

DRAFT
Minutes of the
Upper Mississippi River System
Environmental Management Program
Coordinating Committee

August 12, 2004
Quarterly Meeting

Radisson Quad City Plaza Hotel
Davenport, Iowa

Charles Barton of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:12 a.m. on Thursday, August 12, 2004. Other EMP-CC members present were Don Hultman (USFWS), Rick Mollahan (IL DNR), Mike Steuck (IA DNR), Tim Schlagenhaft (MN DNR), Janet Sternburg (MO DOC), John Sullivan (WI DNR), Linda Leake (USGS), Bill Franz and Larry Shepard (USEPA), and Gary Wooten (NRCS). A complete list of attendees is attached.

Minutes of the May Meeting

Janet Sternburg moved and John Sullivan seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the May 20, 2004 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Program Management

FY 04 Status

Roger Perk reported that, through June 30, 2004, the EMP's expenditures and obligations totaled \$9.733 million and \$12.635 million, respectively. Perk characterized the 66 percent expenditure rate through the third quarter as typical for this point in the fiscal year. All three districts are on pace for full expenditure in FY 04.

According to Don Powell and Brian Markert, three HREP construction contracts remain on schedule to be awarded before the end of FY 04. These contracts are for Spring Lake Islands and Pool Slough in MVP and Calhoun Point Stage 2 in MVS. In addition, MVR just recently awarded the contract for Pool 11 Islands Stage 2. Perk explained that the bulk of construction on all four of these projects will take place in FY 05.

Perk also reported that the definite project report (DPR) for Long Meadow Lake has been approved. DPRs are under development for Harpers Slough and Lake Odessa. A public meeting on the Lake Odessa project is scheduled for August 26 in Wapello, Iowa. A September 25 dedication ceremony is planned for the Banner Marsh project.

Powell reported that the DPR for Long Meadow Lake has been approved and MVP has initiated work on plans and specifications for the project. In addition, MVP anticipates

distributing the preliminary DPR for Harpers Slough to partner agencies this week. Powell announced that MVP received the Chief's Award for design and engineering excellence for the Pool 8 Islands HREP. The Pool 8 Islands design team, comprised of 28 individuals from various agencies, also was named the Design Team of the Year. Mike Thompson noted that MVS's Swan Lake project received an honorable mention for design in the same contest.

FY 05 Outlook

Perk reported that the House of Representatives has approved its FY 05 energy and water appropriations bill, which includes \$16.0 million for the EMP. This compares with the Administration's \$28.0 million EMP request for the upcoming year. The Senate's measure is still pending before the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee. Perk described how different potential funding scenarios would affect the allocation of funds among EMP program elements (see attached slides).

Perk announced that the Corps is modifying the way in which it assesses its regional LTRMP management costs. In the past, these costs have been deducted entirely from the LTRMP's funding allocation. Under the new approach, the Corps' regional LTRMP expenditures will be treated as one of the EMP's overall program coordination expenses, which are deducted from the EMP allocation before it is divided between the HREP and LTRMP components. Perk explained that this will result in slightly more money being made available to the LTRMP. He estimated the increase to the LTRMP at \$40,000 in FY 05.

Establishment of SET and ITRC

Perk commented that LTRMP reviews were conducted in 1988, 1990, and 1996. HREP design workshops were held in 1996, 1999, and 2002, with another scheduled for 2005. He explained that the Independent Technical Review Committee (ITRC), which is mandated by the Water Resources Development Act of 1999, will be asked to place its initial focus on the HREP side of the EMP. Ultimately, however, the ITRC will be responsible for examining questions related to both the HREP and LTRMP components. According to Perk, the scope of work for the ITRC is still under development.

The System Ecological Team (SET) will function as part of the HREP Planning and Sequencing Framework endorsed by the EMP-CC in November 2003. Specifically, the SET will review the project recommendations from each of the three District Ecological Teams and consider how they might best be combined to meet system and reach goals.

Perk reported that he is in the process of contacting candidates for both the SET and ITRC. He noted that there will be some overlap in membership between the ITRC and the Navigation Study's expert panel. This will help ensure coordination between the two groups. Both the ITRC and the SET will be implemented beginning in FY 05.

Program Advocacy and Public Involvement and Education

Don Hultman said he will prepare a revised EMP Outreach Plan to more clearly distinguish between program advocacy activities, in which the Corps and other federal agencies may

not engage, and the public information and education activities that are part of their mandate. Hultman also reported that the Upper Mississippi Basin Stakeholder Network (UMBSN) has initiated its plan to issue action alerts to an e-mail database of individuals interested in the EMP. The UMBSN sent its first such action alert in July. That alert highlighted pending Congressional action on FY 05 appropriations for the EMP.

Hultman announced that the Upper Mississippi Refuge distributed many copies of a special "Refuge Journal" newsletter in conjunction with the refuge's 80th anniversary and the 2004 Grand Excursion. The publication included an article on the EMP. Hultman also reported that the Service is arranging a tour of the Pool 8 Islands project for one of its D.C.-based special assistants. Roger Perk said The Nature Conservancy is planning a September tour of Pool 11 Islands for senior staff. John Pitlo noted that many agency biologists participated in the Grand Excursion, giving talks about ongoing UMR efforts.

Greg Ruff commented that the Mississippi River Commission's (MRC's) upcoming low water inspection trip is an important opportunity for program partners and members of the public to communicate with the Commission concerning the EMP. Gary Loss said the MRC will hold public sessions on August 16 in La Crosse, August 17 in Dubuque, and August 20 in Alton.

Report to Congress

Marvin Hubbell reported that Colonel Gapinski has transmitted the EMP Report to Congress to General Crear at MVD for review and approval. Division-level review will take place in August, and is not expected to result in any major changes. Once MVD's comments are addressed, General Crear is expected to forward the report to Corps Headquarters in early September. Hubbell explained that review and approval by Headquarters must precede transmittal to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works. In addition, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) must also clear the RTC before the Secretary of the Army officially transmits it to Congress via OMB.

Hubbell said the Corps appreciates that every program partner submitted a letter of support for inclusion in the RTC. He noted that this partner consistency sends a very strong message about the program. Hubbell also thanked UMRBA and COE staff who worked on the RTC drafting and editing process.

According to Hubbell, the RTC will be publicly released when General Crear transmits the report to Corps Headquarters. This distribution of the Division report will include stakeholders and Members of Congress. The RTC will also be available on the EMP web site.

Roger Perk noted that the Fish and Wildlife Service previously recommended using completion of the RTC as an opportunity to draw attention to the EMP. Perk asked the EMP-CC members for specific suggestions regarding the report rollout. Don Hultman emphasized that completion of the RTC is a major marketing opportunity, but said he did not have specific suggestions to offer at this time. Hultman suggested that the Corps ask its public involvement staff to draft a plan of action. Perk agreed that Corps staff would develop a rollout plan for the RTC and circulate it to the EMP partners for comment.

However, to assist in this effort, he asked all partners to submit any specific suggestions and examples of their own agencies' past efforts with similar documents and programs.

Bill Franz suggested having General Crear brief the Midwest Natural Resources Group concerning the RTC at its next meeting. In response to a question from Tim Schlagenhaft, Hubbell estimated that the Corps will print 500 to 600 copies of the RTC. John Sullivan asked whether the Executive Summary will be printed as a separate handout. Perk said this possibility has been discussed and observed that it would certainly permit broader distribution. Rich Worthington encouraged Perk to consult with Denny Lundberg regarding how to coordinate the RTC and Navigation Study rollouts.

Holly Stoerker asked whether the Corps will be able to rollout the RTC before the Secretary of the Army signs off on the report, noting that there were major differences between the partnership report and the Secretary's report in 1997. Worthington said he didn't anticipate significant differences this time and said the Secretary's report may simply take the form of a transmittal letter. However, Worthington cautioned that, if the report General Crear forwards to Washington is broadly distributed, it must be properly characterized — i.e., as MVD's report, developed in consultation with the program partners.

Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects

Don Powell reported that MVP has been working with its HREP partner agencies to outline the stepwise process its District Ecological Team (DET) will use in selecting and sequencing potential habitat projects. MVP has used Pool 9 as a pilot, asking each partner to consider how it envisions the DET going about identifying projects, establishing priority, and sequencing projects for the pool. Through this exercise, the MVP partners have identified a 10-step process. Powell distributed a handout summarizing that process, and described key elements, including the way in which it would make use of the Environmental Pool Plans and the Habitat Needs Assessment (HNA). He explained that the MVP partners intend to apply the draft process next to Pools 8 and 10, with the objective of refining the process as necessary before proceeding to MVP's remaining pools. While the MVP partners envision much of the initial work being done on a pool basis, Powell emphasized that the DET will ultimately address recommended sequencing both within and among pools. He estimated that it will take the partners at least one year to complete the process for all pools in MVP.

In response to a question from Janet Sternburg, Powell explained that the MVP partners' process will initially consider all agencies, programs, and authorities that could be used to accomplish the habitat objectives, as was done in the pool plans. John Sullivan said he was not clear on the relationship between the Fish and Wildlife Work Group (FWWG) and the DET. Powell explained that the FWWG will simply be functioning as the DET in MVP. No new group is being established. Roger Perk added that the FWWG will report its recommendations to the River Resources Forum (RRF) before they are transmitted to the SET. Thus, the relationship between the FWWG and RRF will be maintained. Barb Naramore noted that the framework approved by the EMP-CC in November 2003 explicitly states that the framework will not alter such existing relationships.

Dick Steinbach expressed concern with the prominence of pool planning in the approach outlined by Powell. Steinbach observed that pool planning was initially a partner-driven effort and that it has not been implemented consistently on the entire UMR. However, according to Steinbach, it now appears that the Corps is embracing pool planning as the method for sequencing HREPs. He asked whether MVR and MVS will be expected to match MVP's approach to pool planning in order to support their implementation of the HREP program. Perk said he views the pool plans as a useful, but not a necessary, tool in HREP planning and sequencing. He said each DET will have considerable latitude in defining its own process, as long as it meets the November 2003 HREP Planning and Sequencing Framework's basic goals and provisions. This latitude will include the extent to which a DET uses various tools, including pool plans, which are not currently available for all river reaches.

Steinbach asked whether some districts will be disadvantaged if they do not have pool plans and other similar analysis supporting their proposed projects. Perk said the revised fact sheet format will serve as the common thread among the three districts and will ensure that the System Ecological Team has adequate information concerning all projects, regardless of district. Powell said it is inevitable that some project proposals will have more detail behind them than others, but said this need not disadvantage projects with less information, so long as the basics required in the fact sheet are presented.

In response to a question from Joyce Collins, Perk said that each DET will have a liaison to the SET, but those liaisons will not be voting members of the SET. However, the SET membership will include individuals with direct UMR experience.

Perk said he has been working with Bob Clevestine to develop a proposed process for MVR's DET. However, they are not as far along as MVP. Perk characterized MVP's proposal as a good outline and expressed his appreciation to the MVP partners. Brian Markert said MVS is working to refine the process and draft ecological criteria. MVS has set March 2005 as the target to review new project fact sheets. The district will also be canvassing the biological community for available information, including the HNA, side channel plans, etc. In addition, MVS is taking existing fact sheets and translating them to the new fact sheet format.

Long Term Resource Monitoring Program

Background on Restructuring

Roger Perk reminded the EMP-CC that the Corps has established the following basic requirements for restructuring the LTRMP:

- Develop a five-year plan for FY 05 to 09.
- Assume level funding of \$19.0 million annually for the EMP over this period.
- Assume annual inflation of 4.1 percent.
- Assume savings and slippage and rescissions total 23 percent annually.
- Identify a base LTRMP that can be implemented over the five years, beginning at \$3.5 million in FY 05.

Perk said he has reviewed the cost estimates developed by UMESC and the field stations and offered the following comments:

- He appreciates everyone's efforts to reduce the estimated cost of the baseline program from above \$5 million to \$3.851 million.
- Bridging the remaining \$351,000 gap between \$3.851 million and \$3.5 million will be difficult.
- He is proposing a one-year transition period to help bridge the gap. During that year, Additional Program Elements (APE) funds would be used to meet a portion, but not all, of the \$351,000 difference. This would provide time to identify additional cost reductions, but would mean that some other APE priorities would not be pursued in FY 05.
- For the one-year transition approach to work, the program partners need to identify today what they will address over the coming year to achieve the necessary reductions.
- There appears to be some inequity among the field stations in terms of their cost structures and staffing plans. This should be resolved in FY 05. Full cost accounting must be implemented at all LTRMP cost centers during FY 05, at the latest.
- The partnership needs to prioritize work elements, including pending reports, and determine what will be done in FY 05.

Linda Leake explained the process whereby the field station leaders and principle investigators developed the cost estimates for the baseline program. Each field station leader was asked to estimate what it would cost them to execute the program, but there was no attempt to ensure consistency of approach. Leake said she believes there is considerable disparity among the stations in terms of staffing and other fundamental assumptions. However, she said the numbers also represent reasonable best guess estimates based on known facts. She noted that the team leaders were cautioned that there was no room for surprises, so the estimates may be slightly on the high side.

John Sullivan recalled that, at its special June 2004 meeting, the EMP-CC requested a Technical Team be formed to address a series of questions regarding various LTRMP restructuring options. The A-Team and additional experts joined to form this Technical Team, which met in late July and developed the recommendations described below. The Technical Team's discussion and recommendations were informed by input from several sub-groups asked to explore specific questions in advance of the July meeting. The Technical Team's final recommendations are as follows:

- Allocate 1 percent annually from the minimal sustainable program (MSP — i.e., the new baseline program) for equipment refreshment in FY 05 to 09. Also allocate \$200,000 from APE funding in FY 05 to address critical equipment needs.

- Maintain fish sampling with a minimum of two sampling periods, using all gears in all study areas.
- Drop vegetation sampling in the La Grange Pool, Pool 26, and the Open River study areas. Retain vegetation sampling in Pools 4, 8, and 13, with a minimum allocation of 450 samples per study area, per year.
- Reduce fixed sites for water quality sampling by 40 to 50 percent. Continue all stratified random sampling (SRS). Evaluate the potential for additional changes in the water quality component using APE funds.
- Retain statistical support for the LTRMP at a level between 0.25 and 0.5 FTEs.
- The MSP should include web-based annual updates and LTRMP summary reports. Field stations should contribute reports on an annual basis, consistent with A-Team and EMP-CC priorities.
- The MSP's data collection, management, and access functions should include databases and browsers, field applications, QA/QC, security, archiving and backups, software licensing, and information technology maintenance. Spatial query tools and internet mapping tools should be considered for funding with APE money.

Sullivan reported that the A-Team members also offered the following:

- Tom Boland has made many contributions and provided valuable continuity in his years of service to the A-Team and the EMP more broadly.
- The field stations at Alton and La Grange should not be co-located. There is no evidence that co-location would produce significant efficiencies and there is reasonable concern with the potential negative impacts that such a move would have on Illinois River monitoring efforts. The Fish and Wildlife Service abstained from this vote.

According to Sullivan, the A-Team will most likely meet next in early November.

Leake thanked Sullivan for his assistance in combining the A-Team and other experts to form the Technical Team requested by the EMP-CC. She also thanked all those who participated in the sub-groups that provided input to the Technical Team. Leake explained that UMESC staff worked with the field station team leaders to estimate the cost of implementing the Technical Team's recommended baseline program. For FY 05, that estimated cost is \$3.851 million.

Leake explained that the Corps also asked USGS to provide the following:

- Detailed information regarding UMESC services in the areas of statistical evaluation, data management, data delivery/access, and GIS support under the baseline program level. Leake distributed a description of these services via e-mail to EMP-CC members on August 6, 2004.
- A report on achieving full cost accounting at all LTRMP cost centers — only Illinois and Iowa responded by UMESC's requested deadline, so this report has been

delayed until all field stations provide input. The report will be discussed at the EMP-CC's November meeting.

- Potential efficiencies associated with co-locating the two Illinois field stations. Leake estimated that facilities costs might be reduced by \$45,000 and said there are other potential cost savings. However, the 95-mile distance between the two stations would increase travel costs and present some practical implementation issues. She noted that Illinois already has diverse staffing plans at the two field stations and uses the facilities for other purposes, thereby helping to reduce facility costs to the LTRMP.

Roger Perk said, based on Leake's preliminary analysis and consultations with the Illinois field station team leaders, it does not appear that the potential cost savings associated with co-location are sufficient to warrant further exploration. Leake said she tends to agree, assuming there is a commitment to continued sampling in both Pool 26 and the La Grange Pool. Bill Franz also expressed his agreement. Perk suggested that the possibility of co-locating the two Illinois field stations be taken off of the table for now and be reconsidered only if dropping monitoring in one of the two pools is contemplated. None of the EMP-CC members expressed views to the contrary.

Restructuring Discussion

Janet Sternburg and Tim Schlagenhaft noted that, under a \$3.5 million MSP in FY 05, there would still be approximately \$237,000 of APE funds in FY 09. They suggested that the baseline be increased to the point where there would be no APE in FY 09 — i.e., the baseline would consume all available funds in the final year. Perk said he would not consider such an approach, emphasizing his commitment to having some APE in all five years and stressing the importance of balance within the LTRMP. Perk said the Corps believes the LTRMP must include viable analysis and data management components as well as monitoring. He also noted that having APE in all years provides the partners with some flexibility if funding drops below the \$19.0 million reflected in the planning assumptions. John Sullivan observed that the field stations will perform some analysis under the MSP as part of their annual scopes of work. Perk agreed, noting that both UMESC and the field stations will produce some reports without APE funding. However, he emphasized that there are many partner priorities for the APE funds, including bathymetry and advance analysis. Leake said USGS concurs with Perk's position.

Sullivan conveyed the A-Team's frustration with the challenge of cutting costs while trying to maintain the monitoring program's long term integrity. According to Sullivan, the partners do not know what the effects will be of some of the changes they are currently making. He emphasized that any further reductions in appropriations will have serious consequences. Perk said he understands Sullivan's perspectives, but stressed that the Corps and its program partners do not control the appropriations process. He noted the LTRMP is not unique and said the impacts of budget reductions also threaten the viability of the EMP's HREP component. According to Perk, the best course is to make some reasonably conservative assumptions about future funding and attempt to define a program that can operate effectively at those levels.

Schlagenhaft reiterated his concern that that the partners are being asked to make changes that will be detrimental to the LTRMP while there still appears to be some flexibility in the budget. He questioned the wisdom of a \$3.5 million MSP for FY 05, given that this approach will leave APE funds in FY 09. Schlagenhaft also noted that the assumptions reflected in Perk's restructuring requirements appear somewhat arbitrary. Perk responded that the assumptions could just as easily be optimistic as pessimistic. He emphasized his desire for a solid five-year plan to avoid having to revisit program restructuring questions annually, and also stressed the need to address the inequity in the field stations' staffing patterns. Perk reiterated his willingness to fund the MSP at something over \$3.5 million in FY 05, but said the level needs to be below \$3.851 million. In addition, Perk said there must be clear steps in FY 05 that will bring the MSP down to the target level for FY 06.

Larry Shepard said EPA has consistently urged the A-Team to take a careful look at the LTRMP and determine a bottom line for the program — i.e., a minimum funding level below which the program is no longer effective and should be disbanded. Shepard acknowledged the difficulty of such an undertaking, but said it is the only way to ensure the LTRMP's scientific integrity. From what he is hearing, Shepard said it appears that this is precisely what the A-Team did at it July meeting. If \$3.851 million is a true bottom line for the program, then Shepard urged the partners to look for the \$351,000 from other sources rather than terminating the program or risking its scientific credibility.

Perk asked Shepard what other potential sources of funding he envisions. Bill Franz asked about the possibility of bridging the gap with HREP funds. Perk said the Corps has the latitude to do this, but emphasized that the HREP component is also suffering the effects of fiscal constraints. Perk noted that no one, including the Corps, is suggesting looking to the LTRMP to address the HREP program's current \$500,000 project shortfall. He stressed the importance of maintaining equity and predictability in the allocation between the two components, saying this is vital for the EMP's long term health. Perk also noted that he gets at least as much pressure to meet the HREPs' fiscal needs as the LTRMP's. Shepard said he understands Perk's perspective, but said he still would distinguish between delaying or weakening the HREP component and terminating the LTRMP, assuming \$3.851 million truly represents a minimal sustainable program.

John Sullivan asked about opportunities for the districts to contract with the field stations and UMESC for HREP monitoring services. Sullivan said such contracts could help address the fiscal challenge while also better integrating the two components. Perk said MVR already does work with the field stations and UMESC in this way. However, Perk emphasized that such HREP monitoring contracts represent flexible dollars and cannot be relied upon to meet MSP funding needs.

According to Sullivan, the Technical Team urged further analysis of both the water quality and vegetation components before making any modifications beyond those contained in its recommendations. Sullivan said it is possible, but by no means certain, that further cost reductions could be identified that would not undermine these two monitoring components. Among the options might be integrating the water quality and vegetation field work. However, he stressed, further analyses are needed to assess these possibilities.

Schlagenhaft urged the Corps to use APE funds as necessary to fund the Technical Team's MSP recommendations in FY 05 and 06. He said two years are needed to conduct additional analyses and then implement any resulting changes. Schlagenhaft said the analyses should focus on both the monitoring elements and UMESC's support functions in the MSP. Perk rejected Schlagenhaft's timeframe, noting that a two-year transition would leave only three years of a stable baseline program before the end of the five-year planning horizon. He emphasized the need to identify and then implement a viable MSP, rather than revisiting the program's fundamental structure on an annual basis.

Perk asked how the states envision assessing potential further cost reductions in the UMESC support functions within the MSP. Schlagenhaft said the states recommend determining the funding base and then allocating the funding gap between the baseline monitoring and UMESC support elements. The next step would be to determine how to implement the necessary reductions in each element in the least harmful way possible. Schlagenhaft said the states had discussed allocating two-thirds of the gap to the monitoring element and one-third to UMESC support services.

Sullivan asked how the scope of the FY 05 analyses will be defined. Perk said USGS needs to do this in conjunction with the partners. Leake suggested forming a team to scope the analyses. USGS would then use the team's recommendations in negotiating its FY 05 scope of work with the Corps. Sullivan characterized the additional analyses related to program restructuring as a top priority. He said it should be conducted as part of the MSP, not funded with APE money. Leake said she agrees the analysis effort is a top priority, but said it remains to be determined what resources are used to support the work. Schlagenhaft noted that previous analyses have been very helpful in making earlier program changes. He asked Leake to update the EMP-CC on the ongoing analysis work at all future meetings.

Janet Sternburg asked Perk about the Corps' likely position if there are some additional savings possible while maintaining the LTRMP's credibility, but not enough reductions to completely bridge the gap. Specifically, Sternburg wanted to know whether the Corps would consider using HREP funds to bridge the remaining gap at that point. Perk said the Corps would use APE money to support the baseline program before it would shift money from HREPs. However, he expressed confidence that the gap can be bridged successfully without using APE or HREP funds.

After further discussion and clarification, the EMP-CC members agreed to the following next steps regarding LTRMP restructuring:

- Within the next few weeks, UMESC will work with the field stations to refine the staffing plans needed to implement the \$3.851 million MSP in FY 05. This will include implementing full cost accounting and ensuring reasonable equity among the stations in staffing patterns.
- The MSP program outlined above will be implemented in FY 05, supplementing the \$3.5 million baseline target with some amount of APE funds. The actual amount of APE funds required is expected to be less than \$351,000, based on the refined staffing plans.

- The FY 05 scope of work will include further analyses of the water quality and vegetation monitoring components, as well as USGS support functions (i.e., statistical support, data management and delivery, and GIS support). The goal of these analyses will be to identify potential efficiency gains as well as the implications of any other cost reduction measures that may be considered. The water quality and vegetation analyses will include evaluation of the potential to combine the two monitoring efforts.
- Within the next few weeks, UMESC will consult with field station leaders and the A-Team regarding the analyses that will be part of the FY 05 SOW that USGS negotiates with the Corps. This SOW will define the analyses to be completed with both baseline and APE funds.
- The goal of these next steps is to position the LTRMP partners to implement a \$3.644 million MSP in FY 06 (i.e., \$3.5 million plus a 4.1 percent inflation adjustment). Consideration of the following issues was deferred until after completion of the staffing assessment and the component analyses: possible adjustments to the baseline target figure, the amount of APE funding at the end of the five-year planning increment, and the implementation schedule for any further program reductions.

All EMP-CC members present expressed support for the approach outlined above, with some offering additional observations and caveats. Schlagenhaft reiterated his position that a two-year transition period to the MSP would be more appropriate. Sullivan said he also believes a two-year transition would be preferable if there are major monitoring changes being made. Perk said he would not commit to a two-year transition at this point. Sternburg said she supports the approach, but will want to look at other options, including taking money from HREPs, if it is determined that further reductions would severely affect the LTRMP. Franz emphasized the need to determine a true minimal sustainable program and accept the consequences of that determination—i.e., provide that level of funding or terminate the program.

Sullivan observed that he joined the A-Team relatively recently. He said he has been impressed with the A-Team members' efforts to deal with very difficult restructuring issues. While acknowledging that there are many concerns, including the program's ability to retain good staff in the face of budget uncertainty, Sullivan said the process could have been much more difficult than it was. Perk echoed Sullivan's comments, saying that he, too, appreciates the A-Team's efforts. Perk also stressed that one major reason to strive for enhanced stability is so that LTRMP staff will feel comfortable staying with the program.

FY 05 APE Priorities

Perk asked the EMP-CC members what, if any, direct input they would like to have regarding the selection of APE priorities for FY 05. Sullivan recommended that consultation with the partners on APE priorities be done at the A-Team level. He encouraged the EMP-CC to provide broad guidance, but said detailed discussion on priorities belongs with the A-Team. EMP-CC members expressed general concurrence with Sullivan's position. Perk and Leake confirmed that the Corps and USGS will consult with

the A-Team regarding the partners' FY 05 APE priorities. Perk said the Corps and USGS will identify tentative priorities and circulate those for A-Team comment during the second half of September.

Other Business

Linda Leake announced that UMESC has published a handbook on classifying floodplain vegetation. USGS funded the effort, which made extensive use of LTRMP data and classification approaches.

Bill Franz reported that the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force will be meeting later in August in the Quad Cities. On August 25, the group will hold a training session for state water quality staff on accessing and using LTRMP water quality data. Franz said the session will be open to other state and federal personnel.

Barb Naramore announced that the upcoming quarterly meeting schedule includes November 16-18, 2004 in St. Louis; February 22-24, 2005 in La Crosse; and May 24-26, 2005 in the Twin Cities. The EMP-CC will meet on the third day of each quarterly series.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

**EMP-CC Attendance List
August 12, 2004**

Charles Barton	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Don Hultman	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Linda Leake	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Rick Mollahan	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Mike Steuck	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Tim Schlagenhaft	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Janet Sternburg	Missouri Department of Conservation
John Sullivan	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Rich Worthington	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters
Greg Ruff	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Mike Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Gary Loss	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Roger Perk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marvin Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Chuck Theiling	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
John Barko	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, R&D
Larry Shepard	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Sharonne Baylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Dick Steinbach	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain Refuge
Joyce Collins	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Karen Westphall	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain Refuge
Pat Heglund	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Mark Pegg	Illinois Natural History Survey
John Chick	Illinois Natural History Survey
John Pitlo	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Walt Popp	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Mike Wells	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Bob Hrabik	Missouri Department of Conservation
Gary Wooten	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tom Edwards	River Rescue
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association