Minutes of the
Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program
Coordinating Committee

November 8, 2017
Quarterly Meeting

Hampton Inn and Suites Downtown
St. Paul, Minnesota

Sabrina Chandler of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. on November 8, 2017. Other UMRR Coordinating Committee representatives present were Brian Chewning (USACE), Mark Gaikowski (USGS), Dan Stephenson (IL DNR), Randy Schultz (IA DNR), Megan Moore (MN DNR), Matt Vitello (MO DoC), Jim Fischer (WI DNR), Marty Adkins (NRCS), and Ken Westlake (USEPA) via phone. A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

Minutes of the August 9, 2017 Meeting

Renee Turner requested that the second sentence in the third full paragraph on page A-2 is revised to clarify that Headquarters is not providing any indication that UMRR may receive $33.17 million in out-years. Rather, Headquarters simply provided guidance to include full funding in its range of planning scenarios. Marty Adkins suggested that his statement in the second line on page A-5 be edited to "…two similar tributary areas that have been restored…"

Randy Schultz moved and Matt Vitello seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the August 9, 2017 UMRR Coordinating Committee meeting as provided in the agenda packet with the two corrections. The motion carried unanimously.

Regional Management and Partnership Collaboration

Program Manager

Andy Barnes acknowledged that Marv Hubbell's retirement in early 2018 is quickly approaching. Barnes said the Corps gave substantial consideration to the position's status and location. Ultimately, the District leadership agreed that the position will remain within the Rock Island District and that the opportunity to apply for the position will be open to all external candidates. Barnes said he anticipates that the position announcement will be published in early December 2017 and that the Corps will have the position filled by the February 2018 UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting.

Jim Fischer said the UMRR program manager is a very critical position from the partnership's perspective given the amount of direct coordination that partners have with the individual. In response to a question from Fischer, Barnes said the interview panel will include one Corps staff from each District. There will not be an opportunity for partners to be involved in the interview panel. However, Barnes assured the Coordinating Committee that the Corps is taking this position hiring process very seriously and understands the importance of the candidate to partners.

Fiscal Report

Marv Hubbell reported that UMRR achieved an execution rate of 92 percent in FY 2017. Hubbell applauded the partnership for another successful year and thanked all those involved in program implementation.

Hubbell said that, on September 8, 2017, Congress passed a continuing resolution authority (CRA) for FY 2018 that expires on December 8. 2017. District staff are authorized to execute the program at $33.17 million until Congress passes a full-year appropriations measure. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees both approved $33.17 million for UMRR in their respective FY 2018 energy and water appropriations measures. At the $33.17 million planning scenario, UMRR's FY 2018 internal allocations are as follows:

- Regional Administration and Programmatic Efforts — $1,110,000
- Regional Science and Monitoring — $9,325,000
  - Long term resource monitoring — $4,725,000
  - Regional science in support of restoration — $3,175,000
  - Regional science staff support — $150,000
  - Habitat project evaluations — $975,000
  - Habitat Needs Assessment II — $300,000
- Habitat Restoration — $22,735,000
  - Regional project sequencing — $100,000
  - MVP — $10,922,000
  - MVR — $5,747,000
  - MVS — $5,966,500

Hubbell explained that the FY 2018 District HREP allocations above reflect repayment after transferring work among Districts in FY 2017. In response to a question from Kirsten Mickelsen, Hubbell explained that the Corps has developed contingency plans should any challenges arise to executing McGregor Lake. Sabrina Chandler expressed appreciation to District staff for flexibility in transferring money among Districts. Hubbell credited MVD staff for their involvement and responsiveness in ensuring that the FY 2017 execution rate was achieved.

As typical, District staff have provided spending plans associated with several funding scenarios to USACE Headquarters for its use in developing the agency's FY 2019 budget recommendations. Hubbell discussed revisions to the six-year plan for habitat projects using the diagram below, noting that many project schedules were advanced given the increased funding in FYs 2017 and 2018.

External Communications

Mickelsen recalled that, at its August 9, 2017 meeting, the UMRR Coordinating Committee reflected on the importance for UMRR to engage the public and other external audiences. The Committee recognized the priority given to external communications in the 2015-2025 UMRR Strategic Plan and agreed to develop a more detailed recommendation for implementing a communication strategy. This involved providing specific recommendations with assigned roles and responsibilities, including better utilizing the partnership's communications network. Since the August 2017 quarterly meeting, the UMRR *ad hoc* Communications Team agreed that more direction from the UMRR Coordinating Committee is needed regarding communications strategies over the long term and whether there should be a certain amount of dedicated funding.

Mickelsen said the *ad hoc* Communications Team is recommending that the UMRR Coordinating Committee task a group of partners to develop a more detailed implementation plan for external communications and identify any considerations that the Committee would need to address – e.g., annual resources.

Karen Hagerty recognized the Communications Team's accomplishments thus far, including folders of various communications materials for partners to distribute. The folders include a placeholder for business cards and fact sheets on LTRM and other matters.

Brian Chewning applauded the authors of the 2016 UMRR Report to Congress, noting that it includes many compelling messages about the program's achievements, partnership, and implementation effectiveness. Chewning said the major takeaway from the report is that UMRR has a significant value to the nation. Mickelsen agreed with Chewning's observation while pointing out that UMRR is not reaching key audiences to inform them of UMRR.

Bryan Hopkins recognized the value of a "friends" group to serve as a voice. Olivia Dorothy mentioned that McKnight Foundation is providing funding for the Mississippi River Network's 1 Mississippi campaign. Dorothy said she had talked with Hubbell and Hagerty about the potential to collaborate. Dorothy encouraged the UMRR Coordinating Committee to consider opportunities to leverage resources through the 1 Mississippi campaign. A potential opportunity could include surveying the public regarding values associated with the UMRS and how the river should be managed.

Dru Buntin recalled that a primary driver behind communications being a strong component of the UMRR's 2015-2025 Strategic Plan was the Administration's questioning to District staff regarding when restoration on the UMRS will be finished. Buntin said other large aquatic ecosystem programs like the Everglades and Chesapeake Bay do a much better job of telling their stories and emphasizing the value of their work. Those programs have staff dedicated to carrying out communications and education strategies. UMRR's *ad hoc* nature of doing communications has not been effective. The Corps had offered a dedicated staff person but that option does not appear to be feasible for a number of reasons, including competing with other Corps' communications needs. Buntin advised that UMRR develop more specific direction regarding external communications.

Sabrina Chandler recommended that communications professionals be involved in developing and carrying out UMRR's communications strategies. Chandler suggested that the UMRR Coordinating Committee convene via conference call to develop objectives for external communication with sufficient direction to contract out the execution. Marty Adkins recognized that institutional frameworks should also be considered – i.e., how can the partnership network be best utilized.

Mark Gaikowski offered the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee as an example. The Committee has a sub-group that focuses specifically on internal and external communications. The

group developed an initial plan and then assigned responsibilities for various outreach strategies. Gaikowski encouraged the UMRR Coordinating Committee to consider a similar model. Chandler echoed Gaikowski's recommendation and advised that a single point-of-contact be responsible for organizing UMRR's external communications strategies.

Hubbell noted two take-aways from the discussion, including that 1) there is consensus around creating a focus group to develop more detailed operational tasks for external communication and 2) District staff will consider feasibility for allocating dedicated staff time.

Andy Barnes clarified that Col. Craig Baumgartner is not opposed to using a contractor to develop communications materials. However, Col. Baumgartner is cautious to have a non-federal partner implement the communications strategies when that partner may also advocate to Congress for federal funding to the program.

The UMRR Coordinating Committee agreed with Chandler's suggestions to convene a conference call.

Program Showcases

Peterson Lake HREP

Rob Burdis presented on proposed modifications to Peterson Lake HREP to better achieve the project's habitat goals and objectives. Peterson Lake HREP was completed in 1995 and a 2011 adaptive management evaluation was used to justify the improvement efforts.

Burdis described Peterson Lake as a 500-acre backwater lake located in Pool 4 between a string of main channel border islands on the Minnesota shoreline. There are 13 inflow channels to the lake along its northeast perimeter and one outflow channel located to the southeast. Peterson Lake includes a variety of habitat types, including deep water without aquatic vegetation, shallow water with and without vegetation, riparian islands, and areas with little and moderate flows.

Burdis explained that the area changed dramatically following the construction of L&D 4 with the substantial loss of marshes and islands as well as backwater habitat areas. General goals for Peterson Lake HREP were to reduce sedimentation into the project area, stabilize barrier islands, improve migratory waterfowl habitat, and improve fish habitat in winter. More specifically, the HREP intended to maintain Peterson Lake as a productive backwater resource, optimizing habitat conditions for migratory waterfowl and native fish species such as largemouth bass, northern pike, bluegill, crappie, and associated species. Burdis explained Peterson Lake HREP's features, which included a combination of channel closures, weirs, fish access channels, and rock bank and mound protection. Burdis overviewed the project evaluation monitoring scope and discussed the results related to temperature, dissolved oxygen, bathymetry, and turbidity.

In response to a question from Randy Schultz, Sabrina Chandler explained that Peterson Lake has voluntary avoidance with established corridors for boaters to limit disturbances to birds.

Habitat Needs Assessment

Information Summary Report – Existing State of the System

Nate De Jager presented on the results of the HNA II's inventory of habitat and ecosystem conditions within the UMRS and discussed how information can be used to make more meaningful assessments. This is the first major effort in a two-part process. De Jager reminded the UMRR Coordinating Committee that the HNA II purposes are to:

- Develop data sets and quantitative measures (i.e., indicators) for as many UMRS objectives as possible and for the entire system
- Focus on ecosystem structure, function, and resilience at a broad-scale (navigation pool and larger)
- Inform management targets and ranges for indicators

De Jager explained the explicit relationship of the HNA II to the Essential Ecosystem Characteristics and general ecosystem resilience. The HNA II report outline focuses on the three characteristics of general resilience: connectivity, diversity and redundancy, and slow variables and feedbacks. De Jager showcased illustrations depicting the habitat conditions as related to connectivity and water surface elevation fluctuations (a slow variable).

De Jager reported on the development of aquatic and floodplain function classes that collectively define the fundamental aspects of UMRS habitat conditions. About 50 metrics were developed to describe the physical attributes of more localized aquatic areas. Thirteen aquatic functional classes were created and mapped using 11 combinations of those 50 metrics. De Jager overviewed a map output of those aquatic functional classes in Pools 8 and 26. De Jager said the floodplain functional classes were defined by a flood inundation model that utilized multiple attributes, including frequency, depth, duration, timing, and timing variability of inundation. Both the aquatic and floodplain functional classes datasets will be available via shapefile. De Jager also discussed the development of a sedimentation model and how that will be used to better understand potential forest succession scenarios. The methodologies for defining the aquatic and floodplain functional classes as well as for developing the sedimentation and forest succession models will be provided in appendices to the HNA II report.

De Jager said next steps will include:

1. Finalizing the development of inundation and forest succession models and associated indicators
2. Drafting a "future directions" section in the HNA II report
3. Employing a peer-review of the HNA II report and associated data layers
4. Initiate discussions regarding establishing targets and criteria for various indicators

In response to a question from Megan Moore, Kat McCain said that Chuck Theiling had observed that the cluster analysis of habitat conditions in navigation pools matches fairly closely with the geomorphic reaches.

Tim Yager observed that the HNA II approach and information would be helpful at a landscape analysis across the Midwest. Kirsten Mickelsen observed that Yager's suggestion aligns with Goal 3 of the 2015-2025 UMRR Strategic Plan, which calls for more direct coordination and information sharing with related organizations in the watershed.

Management Response to Information – System Assessment

McCain explained that the HNA II Steering Committee is struggling with how to develop the system assessment using the information described by De Jager. The information provides a fundamental shift in how habitat needs can be assessed. McCain said the HNA II tri-chair leads would like to request input from the UMRR Coordinating Committee regarding the definition of acceptable ranges for the indicators. More specifically, McCain pointed to the specific questions on page B-3 of the agenda packet for the Coordinating Committee to consider. She noted the substantial complexity involved in determining a desired future and habitat needs for what and where. In response to a question from Moore, McCain explained that there would be a set of targets or acceptable ranges for each cluster or

geomorphic reach. Additional analyses may be required in order to determine thresholds or acceptable ranges. De Jager clarified that this will not require specific numbers for individual indicators. He said the HNA II should be thought of as a planning effort to move the indicators along a particular trajectory. The indicators should not be evaluated individually (e.g., surface water elevation) but as a collective of indicators that represent a habitat condition.

In response to a question from Chandler to answer McCain's questions from page B-3, Matt Vitello moved and Randy Schulz seconded a motion to:

1. Endorse the notion of using the HNA II aquatic and floodplain functional classes to represent broad habitat categories for the system.
2. Direct the HNA II Steering Committee to develop recommendations for acceptable ranges for the HNA II indicators for the UMRR Coordinating Committee's consideration.

In response to a request from Chandler, Mickelsen said she can work with McCain and Sara Schmuecker to develop a one- to two-page schedule and process outline for future work.

Karen Hagerty suggested that the A-Team be consulted and involved in the HNA II information and system assessment development.

Habitat Restoration

District Reports

St. Louis District

Brian Markert reported that Tim Eagan is no longer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Markert introduced Jasen Brown who is currently serving in a detail to fill the project management position. Markert explained that the St. Louis District is considering alternative designs for Rip Rap Landing to avoid existing constraints resulting from an existing WRP easement. MVS is undergoing a robust planning effort to maintain an adequate pipeline of habitat projects, including Piasa and Eagles Nest Islands, Crains Open River Island, Harlow Open River Islands, and Oakwood Bottoms. Markert said the District anticipates finalizing design work on Clarence Cannon's pump station this fiscal year and awarding a construction contract. Final punch list items are being completed on Ted Shanks.

St. Paul District

Tom Novak said MVP is aggressively advancing work on McGregor Lake Islands, anticipating finalizing plans and design work and awarding a construction contract this fiscal year. The District is also developing plans for Bass Lake Ponds and is working with the District's Fish and Wildlife Work Group to select the next two to three UMRR habitat projects. Novak reported that MVP anticipates awarding a construction contract for Conway Lake and finalizing construction on Harpers Slough this fiscal year and turning the project over to USFWS.

Rock Island District

Marv Hubbell said MVR is continuing planning work on Keithsburg and Steamboat Island habitat projects. Other projects previously in the planning queue have each encountered unique issues that prevent them from advancing. This has created a shortage of projects within the District. However, Hubbell said the District's Fish and Wildlife Work Group is evaluating 10 potential habitat projects to recommend for implementation. MVR is focusing its design work on Beaver Island and may begin

construction on the project this fiscal year. The District is also advancing construction on Pool 12 Overwintering, Huron Island Stages II and III, Rice Lake Stage I, and Beaver Island.

HREP Partnership Meeting

Hubbell reported that a UMRR HREP strategic planning meeting is scheduled for November 29-30, 2017 in Dubuque. A range of issues that are affecting UMRR implementation will be discussed. Hubbell said he will provide a summary of the discussion and any outcomes at the UMRR Coordinating Committee's February 7, 2018 quarterly meeting.

Long Term Resource Monitoring and Science

FY 2017 4th Quarter Report

Jeff Houser reported that accomplishments of the fourth quarter of FY 2017 include the publication of five manuscripts:

1. Hydrology controls recruitment of two invasive cyprinids: bigheaded carp reproduction in a navigable large river
2. Effects of flood inundation and invasion by Phalaris arundinacea on nitrogen cycling in an Upper Mississippi River floodplain forest
3. Lake sturgeon and shovelnose sturgeon environmental life history revealed using pectoral finray microchemistry: implications for interjurisdictional conservation through fishery closure zones
4. An interdisciplinary human-environmental examination of effects consistent with the anthropocene in the Lower Illinois River Valley
5. Evaluating the fish community in a rare backwater habitat in the Middle Mississippi River

Houser explained that UMESC staff are currently reviewing the results of new water quality testing equipment to ensure accuracy and consistency with existing equipment. Houser said such testing is standard practice when new equipment is acquired. Reports will be published that summarize the findings. UMESC is working with the equipment manufacturer to address issues regarding ammonia testing. Jim Fischer recalled that the existing equipment was used when it was originally purchased in 1993, noting the overall efficiency and low-cost of the UMESC LTRM laboratory. Fischer reflected on the UMRR Coordinating Committee's decision to bring the laboratory in-house and said move has paid tremendous dividends, especially when comparing to the cost of contracting to an external laboratory. Karen Hagerty said she appreciates this discussion as it highlights the importance of base monitoring and the value associated with the investment to keep it running.

FY 2018 Science Plan

Houser discussed plans for the January 16-18, 2018 UMRR LTRM science meeting. The meeting's purposes are to foster a collaborative approach for developing science in support of river management, to more effectively incorporate UMRR's LTRM strengths, and facilitate a more direct interaction between management and restoration practitioners and researchers as research proposals are being developed. The meeting will focus on 1) assessing current research needs to improve the understanding, management, and restoration of the UMRS; and 2) identifying specific research proposals with associated scopes of work for FY 2018. Participants will reference the UMRR LTRM research frameworks, reports and recommendations from the two previous workshops regarding sedimentation and geomorphology, as well as information needs and research opportunities discussed throughout the ecological resilience, HNA II, and 2009 reach planning effort.

Houser explained that participants will form working groups during the meeting to further develop and refine research proposals, including further specifying questions and identifying main tasks and resource needs. A lead and a few initial members for each working group will be determined in advance of the meeting so they have time to prepare. Summaries of the selected research proposals and associated scopes of work will be presented to the UMRR Coordinating Committee for its consideration of endorsement at its February 7, 2018 meeting.

USACE LTRM Report

Karen Hagerty reported that the anticipated FY 2018 UMRR budget for LTRM is $5.75 million, including $4.75 million for base monitoring and $1.025 million for science in support of restoration (i.e., analysis under base monitoring). Hagerty said an additional $2.15 million is available for science-related efforts.

A-Team Report

Matt Vitello reported that the A-Team held an in-person meeting on October 3, 2017 in conjunction with the UMRCC Fish and Wildlife Tech Section. The agenda included an updates on UMRR's budget, LTRM-related efforts, ecological resilience, and HNA II. In addition, the A-Team discussed planning for science research in FY 2018.

Other Business

Appreciation to Mike Griffin and Dan Stephenson

The UMRR Coordinating Committee recognized Mike Griffin and Dan Stephenson for their contributions to river management and UMRR. They have both announced their retirements in the near future. Griffin has been involved with UMRR since its first years, including building the program's foundation and fostering its partnership network.

Future Meetings

The upcoming quarterly meetings are as follows:

- **February 2018 — Moline**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting — February 6
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting — February 7**
- **May 2018 — St. Louis**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting — May 15
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting — May 16**
- **August 2018 — La Crosse**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting — August 14
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting — August 15**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

UMRR Coordinating Committee Attendance List
November 8, 2017

UMRR Coordinating Committee Members

Brian Chewning	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Sabrina Chandler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Mark Gaikowski	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Dan Stephenson	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Randy Shultz	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Megan Moore	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Matt Vitello	Missouri Department of Conservation
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Marty Adkins	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Ken Westlake	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 [On the phone]

Others In Attendance

Renee Turner	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Gary Young	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Kat McCain	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Tom Novak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Aaron Snyder	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Andy Barnes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jody Creswell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marvin Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jasen Brown	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Johnson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Sara Schmuecker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO [On the phone]
Scott Morlock	U.S. Geological Survey, Missouri Water Science Center
Jeff Ziegeweid	U.S. Geological Survey, Iowa-Illinois Water Science Center
Jeff Houser	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jennie Sauer	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Nate De Jager	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC [On the phone]
Jessica Weis	Natural Resources Conservation Service, Minnesota
Sanjay Sofat	Iowa Environmental Protection Agency
Mike Griffin	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Kirk Hansen	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Rob Burdis	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Bryan Hopkins	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Olivia Dorothy	American Rivers
Tim Schlagenhaft	Audubon, Minnesota
Mark Ellis	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Kirsten Mickelsen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association