

Topic: How is the River regulated & why? Who gives the orders?

Convener: Tom Jaeger

Number of people: 10

Notes (verbatim from facilitator):

Is the water level consistent with 9 ft navigation channel or is it held higher at times.

Are there any times that dams on Mississippi River are operated to increase stage in pools during flood or during other time periods?

Concern with duration of flood, is there way to manage so shorter duration?

Comment that can't manage the Mississippi River alone. Major economic impacts with prolonged flooding, need to find place other than Mississippi River to store some of the water.

Topic: Sediment Management

Convener: Karl Steichen

Number of people: 7

Notes (verbatim from facilitator):

Finley's Landing/Rosebrook island

- Building up island
- How to dispose of sand
- Sand washed off Rosebrook during this spring's high water

- Some higher island might be okay for wildlife

Climate change predicts more rainfall for our area

- Will all of the Corps locks and dams be obsolete? (Due to higher water levels)

City of Dubuque

- Corps of Engineers permitting process is difficult to navigate. Difficult to get simple things done such as reinforcing Dubuque's floodwall

- Also, Corps process is too compartmentalized – "term silos" was used. Permitting is too much in "silos"

Not enough coordination between different government agencies.

Building a floodwall to protect a town slows down the current below, also the project leading to increased sedimentation

Rivers must be able to act as rivers – need room to flood.

Flood walls are not the total answer

If coastal communities need sediment, how is it that our sediment never seems to make it to the gulf?

Climate change – increased rainfall but also periods of drought.

Sediment will be an increased problem during drought.

Lots of groups to coordinate to achieve many of these goals.

Upstream people must be aware of the problems they contribute to.

Topic: Flood Risk Mitigation

Convener: Sara

Number of people: 6

Notes (verbatim from facilitator):

Davenport Mayor's Flood Task Force

The path they think will work is a multi-faceted approach including land use, infrastructure.

Some advocates for big levee, but not broadly held

Communities decide to get out of the way or protect in place

Lacking coordination of buy outs, need to turn buy outs into an asset

Protect WWTP, preserve green space

Why do you protect what you protect? Economic losses, critical transport? Emergency access?

Can you keep traffic moving?

Cedar Rapids - levees, flood wall, & pump stations

Watseka, IL – elevate individual structures

California Central Valley Flood Plan – make a plan that allows for additional resources to create a more complex plan

1972-73 Dubuque flood wall. Structural bridge was crossed long ago so focus of most conversations is Water Quality

Climate change behind structure management becoming more challenging.

Partner assistance to states leverage Corps technical expertise

Flood alliances

Remaining risk

Breach study – where are we going to protect? Develop response plan

Evacuation routes being posted

NWS – can do a flash flood warning public outreach for phones

Hesco failure allows for good conversation about what to do be prepared

Rapid rise of Mississippi is a new development for Dubuque

Rock Island neighborhood meetings to explain flood plan. Where pumps were, what scenarios were likely and what is the impact & response

How do we define the river & floodplain? Geomorphology versus regulatory floodplain

Waterloo, IA can't build within 500-year floodplain

If we manage the river in the valley & town, what do we need out of the landscape to sustain the river we've wrought?

Low risk very high impact

Flood insurance coverage – Olivia went after individual insurance

Homeowners – have to know a lot

Quad Cities, Dubuque – cinder block basements bring a wall

National Flood Insurance Program – flood rates are climbing, buy out those areas

Close to Lake Pontchartrain in New Orleans need to be built on stilts

Land ownership rules are different

FEMA buyouts challenge is tackles low income housing availability & available assets

Cedar Rapids in 2008, 1400 structures bought out with combo of HUD, FEMA, local \$
They had to create a master plan that incorporated that

Communities need to have revitalization in concert with flood risk mitigation

What can be done outside communities to help reduce flood pressure in cities. Can we manage rural landscapes to provide benefits in urban areas

Easements lacking, buy outs are options

Sister to FEMA buyout for ag areas to make financially feasible

Soil health NRCS needs to restore OM

Riparian buyout programs?

Corps flowage easements (reimbursement process)

\$200 million in NRCS EWPP easements – pay after event, requires national declaration

NRCS ACEP – can't be in floodplains because requires habitat restoration

Counties & states could develop a program

Turkey River, IA corps went into trees good example

More need than money on the landscape.

How much landscape change would you need?

\$1.2B to be invested in watershed above Cedar Rapids thru multiple partner

Iowa Flood Center – if you want to meet nutrient redux goals

MN – 50' buffer rule (dated to 70s) on public; 16 rods thru ag land

Topic: Sediment Management

Convener: Karl

Number of people: 4-5

Notes (verbatim from facilitator):

Corps had trouble down river with people raising levees using dredged material

Planning silos – separate efforts

Moving from simple maintenance to a 408 project, which increases the amount of review required.
Difference between level of engineering work

Levee districts have noted that 408, lacks an appetite for pursuing those other avenues for compensatory storage or EIS. Maybe need a grant program to allow for additional planning

Maybe need to produce drier sand

Rain causes sediment gullies on coulee land

If climate change continues & infrastructure isn't meant to work in this way

RR

Basin wide approach to keep sediment in watersheds. IL River did basin approach to begin assigning where problems are the worst, not just federal government doing it

Where the problems are right now? Keep water in the landscape. Ag needs to have more precise water management

Catfish Creek Watershed Management Authority – flows through Dubuque
Buy in from landowners; landowners reach out to identify problem
Slow buy in, slow process

Community based social marketing campaigns for behavior change efforts have been the most effective
It's very hard & takes time. Zoos & Aquariums are taking a big role in doing that education.
Community advocacy

So one development is that existing institutions are begin filling a gap for NGOs & government agencies. What had been wheel house of NRCS is growing for other (incorporate agency priorities)

Changing behavior – things need to look “cool” or being popular or prevalent to be within reach

Make Room for the River – Set back levees

Make room for sediment? rivers are dynamic, these periods of accretion & release

Upper Mississippi wasn't historically a major source

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) all properties could be viewed as point sources

Davenport hasn't moved to build a wall (Nahant marsh)

Dubuque has moved to protect wetland restoration to alleviate floodwater. It will drop out so they will require maintenance or replication