate package
 - Paul noted we've received response from HQ, Bre is working on follow-up
 - Jim mentioned that the ideal would be PPP for material management
- Andrew UMRBA asked what are simple key messages everyone can share?
 - Key talking points, like a beneficial use fact sheet
- Jim F to Paul M - WRDA SEC 125 guidance updated?
 - Paul – Still waiting on additional guidance

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

- Next Topics
 - The usual
 - eHydro presentation
 - Separate topic for WRDA, should have something by December
 - USAF Disposition study
 - IA DOT Blackhawk Bridge replacement in Lansing
 - UMRR

- Due-Outs from this RRF
 - Jim Fischer to determine path forward re: spudding question
 - Identify what questions are being asked and who needs to answer
 - Assign to appropriate workgroup
 - Jim Fischer will pass on information to USACE and USFWS on Trempealeau landing dredging
 - Channels and Harbors will look into posting the due-outs on the RRF webpage
 - Dano will make arraignments in Prairie du Chien for next meeting
 - Bob Stanick will send out a survey to RRF members seeking meeting feedback
 - Bob Stanick will create a due-out spreadsheet to track; monthly reminder
 - USACE will continue internal dialogue regarding Ackerman's Cut
 - Jon Hendrickson discussed Ackerman's Cut
 - The reason to look at it now is that it's small
 - Would be cheaper to fix now
 - If we let them go, they become much bigger jobs in a hurry
 - Discussion
 - Jim Fischer - makes me think about opportunities for NESP
 - Neil Rude - thought there was a Swift slough project?
 - Kirk Hansen- not sure if it's an ecosystem project
 - Andrew Stephenson - there's still the systematic Bankline mitigation guidelines
 - Kirk - good point, lots of NESP pots of \$\$
 - Jim F - are things like Ackerman's more intuitive, or do we need modelling/information
 - JH - navigability from outdraft from Ackerman's
 - Has potential to become a big deal
 - Don't know if it needs to be modeled unless we spend a lot of money on rock
 - Jon H – 2-foot head differential there
 - Only other one is Indian slough

- Bob S - we'll have some further internal discussions

Robert Stanick
Co-Chairman, RRF