

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #128 on 30 April 2024 (In person/WebEx virtual meeting)

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

- Introductions
 1. Bob Stanick – Chief, Channels and Harbors, USACE MVP
 2. Dano DeVaney – Placement Site Manager – USACE MVP
 3. Angela Deen – UMRR Program Manager - USACE MVP
 4. Kristin Moe- Navigation Chief, USACE MVP
 5. Heather Henneman – Chief, Hydrologic Engineering – USACE MVP
 6. Geoff Kramer – Hydrologic Engineer, USACE MVP
 7. Eric Hammer – Channel Maintenance Coordinator – USACE MVP
 8. Steve Clark – Environmental Compliance Section Chief – USACE MVP
 9. Al VanGuilder – Chief of Surveys, Channels and Harbors, USACE MVP
 10. Paul Machajewski – Long Term Planning, Dredged Material Manager, USACE MVP
 11. Dan Fasching – Water Management – USACE MVP
 12. Dan Cottrell-Channel Manager- USACE MVP
 13. Sabrina Chandler – Refuge Manager – USFWS
 14. Vanessa Perry – Mississippi River Coordinator – MN DNR
 15. Neil Rude – Mississippi River Habitat Specialist – MN DNR
 16. Lucas Youngsma – Area Hydrologist - MN DNR
 17. Charlene Anderson – Area Fisheries Supervisor – MN DNR
 18. Jeff Janvrin – Mississippi River Habitat Specialist, FWFG Chair – WI DNR
 19. Sammi Boyd – Mississippi River Planner – WI DNR
 20. Kirk Hansen – Mississippi Region Supervisor- IA DNR
 21. Fritz Funk- Lake Onalaska District Pool 7
 22. Steve Marking-Isaac Walton League, American Cruise lines
 23. Barry Drazkowski - Isaac Walton League
 24. Jordan Weeks – WI DNR
 25. Alex Kwolek – US Coast Guard
 26. Jim Fisher – Branch Chief – USGS
 27. Patrick Phenow -MN DOT
 28. Nick Castellane – Project Manager, USACE MVP
 29. Jim Cook – NESP Project Manager, USACE MVP

- RRF 127 Minutes approval
 - Motion from Sammi to approve.
 - Second from Kurt
 - No comments approved as written.

- Next Meetings: Red Wing, MN
 - #129 Aug 13th & 14th, Red Wing, MN- Location: TBD
 - Field Trip: Pool 4 Islands: Dano and Eric will coordinate.
 - Speaker: Bob had some ideas, Virtual speaker
 - Format:
 - Day 1: Morning Meeting, Afternoon Trip or Speaker

- Day 2: Morning Meeting, Afternoon Trip or Speaker
- #130 - December 10th & 11th – La Crosse, WI; TBD, USGS conference room-Jim Fischer booked a room, need to re-confirmation as USGS is using a new reservation system.
- Due Outs carried forward from previous meetings:
 - Bob will continue to work on creating a Due-Out Tracking Spreadsheet – through meeting 123, but it is not finished.
 - USACE cannot post spreadsheets on the USACE website, but they can be emailed.
 - Minutes are still/will be posted online.
 - 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)
 - *Pending: DeVaney (for Berg) reported no updates*
 - Corps to consider more dialogue with OSIT regarding channel conditions (Stanick)
 - Agencies would like more information on existing channel conditions and what USACE is currently tracking as issues, goal is to limit surprises to agencies.
 - More regular communication about channel conditions to limit surprise dredging locations, specifically placement site use. Fuel Gage of sites Red, Yellow, Green
 - *Bob spoke about channel volumes already present on bottom of dredging schedules.*
 - *Trying to figure out how to provide probable dredging info properly caveated based on the unpredictability of changing river conditions.*
 - *There is little to no certainty on potential sequencing, this changes incredibly fast.*
 - Update: Dan Cottrell was on a Work Detail, is back now, and will discuss further with Bob and present at the next meeting.
 - Dano mentioned that we had the LiDAR flight this fall, and we will have a good baseline volume measurement of all our sites. We will be moving forward with updated surveys and flights, and we can share that information as needed.
 - Dano is continuing to work on that data; hopefully will have more info soon.
 - Discussion about whether the co-chair remains with Wisconsin.
 - The question has arisen after Jim Fischer's retirement: Should the co-chair remain with Wisconsin or rotate?
 - Bob Stanick has reviewed the early RRF minutes and the minutes from Meeting #2 mentioned that the Co-chair position would rotate through a voting process.
 - Discussions that even though that was the intent, that is not what has happened.
 - WI would like to continue with holding the co-chair position.
 - MN understands the historic use of the position and accepting WI as the co-chair.
 - If WI remains co-chair, the WI Planner (Sammi Boyd) position would hold the co-chair position.
 - **Decision** The group's voting members reached a consensus that WI will continue the co-chair position. Since nothing officially changes, no official vote was needed.
 - Spudding Question:
 - Bob's option was to remove this from the due outs unless there was a specific goal or topic.
 - No opposition to removing from due-outs.
- Bob Stanick: Read the appreciation letter to Jim Fisher on behalf of RRF that voting members signed.

Agency Activities – (All)

- Bob Stanick – USACE Channels & Harbors
 - New Employee: Eric Hammer- Channel Maintenance Coordinator
 - Dan Cottrell is back from the work detail, welcome back

- Sabrina Chandler – USFWS
 - Will Meeks, the New Regional Manager, is coordinated priorities, established directions, and conducting strategic budget-cut planning.
 - Inflation Reduction Act Funding & Climate Resiliency projects
 - Waiting to announce the Refuge Project in a few weeks
 - Announced four (4) State Projects last fall: Working on financial aid agreement.
 - Should be announcing science and support of restoration projects.
 - Tim Miller should be asking for project requests in a few weeks.
 - Other news: Recent findings show that it is not warranted to relist Lake Sturgeon

- Alex Kwolek – US Coast Guard
 - Full season in progress, few grounds so far.
 - Alex Kwolek has new orders and will move on in May; a replacement will be named soon.

- Vanessa Perry –MN DNR
 - In process of hiring Lake City Office Fisheries Supervisor hoping to fill early summer.
 - DNR released an updated Invasive Carp Action Plan early 2024. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council allocated \$12 million in March for a proposed carp barrier at LD 5, will work through approvals and feasibility.
 - The State is in the process of acquiring 50 acres of Gray Cloud S&A, which will close at the end of June.
 - Nelson Backwater Mine: EIS technical Committee is wrapping up, and will release EIS in the Fall
 - MN DNR partnered with Winona Marine Museum for an Earth Day event.
 - 70 people, for litter clean up.
 - Re-issue General Permit to USACE for placement sites; 5-year permit.
 - Just had a meeting for the Wabasha Port (217 Agreement): working towards the EIS
 - The 2023 round of port development funding was announced: \$18 Million in total, \$11.5 million for 6 projects.

- Jeff Janvrin - WI DNR
 - The State will soon select the person for the Miss. River Unit Manager.
 - Received Dept approval for new NESP Project Position.
 - Crystal VanHoldt – Miss. River Regulator Expert moving to a Statewide position as Waterways Policy Coordinator position.
 - Staff Shortage with Fish & Wildlife positions, discussion how to adjust.
 - Brenda Kelly – Goose Banding in mid-June, looking for volunteers.
 - Jeff Janvrin- Will be retiring within this Calendar year.

- Jim Fisher – USGS
 - New Center Director – John Amberg started 24 March
 - LTM is deciding how to move forward with a large funding increase of 50% and moving forward with the approved plan. Currently hiring geomorphologist, physical scientist, and large river ecologist positions. Beginning a position description for a zooplankton ecologist position.
 - Hosted Bi-annual science meeting in January with about 100 in attendance. Developed 14 proposals totaling 3.9 million dollars. Projects are currently ranked and working through the budget process and will be submitted to the UMRR committee.

- Kirk Hansen –IA DNR
 - No staffing updates.
 - Staff have noticed an increase in invasive Carp north of the Quad Cities, pools 12-14.

Fish and Wildlife Work Group Activities (Jeff Janvrin)

- Had a full partnership meeting at the end of January, where over 23 projects were presented, including two non-voting partners presented 4 ideas. Agencies were asked to submit a max of 5 projects.
 - Project Ranking Timeline:
 - May—Have FWWG members finish the ranking matrix, narrow down the projects, and create draft fact sheets for 8-10 projects.
 - May-Aug- Will be looking for USACE assistance.
 - Aug-FWWG will finish the rankings of the projects and make recommendations.
 - Sept -FWWG will finalize the drafts for submission to RRF before the December meeting.
 - Have added new columns in the spread sheet to help give a better illustration of the project's goals.
 - Will need cost estimates between June and Aug for these projects.
 - USACE will want only to do cost estimates for projects on the short list.
 - Cost estimators are hesitant to make too many assumptions with rough project outlines
 - The idea was suggested to add a 20% contingency when estimates are done early the early stages.

- NESP is looking to relaunch reach planning this summer and may need a big ask from the river team.

Water Level Management Task Force (Neil Rude)

- WLMTF has a full meeting after the last RRF with 20-25 people in attendance.
 - Reviewed info from the UMR meeting
 - Aaron McFarlane presented on water level management in Pool 10 and NESP
 - Lauren Salvato presented what SDM has put out regarding water level management.
 - Planning to meet every 6 months.

- Awaiting on developments from NESP on water level management, currently is stalled.
- USACE Sustainable Rivers Programs is an operations-funded program focused on changing how projects are operated, keeping environmental flows in mind.

- Recently received funding for a Minor Opportunistic Draw Down in pool 10.
 - Will soon be developing a process on how to do this.
 - Aaron McFarlane will lead this effort.
 - A major concern is how to message this publicly.
 - It will only operate within the intermediate band and will not be lower than it has normally been in any given year.
 - Question: Has a discussion happened with the cruise lines?
 - This project will not impact barge traffic, or cruise lines, or dredging. Determined that industry/cruise lines should be notified.
 - Looking at Summer of 2025 for first draw down.
 - This becomes part of LD 10 operational manual and gives USACE the flexibility to implement this drawn down if conditions are right. It gives us the operational ability to try.
 - Not going to have a lot of monitoring, potentially use game cameras to look at vegetation growth.
 - Possible to bring up the draw down during the Pool 10 HERP meeting?
 - Probably too soon, in the planning stages.
- USACE is also looking for possible dam locations, to host a pilot study to alter flows to increase sturgeon spawning habitat potentially.
 - Will get a person assigned to start looking at possible locations.
 - LD 3 mentioned as a possible test site.
 - Does not have enough funding for modeling, currently.

Recreation Work Group Activities (Kevin Berg)

- Kevin Berg does intend to have a meeting this summer. One topic will be who will chair this RWG next, pending his retirement.
- This is a reminder to spread the word about a UMRCC Grant to get classes/schools out to the river. The grant will pay for transportation and other costs.
 - Can be applied to at any time.

Continuing Authorities Program Update (Nick Castellane)

- No current CAP projects to update the group. Should have more info in about 8 months. There are two potential projects on the river.

Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) (Jim Cook)

- No program level updates.
- St. Paul District Ecosystem projects:
 - Pool 4 Wacouta Bay:
 - The report is with the division not fully in design yet.
 - Currently reviewing new cost estimate.
 - Looking for contract award in Summer of FY25
 - Sny Magill-Effigy Mounds:
 - Received approval of TSP in 24 February.

- PIR is concurrently in review by MVD, ATR, Sponsor, and Tribal starting on 24 May through the summer.
- Pool 6 Johnson Island:
 - New PIR started in 24 January
 - The project will include island & shoreline protection, floodplain restoration, and backwater restoration
 - Looking to schedule site visit in early May 2024
- Systemic Forestry:
 - Looking to do timber stand inventories on federal lands.
 - Working on long-term strategic planning and will have updates when they are ready.
 - Have about a million dollars in work during FY24
- Regional Water Level Management
 - Kickoff was July 2023
 - Participants include Ops, H&H, and legal counsel from MVP, MVP, and MVS
 - Will be meeting in the next few months.
- NESP Navigation Project
 - Navigation Mooring Cells Project
 - Regional project lead by MVR, design contracted to Stantec
 - Pools 7 and 10 are within MVP
 - Efficiency improvement, 5–10-minute time savings per lockage
 - 95% design is currently undergoing quality assurance reviews.
 - The goal is to contract award in FY24
 - Biologic Assessment in pool 10
 - The City of Guttenberg and its citizens have expressed interest in a public meeting about the Pool 10 mooring cell. The PDT Team plans to host a public meeting in the summer of 2024.
 - Navigation Mitigation Pool 4 Island 4
 - Systemic extenuation project, fully funded by Navigation.
 - Partnership with Wisconsin DNR
 - Awarded in July of 2024
 - Received notice the contractor mobilization will start in the summer of 2024 with a completion of mid-summer 2025.
- NESP Consultation Committee Meetings
 - 26 June 2024: Rock Island, IL
 - 4 September 2024: Rock Island, IL
 - 4 December 2024: virtual meeting

Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) (Angela Deen)

- President released the 3rd year budget: \$55 million in total.
 - Still around 11-12 Million for St. Paul District.
- Planning
 - Robinson Lake - Pool 4, MN
 - Alternatives are set.
 - Currently developing quantities, costs, HEP
 - Goal to have TSP by Fall

- Big Lake – Pool 4, WI
 - Final report was submitted to Division at the end of April.
 - Cost increased to about 44 million dollars.
 - Will be using about 240,000 cubic yards of sand from Teepeeota
 - Plans and specs will kick off this summer.
- Design
 - Reno Bottoms HREP – Pool 9 MN/IA
 - No significant updates; currently in the middle of the design
 - Preparing for reviews end of CY24
 - Lower Pool 10 HREP
 - Project is about 30 million dollars.
 - Stage 1- BCOES
 - Looking to award state 1 this summer.
 - Currently scheduling public open house for this summer
- Construction
 - McGregor Lake HREP
 - Stage I: 100% Completed
 - Stage II: 60% Complete
 - Planted over 300 trees over earth day on the north end of McGregor Lake
 - Also hosted open house, with over a dozen members of the public
 - Final grading & seeding expected in 2025.
 - Drone video is also posted online.
- Pool 6: Trempealeau Refuge Report
 - It is finished up and can be used to develop a capability study.
 - The main finding was to switch away from pump stations and increase river connectivity.
 - Increase culvert under railroad tracks, coordination with railroad needed.

Beneficial Use Work Group Activities (Dano DeVaney)

- Held an aquatic placement workshop in January, with 36 people in attendance. Goal was to broaden the perspectives of material management. Looking at exploring more aquatic placement.
 - Outcome from the workshop:
 - L-T FATE- Sediment Tracing Study
 - Instead of dye it's a manufactured polymer that is placed into the water for sediment tracing.
 - Looking to find a testing site within the St. Paul District.
 - Create a marketing sheet/ brochure for the beneficial use sand to give out to the DOT and other contractors.
- Coordinated with Winona County for haul sand for road projects out of the Homer placement site.

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

- Dan Cottrell – Channel Conditions
 - Current Operations:
 - Govt. Mechanical is the only plant operating currently.
 - They were on specialized projects and are now transitioning to channel dredging.
 - Overall, the surveys look good, but a few areas of concerns exist.
 - Areas of concern/critical area:
 - Pool 2
 - Head of Lake Pepin

- Channel Management study in internal review, hope to have it out for external review this summer.
 - Currently working on scheduling, the return of the Dredge GOETZ, and the start of Contract Mechanical plants.
 - Currently use Just in Time Dredging, and it's hard to predict and plan dredging operations.
 - 700,000 cubic yards of unscheduled dredging listed currently.
 - Can still currently see cut lines from last year's dredging.
 - USCGC Wyaconda has made it through the district twice now.
 - Wyaconda Captain is changing this summer, Change of Command in July.
 - American Cruise lines are planning to go to St. Paul this year.
 - Adding Steve Marking to Channel Conditions Report emails that are released on Wednesday.
 - Survey Inspection, not seeing anything unusual, and are working in pool 4 and checking spring hotspots.
- Dano DeVaney – Placement Site Actions
 - Upper Pool 4 CMS:
 - Draft is completed and in internal review, out this summer.
 - LD 2 Protective Island:
 - Is moving forward, will use Pool 2 CMS volumes to build the island.
 - LIDAR Survey
 - It is completed, but currently working on volumes.
 - Containment berms, and functional volumes are concerns of getting the volumes.
 - Beneficial Use Signage:
 - Finished installing signs at heavily used placement sites.
 - Have seen some minor increase in phone calls, trying to get contractors to reach out more often.
 - Pine Bend/Lower Boulanger:
 - Pigs Eye Project using fines, during this project.
 - Corps Island/Wild Bend Bank Stabilization Project
 - Contracts awarded, and will begin in Aug.
 - The willow planting contract is in the works for Corps Island/Wild Bend/Fisher Island.
 - Red Wing Commercial Harbor:
 - ROE will expire at end of 2024, working on renewing.
 - Reads Landing:
 - Two offloads starting next month.
 - Pierce County Islands, and NESP Island #4
 - Rolling Prairie:
 - M&R will be finishing the road to Fitzy 40 and will be ready for material placement soon.
 - Fountain City 1:
 - M&R placed material from the FCSB dredge cut with a containment bowl.
 - Awaiting environmental study to determine fate of that material.
 - Winona Tech Park
 - Currently working to renew ROE paperwork, for right of entry.
 - Trempealeau & Buck Creek:
 - Were shaped this spring in prep for Bank Swallows
 - Lansing Highway Bridge:
 - Currently empty of sand, due to the construction
 - Getting a lot of called from users asking for material.

- Could Lansing Power plant be used as a temporary placement site during construction?
 - It is possible, as it was mentioned in DMMP but not researched yet.
 - Potential Placement Site Activities:
 - Teepeeota: Offload of 240,000-300,000 cubic yards for Big Lake HREP
 - Grand Encampment: offload in support of 217 agreement with City of Wabasha
 - Alma Marina: Need to find discharge pipe.
 - West Newton: Possible offload through West Newton to Rolling Prairie.
 - Above Brownsville offload to Brownsville
 - Mississippi Gardens: No current plans
 - McMillian Island: Offload of 150,000 cy for lower Pool 10 HREP
 - Questions: If you offload Corps Island would you go through Sturgeon Lake boat Ramp?
 - For Rock Staging it's planned for Lock and Dam 3
- Paul Machajewski – Unloads & DMMPs
 - MOU's and General Permits:
 - WI DNR Permit reissued.
 - 401 water quality certification is with the DNR close to starting the public comments process.
 - MN DNR General Permit:
 - Is completed, is now issued as a 5-year permit, instead of annual.
 - A ten-year permit with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) was secured, ensuring compliance until 2033.
 - The Iowa DNR 404(t) permit for after-the-fact issuance remains in effect for placement operations in Iowa waters.
 - Site Developments:
 - Rolling Prairie:
 - The draft land use plan received some comments and is currently reviewing and updating the plan with those comments. Plan to finish the draft by the end of calendar year.
 - Fitzzy 40, we plan to remove 10 acres from the Ag lease. And place potentially 100,000 cy from Above West Newton Island.
 - Wetland restoration project for land south of 84, looking to re-meandering of Gorman Creek potentially in 1 to 3 years.
 - Will host onsite visit once plans are developed.
 - Site Unloads:
 - IDIQ Unload Contract: awarded to Legacy Corporation.
 - Plans to unload Above West Newton, and or Above Brownville Island sites, using this contract.
 - Could also have the do channel dredging if needed.
 - Plan to do less large offload contracts and more these smaller offloads.
 - DMMP's:
 - Pool 4:
 - Feb: City of Wabasha unloaded our Wabasha Gravel Pit, Moved about 129,000 cy.
 - 217 Agreement: No island work has started with this yet.
 - Working on EIS process for approval of a barge terminal.
 - State EIS process, and Federal process are different. Consultant is trying to make the EIS cover the design use and potential use.
 - Lucas: State is looking at how the port will potentially be used now and in the future. The Federal is only looking at the designed used.
 - Goals to is move sand by 2025.

- Read's Landing; Pipeline A:
 - Contractor has mobilized and completed some tree cleaning.
 - Plan to start pipeline in May.
 - Goal to finish pipeline by Sept 2024
 - Booster Pump procurement is with contracting and going through the acquisition process and hope to award soon. Delivered may not be until 2025.
- Pool 6:
 - Implementation phase of DMMP.
 - Continue to use Homer primary placement site, Dicks Marina (2-year agreement), and Winona Tech Park (yearly agreement).
 - Working with Fastenal for real estate agreement:
 - Two sites written in the DMP are off the table.
 - Has proposed another site: Badger Equipment site.
 - Will have to go through process to add to DMMP.
 - Potentially up to 100,000 cy.
 - Safety Improvements at Homer Site:
 - Collaboration with Canadian Pacific Railroad to enhance safety at the Homer site by installing crossing arms, lights, and bells.
 - Communications has currently stalled. Submitted plans to CPR last June (2023) with no response.
 - Construction to be determined.
 - Pedestrian Study and Noise Mitigation:
 - A pedestrian study is planned to facilitate the turning off bells and lights when the train is stationary and the crossing arms are down, addressing noise concerns expressed by the community.
 - Looking to hear back from MN DOT on developing a study.
 - Have not heard back from them since Dec 2023.
 - Pool 9 DMMP:
 - Genoa Power Plant:
 - Looking for over 200,000 cy to cap the coal storage area.
 - Will unload at historic COE placement site.
 - Has a 45,000 cy capacity
 - Will be able to use as a Ben. Site once coal storage area is filled.
 - Will be only mechanically placed material.
 - Adjacent dredge cuts are on a 17% frequency, last dredge was in 2022.
 - Continued used of Lansing Highway Bridge as per the CMMP.
 - Currently no need to look into/add another placement site.
 - The draft Dredge Material Management Plan for Pool 9 is expected to be presented to stakeholders for review in the spring or summer.
 - Pool 10 DMMP:
 - A 12-foot sediment collector, was tested in March in Lake Altoona, Eau Claire.
 - Water flows were low and didn't allow long term testing.
 - Had running maybe 6 hrs, intended to run up to a week.
 - Tested with dye to see how it would pull material in. Dye work as expected.
 - No concern with entrapment.
 - May look at testing this collector on the Upper Iowa River this summer.
 - Developing Placement site Matrix.
 - Over a year away before a draft is ready.
 - Pool 3 DMMP:

- Have had talks with Xcel Energy and Red Wing Port Authority to use the power plant to offload material.
 - Potential user looking for 100,000 cy.
 - Prairie Island Casino is looking for material to build a bridge over the railroad tracks. Potentially 100,000 cy.
- Question: Does the DMMP Matrix for potential placement sites factor in potential beneficial use?
 - We do note the potential of beneficial use in the matrix.
 - Beneficial use is very one time and project based. It's difficult to plan ahead in the DMMP for these one-time projects.

Navigation Work Group Activities (Bob Stanick)

- No Current Task, but here to respond to anything that comes up.

Other Topic and/or presenter (guest speaker)

- Ackerman's Cut; below Lock and Dam 10 just above Rock Island Line.
 - Has been noticed as a concern since 2019, flows through this cut are extremely strong with deep holes, and a channel to the north is growing may bypass the manmade structures that are in place soon. Flow measurements were taken in Sept of 2023, and a survey was completed in Nov of 2023. Currently in talks with H&H to get ideas on what is happening and how to protect some of the areas.
 - Jeff Question: If flows are reduced in Ackerman's Cut are their cuts below this area that would then become the next break out?
 - Yes, this is a concern as the manmade structures below were installed around the same time. Any changes would be coordinated with Rock Island District.

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

- No Future Topics Discussed
- No new Due outs, Continue forward with unfinished due outs.

Robert Stanick
Co-Chairman, RRF