

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

**November 18, 2004**  
**Quarterly Meeting**

**Holiday Inn Westport**  
**St. Louis, Missouri**

Charlie Wooley of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, November 18, 2004. Other EMP-CC representatives present were Greg Ruff (USACE), Rick Mollahan (IL DNR), Mike McGhee (IA DNR), Rebecca Wooden (MN DNR), Janet Sternburg (MO DOC), Gretchen Benjamin (WI DNR), Linda Leake (USGS), Al Fenedick (USEPA), and Bob Goodwin (MARAD). A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

**Minutes of the August Meeting**

Janet Sternburg moved and Rick Mollahan seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the August 12, 2004 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

**Program Management**

*FY 04 Wrap-Up*

Roger Perk reported that, at the close of federal FY 04, the EMP had expended \$14.709 million, or 99.1 percent of the year's \$14.843 million in scheduled expenditures. These figures include \$99,000 in reprogrammed funds that the EMP received shortly before the close of FY 04. According to Perk, the reprogrammed money was directed to the Pool 11 Islands Stage 2 HREP. Habitat projects completed in FY 04 include Pool 11 Islands Stage 1, Banner Marsh, and Gardner Division. Expenditures to complete and print the Report to Congress totaled \$168,000 for the year.

According to Tom Novak, MVP awarded the contract for the Spring Lake Islands HREP as expected prior to the close of the fiscal year. However, the Pool Slough award has been delayed due to lack of contractor interest. MVP may consider doing the Pool Slough project in-house.

*FY 05 Status*

Perk reported that, since October 1, the Corps has been operating under a continuing resolution authority (CRA) because the FY 05 energy and water appropriations measure has not yet been enacted. He explained that the CRA permits the Corps to expend funds at FY 04 levels, but

will complicate EMP work planning for FY 05. Possibilities for the remainder of the fiscal year include continued operation under CRAs, inclusion in the omnibus spending bill expected to be passed before the end of calendar 2004, or inclusion in a separate energy and water bill later in the fiscal year. [Note: On November 20, the House and Senate passed a Consolidated Appropriations Act that included \$17.5 million in FY 05 funding for the EMP. The President signed the measure on December 8. The FY 05 savings and slippage rate has not been finalized, but is expected to be substantially below last year's 23% rate.]

Perk presented possible FY 05 allocations, based on a \$19.0 million appropriation for the EMP and 23% savings and slippage. However, he emphasized that the allotments reflect working assumptions and are subject to considerable change. (See Attachment 1.) Under this funding scenario, MVP would receive an allocation of \$2.951 million for FY 05. Novak explained that most of MVP's HREP construction funds would go to Spring Lake Islands. In addition, the district plans to complete Ambrough Slough and, if funds permit, initiate Pool Slough and/or Long Meadow Lake. Novak said these final two projects are relatively small and will be put on the shelf if funds in FY 05 are not sufficient. Based on the assumptions outlined above, MVR would receive \$3.936 million for its HREP program in FY 05. Perk said MVR's HREP construction priority will be Pool 11 Islands Stage 2. In addition, Lake Odessa is a planning and design priority and may be ready for construction in the final quarter of the year. MVS's HREP allocation would be \$2.951 million. Perk said MVS has several planning priorities for FY 05, including three new projects — i.e., Kaskaskia Oxbow, Godar Refuge, and Wilkerson Island. Calhoun Point Phase II will consume most of the district's HREP construction funding. Perk characterized the design work for Swan Lake and Stump Lake as relatively minor.

### *EMP-CC Representation*

Perk noted that there have been several recent changes in partner agencies' representation on the EMP-CC. In particular, he observed that three of the states have changed their representative within the past year, Linda Leake is serving in an acting capacity at USGS, and Charles Barton has recently become the Corps of Engineers' co-chair of the group. In addition, the status of some other partner agencies is unclear.

Leake reported that on-site interviews for the UMESC Director position are scheduled for the end of November. She said the process for hiring Leslie Holland-Bartel's permanent replacement is moving along.

In response to a question from Perk, Bob Goodwin confirmed that the Maritime Administration wants to continue to serve on the EMP-CC. He explained that travel restrictions limit MARAD's ability to participate in all meetings, but emphasized that MARAD remains committed to the program partnership and will attend meetings to the extent possible. Goodwin said Doris Bautch remains MARAD's official EMP-CC representative, but added that he is more likely to attend EMP-CC meetings.

Perk observed that NRCS has never officially named a representative to the EMP-CC and said he will attempt to follow up with the agency regarding its status. Perk asked all other agencies that have not already done so to provide him with a letter identifying their EMP-CC representative. He said new letters are needed from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

### *Public Involvement and Program Advocacy*

Perk reminded EMP-CC members that Diane Ford-Shivvers had asked to include partner reports on public involvement and program advocacy efforts as a standing agenda item. Perk noted that other members had endorsed Ford-Shivvers' request and said he assumes this will remain an ongoing agenda item despite Ford-Shivvers' departure from the group.

Gretchen Benjamin reported that the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board held its August meeting in La Crosse. Using a Corps of Engineers barge, the board members were able to visit several HREPs in the area. Benjamin said the board members were very impressed with the work being done under the EMP. Perk mentioned a public meeting for the Lake Odessa project. Mike Thompson reported that a staffer from the Congressional Research Service toured the Swan Lake HREP last week and was quite interested in the cost per habitat unit.

In response to a question from Goodwin, Thompson explained that the new Kaskaskia Oxbow HREP addresses an oxbow that was cut off near the Kaskaskia River's confluence with the Mississippi. The project would involve reopening the oxbow and would not affect main channel navigability.

### **Report to Congress**

#### *Status and Rollout*

Roger Perk reported that the Report to Congress (RTC) is complete, and MVD Commander Crear has forwarded the report to Corps headquarters. After its review, headquarters will transmit the RTC to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) for Civil Works. The ASA will then coordinate with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) prior to submitting the RTC to Congress. In response to a question from Charlie Wooley, Greg Ruff explained that no Chief of Engineers report is required because the RTC is not a decision document.

Hank DeHaan said MVR mailed hardcopies of the RTC to program partners and stakeholders earlier this week. DeHaan said he sent 10 copies of the report to each EMP-CC member and encouraged people to contact him if they need additional copies. Wooley asked about the Corps' rollout plan for the RTC. Perk replied that the Corps is implementing the plan it distributed to partners in September. That plan includes various internal briefings within the Corps; partnership briefings; and an external focus on Congress, the media, and constituent newsletters. Perk noted that he received very few comments from partners on the rollout plan. Thus, the Corps is proceeding with those elements of the plan for which it has sole responsibility and remains available to assist program partners with other elements upon request.

Wooley said the Fish and Wildlife Service would like to work with the Corps and the states to get Congressional attention on the RTC. He suggested that an open house on Capitol Hill might be useful. Holly Stoerker suggested working with the House UMR Task Force on a briefing, with the program partners supplying the speakers and the Task Force hosting the briefing. Stoerker said she thought such a briefing might be more appropriate and effective than one-on-one meetings with Members, particularly given that the RTC does not recommend

major Congressional action. She also suggested having the states request a meeting with the Fish and Wildlife Service Director regarding funding for operation and maintenance (O&M) of HREPs on Service-managed lands. Wooley encouraged the states to pursue such a meeting, and said the regional FWS staff will continue to raise the O&M funding issue internally as well.

In response to a question from Stoerker, Perk said the Corps printed approximately 700 copies of the RTC. Stoerker suggested printing the Executive Summary in a standalone format for broader distribution. Janet Sternburg asked how the Corps plans to rollout the RTC to stakeholder groups. Perk noted that the major stakeholders participated in development of the RTC and their representatives have received copies of the report. Based on the Corps' September rollout plan, these representatives are responsible for initiating further rollout efforts within their organizations. This is analogous to the responsibility of the EMP-CC members to lead rollout efforts within their agency or state.

#### *NGOs as Nonfederal Sponsors*

Regarding the recommendation to allow nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to serve as nonfederal sponsors, Barb Naramore observed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) would be the obvious vehicle for such a legislative change. With the fate of the 2004 WRDA yet to be determined, the prospects for a 2005 bill are uncertain. If there is a 2005 bill, this would be the earliest opportunity to pursue the NGO language. In response to a question from Sternburg, Perk said The Nature Conservancy has been the primary advocate within the NGO community for this legislative change. In response to a question from Stoerker, Rich Worthington said he thinks the EMP may be unique among the Corps' ongoing environmental authorities in not currently authorizing NGOs to serve as sponsors. Given the well-established precedent, Stoerker said Congressional resistance to such an EMP amendment would seem unlikely. It was agreed that the UMRBA staff would help the states coordinate with interested NGOs in pursuing the authorization.

#### *EPA/USGS Science Planning Process*

Stoerker noted that EPA representatives advocated for the RTC's interagency science planning process recommendation. The RTC calls on USGS and EPA to co-lead this process, and Stoerker asked about the two agencies' level of interest in carrying through on this recommendation. Larry Shepard said EPA still has some internal work to do coordinating between its two regions, but he expressed hope that EPA will be prepared to assume a leadership role. Linda Leake reported that USGS has not given much further consideration to the recommendation. She said USGS needs time to identify the new UMESC Director and let that person come up to speed before determining how it wants to respond to this recommendation. Shepard suggested that EPA and USGS be given an opportunity to explore the issue further and report back at the February 2005 meeting with their ideas for a potential process. EMP-CC members concurred with this approach.

In response to a question from Gretchen Benjamin, Shepard explained that the science planning process envisioned in the RTC would not require new or reprogrammed money from the EMP. According to Shepard, the initial effort will be a modest attempt to identify the questions that need answering and propose strategies for addressing those questions. At that point, the

interested agencies will need to look at where the resources might come from to implement those strategies. Barry Johnson asked whether anyone is currently looking for the funding needed to undertake the science planning process itself. Stoerker noted that the RTC recommendation speaks to this only in a limited way, making clear that the assessment should be accomplished with non-EMP resources. She said it is up to EPA and USGS, as the identified co-leaders, to identify potential resources for the planning process as part of their initial scoping efforts.

### *Delegated Authority*

Greg Ruff reported that Corps headquarters recently delegated approval authority to the divisions for post-authorization decision documents related to all Corps projects and programs, including the EMP. Ruff explained that implementation guidance is under development, so all aspects of this new delegation are not yet clear. Referencing the RTC's recommendation for increased delegation to MVD and the districts, Ruff said MVD plans to work under the new guidance for a while before considering whether to seek permission to delegate additional HREP approval authority to the districts. He noted that MVD cannot delegate its approval authority to the districts without approval from Corps headquarters.

### **EMP Strategic Planning**

Roger Perk said that, with the RTC completed, charting a course for the EMP's future is an important next step. He said he would like to develop a five-year strategic plan for the program that will articulate specific goals. As a first step in this process, the Corps has developed an initial draft of the plan, intended to catalyze discussion among the partners. Perk said the Corps' major EMP goals for the next five years include:

- EMP as a whole — better integrating the HREP and LTRMP components
- LTRMP — integrating monitoring, analysis, and research to inform managers and policymakers
- HREP — target rehabilitation and enhancement at multiple scales to counteract the impacts of the aging impounded river system

Perk asked EMP-CC members and others to review the draft strategic plan and provide comments to him by January 19. Barb Naramore asked whether Perk intends for the strategic plan to focus on the EMP's internal functioning or on how the program might relate to new authorities stemming from the Navigation Study. Perk said he wants the plan to address both.

Holly Stoerker urged that the February meeting focus on a substantive discussion of issues facing the EMP, not group editing of the draft plan. In response to a request from Janet Sternburg, Perk said he will circulate all comments received to EMP-CC members in advance of the February 24 meeting. The comments and the draft plan will then be discussed in detail at the February meeting, with the goal of developing a final plan for endorsement at the EMP-CC's May 26 meeting. In response to requests, Perk said he would circulate a digital copy of the draft plan to facilitate partners' review and comment efforts.

## **Institutional Arrangements**

Chuck Spitzack reported that the Corps is beginning to study institutional arrangements (IA) options associated with implementing the Navigation Study recommendations. He explained that the Navigation Study Feasibility Report calls for a structure that supports integration and adaptive management. However, the Corps did not have time during the feasibility study phase to develop the IA concepts fully. As part of its options assessment, Spitzack said the Corps has assembled a team of approximately 30 volunteers, who will be asked to explore the Navigation Study's IA concepts, relate them to existing institutions, and develop recommendations for consideration by the broader array of agencies and stakeholders. The IA team's first meeting is scheduled for mid-December, and the team will likely have additional meetings thereafter. Spitzack said he anticipates using workshops to introduce the volunteer team's recommendations to broader groups, and then a more formal process for final formulation and implementation of the new IA structures.

Spitzack acknowledged the uncertainty and anxiety that considering potential institutional changes will engender. He said the Corps is committed to building off of our existing, successful models. In response to questions from Rebecca Wooden, Spitzack said the IA team was assembled by asking for volunteers from the Navigation Environmental Coordinating Committee (NECC) and other groups and noted that Tim Schlagenhaft from Minnesota is participating on the team. Charlie Wooley asked about the Corps' timeframe. Spitzack said there is no firm deadline, but the Corps does want the IA concepts developed by the end of FY 05. Janet Sternburg noted that the EMP-CC will be well-represented, as both she and Gretchen Benjamin have also volunteered to serve on the IA team. However, she urged that the full EMP-CC have an opportunity to consider any IA recommendations that would affect it. Spitzack emphasized that the roles of the EMP-CC and other existing groups will be fully considered and that these groups will have the opportunity to comment on the team's recommendations.

Roger Perk observed that there are many questions surrounding the EMP's potential integration with new environmental authorities that may follow from the Navigation Study recommendations. While it is impossible to know yet what that integration will look like, Perk said he is confident there will be links if new authorities are enacted. He noted that the Navigation Study calls for a report three years after authorization and said this would be a logical point at which to evaluate the initial implementation of the new environmental authorities and consider integration with the EMP. Greg Ruff concurred, reminding the EMP-CC member that the program partners made a deliberate decision to keep such program integration questions out of the Report to Congress, based on the premise that they were premature at the time. Ruff said he still views this as the appropriate approach, urging that integration be deferred until we see the Navigation Study authorities in place.

## **Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects**

### *HREP Design Manual*

Roger Perk reported that the Corps will be developing an HREP design manual for its use in working with project partners. The manual will include costs, photos, engineering drawings, lessons learned, and other information concerning common design elements. The intended

audience consists of both Corps project designers and partner agency staff. Rebecca Wooden asked whether the manual will simply document typical features or will also address how to identify and assess different options. Janet Sternburg and Charlie Wooley urged the Corps to include information on approaches it is using outside of the UMRS. Perk and Greg Ruff said the initial phase of the manual will focus on documenting current approaches and practices within the EMP, including design requirements, typical costs, and lessons learned. A second phase will include comparative information from other Corps programs and will take more of an “if, then” options approach.

Wooden urged that the manual be organized by problem. For each problem type, the manual would then identify a range of potential solutions or options. Wooley asked Perk to seek partner comments on the outline for the design manual when it is available.

### *HREP Workshop*

Perk noted that the Corps has sponsored HREP workshops at roughly three-year intervals in recent years and said he anticipates holding another workshop late this winter. He described the workshops as excellent opportunities for staff from all the partner agencies to share experiences across the entire UMRS. Corps staff are just starting to plan the upcoming workshop, but one point of focus will be the HREP design manual. Workshop participants will be asked for input regarding what should be addressed in the design manual, the desired level of detail, etc. Sternburg noted that there are already several events scheduled for February and March. She urged Perk to determine and announce dates for the workshop as soon as possible.

### *HREP Database*

Perk reported that the Corps is in the process of revising the HREP database originally created for the 1997 Report to Congress effort. In addition to updating basic information, the Corps is seeking to geo-reference the data and develop a more interactive tool. With geo-referenced data and an enhanced interface, Perk said users will be able to query the database by watershed, project type, jurisdiction, etc. He cited Illinois’ Conservation 2000 database, samples of which were included in the EMP-CC agenda packet, as a model for the type of tool the Corps wants to develop for the HREP program. In response to a question from Barb Naramore, however, he clarified that he does not envision replicating the Illinois database’s education and outreach element in the HREP database. Perk said the Corps will consult further with program partners as it revises the HREP database.

### *DET and SET Implementation Update*

Perk reported that he has contacted almost all of the top candidates for the System Ecological Team (SET) concerning their potential participation. Some candidates have said they will not be able to serve. In some of these instances, Perk said he turned to the list of Independent Technical Review Committee (ITRC) candidates for substitutes. Sternburg expressed concern with the lack of UMR-specific knowledge among some of the ITRC candidates. Perk stressed that, in filling the SET positions, he has striven to maintain diversity in disciplines, geography, and institutional connections while also ensuring that some members have strong backgrounds on the UMRS.

John Barko will lead the SET, which will include between four and eight members. General Crear will formally invite the candidates to serve on the SET, and the group will likely hold its first meeting in January or February 2005. This first meeting will be an opportunity for SET members to establish their working arrangements and general strategies. Perk said that, once the SET membership is finalized, the Corps will begin forming the ITRC.

### *Maintaining and Refining the HNA*

Perk noted that the 1999 EMP reauthorization requires the program partners to maintain and refine the Habitat Needs Assessment (HNA). He observed that some work, such as adding new data layers to the Query Tool as they become available, has been done on an ongoing basis. However, with completion of the 2004 Report to Congress, Perk said it is time for the partners to look more comprehensively at how they want to manage and improve the HNA. He acknowledged that resource constraints will limit what can be accomplished.

In response to questions from Sternburg and Wooley, Perk emphasized that he was not looking for specific answers today, but rather would like the EMP-CC members to begin discussing the matter within their respective agencies. Holly Stoerker noted efforts to implement the new HREP planning process should yield useful insights regarding the HNA and potential enhancements. Perk said resource constraints will probably delay any substantial work on the HNA until FY 06 at the earliest. After further discussion among the EMP-CC members, it was agreed that those working to implement the new HREP planning and sequencing process over the next several months should be asked to report back on recommended HNA modifications.

Wooley asked what each of the District Ecological Teams (DETs) is planning over the next six months. Perk reported that the existing Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee (FWIC) will function as MVR's DET and plans to meet in December. Tim Yager said MVP's DET will be the current Fish and Wildlife Work Group (FWWG). Yager explained that the FWWG members have determined that they will rely primarily on the recently completed environmental pool plans in conducting their HREP planning work. They will also use the HNA to identify ecosystem deficiencies and threats. Yager noted that the pool plans are not EMP-specific, but rather were developed for use across different programs. Gretchen Benjamin explained that the FWWG used the HNA in developing the environmental pool plans. Thus, when the FWWG uses the pool plans in its HREP selection, it is in fact relying in part on the HNA.

Perk reported that, over the next six months, the DETs will have opportunities to explore the HNA, the Navigation Study's environmental objectives database, and the new fact sheet format. DET members will be asked for their input regarding the various tools. Perk estimated that the DET feedback will be available for the EMP-CC's consideration at its August meeting. He acknowledged that MVS's DET does not have pool plans at its disposal. However, Perk emphasized that pool plans are not required to develop HREPs that can compete for system priority. He said each DET will use the best tools available to it and will not be penalized for not having certain tools.

## Long Term Resource Monitoring Program

### *Completed Products*

Linda Leake highlighted several important LTRMP products completed in FY 04, including the following:

- Water Quality Procedures Manual
- LTRMP outpool fisheries analysis
- Suspended sediment budget for Pool 13 and La Grange Pool
- Manuscripts concerning the ecology of Ohio shrimp, fish assemblages in the unimpounded UMR, and submersed aquatic vegetation trends in Pool 13
- New and updated Internet products including component annual updates, summary of FY 02 monitoring findings, and sedimentation rates and patterns in the three northern trend pools

Leake also reported that the LTRMP water quality lab analyzed approximately 50,000 samples in FY 04 and received a rating of “excellent” from USGS evaluators. In addition, the LTRMP completed the 2000 land cover/land use for the UMRS, an area of more than 2.5 million acres. Leake noted that the 2000 coverage was completed by two photo interpreters in four years, a significant increase in efficiency relative to the 1988 coverage. In the area of communications, the LTRMP produced two project status reports (PSRs) in 2004 and staff made presentations at various scientific conferences. The A-Team Corner on the LTRMP web site continues to provide important information, including A-Team minutes, scopes of work, milestone spreadsheets, and the results of power analyses.

Looking forward to FY 05, Leake said the 10-year component reports will be available as follows:

<u>Component</u>	<u>On Web</u>	<u>In Print</u>
Macroinvertebrates	1/11/05	1/12/05
Aquatic Vegetation	1/26/05	1/27/05
Water Quality	4/7/05	4/11/05
Fish	6/17/05	6/23/05

Leake noted that, at future EMP-CC meetings, she will discuss the status of ongoing work.

### *Analysis Efforts and Results*

Pat Heglund thanked all those who contributed to the challenging LTRMP restructuring deliberations over the past year, including the field stations, A-Team, EMP-CC, and USGS principal investigators. Heglund said the past year’s efforts, combined with previous analyses, have demonstrated that the current components are as efficient as they can be, given the

program's basic structure. She said it is also clear that we are still able to detect long term and annual trends in the data, with the changes that have been made to-date. The ability to detect multi-year trends is stronger than the ability to discern annual fluctuations, while the ability to detect trends in discontinued variables has been lost.

Heglund then summarized the specific efficiency assessments, power analyses, and protocol modifications for each of the four major components over the past several years. She also described changes in the LTRMP's data management practices designed to enhance efficiency. (See Attachment 2.) Heglund acknowledged that some changes were made based purely on scientific merit, while others were driven by fiscal necessity.

Heglund reported that, in follow-up to the August EMP-CC meeting, a panel of UMESC and field station personnel addressed the question of whether integrating water quality and vegetation sampling would enhance efficiency. Panelists included Jeff Houser, Jim Fischer, Yao Yin, John Chick, and Brian Gray. The panel concluded that, for several practical and structural reasons, integrating the two components would not increase efficiency. According to Heglund, these reasons include impacts on data variance, complications to long term analyses, differences in site selection processes for the two components, increased potential for contamination of the water quality samples, and space limitations in the boats used for sampling.

#### *Full Cost Accounting*

Leake described the effort to establish full cost accounting within the LTRMP. This effort began in FY 04. The intent is to ensure that all projects conducted by UMESC and the field stations pay their "fair share" of direct, facility, and common services costs — i.e., that the LTRMP does not underwrite the share of these costs reasonably attributable to non-LTRMP projects. Leake said the field station team leaders have responded to her letters requesting necessary financial information. Changes in practices for FY 05 will include requirements that field stations coordinate any outside work with USGS and provide quarterly summaries. In addition, USGS's FY 05 cooperative agreements with the field stations will identify specific LTRMP products for which each field station is responsible.

#### *LTRMP Restructuring Plan*

Roger Perk summarized partner efforts to define the LTRMP minimal sustainable program (MSP) since the August EMP-CC meeting. He noted that, at their August meeting, the EMP-CC members set a target of \$3.64 million for the MSP in FY 05. However, the field station team leaders subsequently submitted their individual bottom line numbers for FY 05. These numbers, combined with USGS's figure for its LTRMP work, totaled \$3.73 million. Perk explained that the A-Team discussed the MSP on its November 4 conference call and supported the \$3.73 million figure for the MSP in FY 05. The state EMP-CC members then met via conference call with representatives from USGS and the Corps. Perk said that, after considerable discussion, call participants agreed to recommend an MSP of \$3.73 million for FY 05. However, Perk emphasized that this figure comes with several caveats. In particular, the figure would be adjusted for inflation annually by only 3.0%, rather than the 4.1% envisioned in August. In addition, there will be less money available to fund additional program element (APE) projects with this higher MSP figure. According to Perk, each field

station would be responsible for executing all yearly work elements identified under the MSP with only a 3.0% annual increase. He stressed that no additional funds will be available to supplement the MSP in future years, and also emphasized that all products will be identified in the annual scope of work and tracked. Gretchen Benjamin, Rick Mollahan, Mike McGhee, Rebecca Wooden, and Janet Sternburg all expressed their concurrence with this approach.

Charlie Wooley said the Fish and Wildlife Service would support this approach, based in part on its acceptability to the states. Sternburg said she believes the \$3.73 million MSP is a reasonable approach, given the resources available. She emphasized that the MSP is by no means the minimal program needed to understand the UMRS, explaining that there are important monitoring elements missing from the MSP. Sternburg expressed hope that these missing elements will be addressed should additional resources become available. Larry Shepard concurred with Sternburg's observations and stressed the importance of identifying the key questions that the LTRMP is not addressing. Shepard said the Report to Congress science planning process recommendation is intended to focus attention on the information needs that are not being addressed by current programs, including the LTRMP.

Benjamin asked whether the Corps would insist on implementing the MSP in FY 05 if the EMP receives a \$25 million appropriation. Noting that the bulk of the annual monitoring work does not begin until March, Benjamin urged that the full monitoring program be implemented if the appropriation level permits. Perk rejected Benjamin's suggestion and stressed the Corps' commitment to implementing the MSP in FY 05 even if the annual appropriation is unexpectedly large. Perk reiterated the Corps' position that the MSP is designed to provide a stable, five-year structure for the LTRMP and stop the cycle of annual, budget-driven restructuring debates. That being the case, shelving the MSP in response to a one-year up tick in funding would undermine the entire purpose of the effort, according to Perk. Greg Ruff said Perk had described the Corps' position quite accurately and said MVD backs the approach Perk is taking as project manager. Ruff emphasized the Corps' commitment to working with the partners to define the MSP and then employing a structured process for augmenting the LTRMP if the program receives additional funding in future years. Ruff also noted that it is highly unlikely the EMP appropriations amount will exceed \$19.0 million in FY 05. Benjamin restated her position that the MSP is not base monitoring. Rather, it is the best the program can do within the constraints imposed. She emphasized the need to get back to base monitoring for the system.

Leake explained that the LTRMP's annual scope will identify all products to be completed, whether by USGS, the states, or the Corps of Engineers. USGS will carefully track the status of all these products, and Leake will provide status updates at each EMP-CC meeting.

In response to a question from Wooley, Leake explained that November 15 budget estimates from the six field stations and UMESC totaled \$3.68 million, or \$49,000 under the \$3.73 million MSP cap for FY 05. Leake said she needs to coordinate further with the field stations to finalize their individual FY 05 funding requirements. According to Leake, some changes are likely. However, she emphasized that any variation from the previous estimates should be small, and the overall MSP will not exceed \$3.73 million in FY 05. If the field station and UMESC needs total less than \$3.73 million, the available increment will be transferred to APE projects.

Leake briefly described the process used to identify potential APE projects. The Corps provided basic sideboards for acceptable projects. These included projects that contribute to the Status and Trends Report, additional analyses identified in comments on the 10-year component reports, projects that help complete priority products, and projects that link the LTRMP with river management needs and/or HREP projects. USGS then asked the field station team leaders to consult with their A-Team members and others regarding potential projects. The team leaders and LTRMP principal investigators submitted 30 projects that USGS and the Corps determined met the sideboards. USGS then forwarded those 30 projects to the A-Team for ranking as high, medium, or low priority. Leake explained that USGS and the Corps will now consider the A-Team rankings, available staff expertise, and budget resources to determine which APE projects will be pursued in FY 05.

Sternburg expressed concern that the A-Team members reviewed a potential APE project list that contained only those projects the Corps and USGS determined met their sideboards. While she has reservations with this approach, Sternburg also acknowledged that she would not favor a repeat of the 2003 ramp-up effort, where A-Team members had to consider a lengthy, unedited list of potential projects. Perk emphasized that the Corps will not fund APE projects that do not meet the basic sideboards. That being the case, he said there is no point in having the A-Team review projects that do not meet those criteria. Leake explained that proponents of projects that were culled for not meeting the sideboards had an opportunity to address the identified shortcomings. According to Leake, only one person took advantage of this opportunity to recover their project and get it back on the APE list. Leake questioned what more could possibly be done, stressing that it is the responsibility of proponents to clearly articulate the value of their project and its compatibility with the identified sideboards.

Sternburg also expressed concern with the limited time afforded A-Team members to review the APE project proposals and discuss them with fellow A-Team members before being asked to rank them. Sternburg said the A-Team needed to receive the information sooner. She emphasized that the A-Team members are distinct from the field station team leaders and cautioned against assuming that the state A-Team members were conversant with the projects their field station team leader(s) submitted. Leake acknowledged Sternburg's point, saying that she shares her concern. Leake emphasized that USGS must work with three points of contact in each state — i.e., the field station team leader, the A-Team member, and the EMP-CC member. She said that failure by one of these contacts to respond promptly often reduces USGS's ability to get information to another contact or group in a timely manner. Leake also stressed the need for these three contact points within each state to communicate effectively with one another. She invited suggestions for anything that USGS can do to facilitate this. Sternburg suggested including time on the next A-Team agenda to discuss coordination issues.

Leake emphasized the need to make final determinations regarding the FY 05 MSP and APE promptly. Observing that the first quarter of FY 05 is almost over, Leake pointed out USGS and the Corps cannot finalize the LTRMP scope of work for FY 05 until the MSP and APE are completely defined. Assuming an allocation of \$4.363 million for the LTRMP and an MSP of \$3.73 million, this leaves a total of \$633,000 for APE work, according to Leake. However, she noted that, of this \$633,000, \$153,000 has been requested for glide path transition to the MSP; \$57,000 is earmarked for equipment refreshment; and approximately \$250,000 is estimated for the Status and Trends Report. Thus, the amount available for other APE projects totals only \$173,000.

Gretchen Benjamin noted that the \$153,000 glide path figure Leake cited is for FY 05 only. Benjamin cautioned that some field stations may also require glide path funding in FY 06. She explained that Wisconsin staff are doing what they can to expedite things, but said the transition to the MSP will be difficult and require time. Roger Perk said he does not support a two-year glide path schedule. Citing the short time in which state agencies are implementing their own state-mandated changes, Perk said a one-year glide path is more than generous. Benjamin emphasized that the glide path money will not be wasted, since it will be used to support APE projects. However, Leake stressed that the APE projects need to be matched to the skills of particular individuals. Thus, those stations needing glide path support may or may not be well-suited to executing priority APE work. Benjamin reiterated her statement that Wisconsin DNR may not be able to bring its field station structure into line with the MSP in one year.

Sternburg asked what would happen if the EMP received more than the \$19.0 million base funding appropriation used for planning purposes. Specifically, Sternburg asked how the additional funds would be allocated. Perk said additional funding would be allocated to APEs. He emphasized that the MSP would not be altered, noting that the base monitoring program cannot be expanded and contracted to adjust to one-year funding increases. Perk said the existing APE projects list is more than adequate for EMP funding up to \$23 million. If the EMP received more than \$23 million, Perk said the Corps and USGS would solicit additional APE project ideas. Sternburg stressed that, if the EMP received additional funding, consideration should be given to picking up aspects of the monitoring that have been dropped. She said some options for restoring monitoring would be suitable as one-year efforts and expressed concern that the current APE sideboards do not allow for such projects. Perk said monitoring under APE would only be considered appropriate if it contributed to a focused objective. He said he would not fund monitoring through APE if the effort simply contributed more points to the data set. Sternburg asked that the sideboards for the FY 06 APE projects explicitly allow for one-year monitoring efforts that contribute to priority objectives.

Leake called for a more measured, deliberate process in developing the FY 06 APE list, urging that the list and prioritization be completed well before the fiscal year starts. In response to a question from Barb Naramore, EMP-CC members confirmed that they want their A-Team members to be responsible for reviewing and prioritizing the FY 06 APE list. Leake agreed to coordinate with A-Team chair John Sullivan regarding the process to be used in developing the FY 06 list. EMP-CC members recommended that work on that list begin early in the second half of FY 05, to ensure adequate time to solicit and evaluate potential projects. They also suggested that the next A-Team agenda include a discussion of the process for developing future APE lists.

### *Status and Trends Report*

Leake updated EMP-CC members regarding the Status and Trends Report. Bob Gaugush and Hank DeHaan will serve as the USGS and COE leads, respectively, for the report. The report is intended to update UMRS stakeholders regarding the condition of the ecosystem and demonstrate the LTRMP's ability to contribute to ecosystem management activities. It will cover the entire UMRS ecosystem for the LTRMP data sets' full period of record. The goal is to complete the draft Status and Trends Report by September 30, 2005.

Leake said that USGS and Corps are seeking the EMP-CC's endorsement of the report outline at today's meeting. DeHaan explained that the two agencies have already shared the outline with the A-Team and sought its members' comments. Overall, according to DeHaan, the A-Team members were supportive, though they have expressed some concern regarding how the indicators and endpoints will be selected. DeHaan reviewed the major chapters planned for the report, including:

- Introduction
- Status and Trends of UMRS Resources
- Use and Application of LTRMP Monitoring Data
- Additional UMRS Resource Datasets
- Adaptive Resource Management
- Conclusions
- Citations

Wooley expressed concern that the report will contain too much preliminary material before the presentation of the core status and trends information. He urged that the report start with a summary of key status and trends information as its very first element. Sternburg said several A-Team members are skeptical that the indicators and endpoints can be developed in the timeframe envisioned, noting that the schedule calls for the selection of indicators and endpoints by January 7, 2005. DeHaan explained that USGS will take the lead in developing the indicators and endpoints, and will start with the 21 endpoints identified by the Navigation Study Science Panel. DeHaan acknowledged that they are not all perfectly suited to the Status and Trends Report, but said they are a good start. DeHaan assured EMP-CC members that USGS and the Corps will consult with the field station team leaders, A-Team members, and principal investigators regarding the endpoints and indicators. John Barko cited the LTRMP's Operating Plan and two Strategic Plans as other sources that should be reviewed for insight regarding endpoints and indicators. Leake said DeHaan and Gaugush will assemble all relevant reference materials.

Sternburg said the A-Team members' comments on the Status and Trends Report were generally favorable. They believe the report will be an important document and are pleased that it is moving forward. Some members have questions about specific endpoints, including Asian carp and lake sturgeon. Others asked about the timeframe for development and what information is missing in order to fully understand the UMRS's ecological health. Gretchen Benjamin noted that the Status and Trends Report will have a wide variety of readers. She urged USGS and the Corps to keep this diverse audience in mind while crafting the report.

#### *A-Team Report*

Sternburg distributed a written A-Team report and summarized the A-Team's November 4 conference call. According to Sternburg, the A-Team devoted a considerable portion of its call to discussing which sampling period should be dropped from the fish monitoring protocol. Members ultimately agreed to drop the spring period and retain summer and fall sampling, though Illinois and Missouri expressed concern with this approach. Several state A-Team

members also voiced reservations with the level of resources being devoted to statistical support under the MSP, noting that 0.5 FTE was at the high end of the range previously agreed upon.

The A-Team did not discuss the specifics of the APE project list on the call, but individual members did prioritize the proposed projects and provide that input to A-Team Chair John Sullivan. Sternburg explained the ranking process employed and noted that Iowa and Missouri viewed some APE proposals as work that the principal investigators (PIs) should complete under the MSP. Leake explained that the field stations and PIs will, indeed, be conducting analyses as part of the MSP. However, she explained that the PI analyses efforts identified for potential APE funding are items that cannot be completed under the MSP because these individuals' MSP time is fully allocated to other tasks. Leake said a list of the MSP analysis tasks will be available after USGS and the field stations complete final negotiations on the MSP.

Among the APE proposals, bathymetry received the highest overall ranking. However, Sternburg emphasized that this should not be interpreted as meaning the A-Team favors fully funding bathymetry at \$625,000, which would leave essentially no money for other APE priorities. She said there are separable elements within the bathymetry category. Perk acknowledged Sternburg's point and said the Corps and USGS will give careful consideration to the A-Team's priorities in determining which APE proposals will be funded in FY 05. Other considerations will include the availability of appropriate staff for the priority projects.

### **Other Business**

Greg Ruff noted that the Corps and other federal agencies are currently working with the Office of Management and Budget to develop the President's FY 06 budget request. Of particular note, the Corps is shifting to a performance-based budgeting approach for the coming fiscal year. Ruff said it is not yet clear precisely how this approach will work or how it will affect particular programs and projects. He also noted that federal employees are not permitted to discuss specifics until the President releases the budget in February.

Larry Shepard asked that anticipated decision points and action items be highlighted in advance of EMP-CC meetings.

Barb Naramore announced that the upcoming quarterly meeting schedule includes February 22-24, 2005 in La Crosse; May 24-26, 2005 in the Twin Cities; and August 16-18, 2005 in the Quad Cities. The EMP-CC will meet on the third day of each quarterly series. The Corps of Engineers has yet to make final determinations regarding the GLC meetings currently scheduled for the first day of each quarterly series. [Note: The Corps subsequently confirmed that there will be a GLC meeting on February 22, 2005. Decisions have not yet been announced regarding the May and August dates.]

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

**EMP-CC Attendance List  
November 18, 2004**

Gregg Ruff	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Charlie Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Linda Leake	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Rick Mollahan	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Mike McGhee	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Rebecca Wooden	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Janet Sternburg	Missouri Department of Conservation
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Al Fenedick	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Bob Goodwin	U.S. Maritime Administration
Rich Worthington	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters
Mike Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Kip Runyon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Tim George	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Roger Perk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Hank DeHaan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Tom Novak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Chuck Spitzack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
John Barko	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, R&D
John DeLashmit	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Larry Shepard	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island Field Office
Dick Steinbach	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain Refuge
Karen Westphall	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain Refuge
Pat Heglund	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Mike Slifer	U.S. Geological Survey, Rolla
Mark Pegg	Illinois Natural History Survey
John Chick	Illinois Natural History Survey
Mike Wells	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Valerie Barko	Missouri Department of Conservation
Mark Carr	AEP River Operations
Paul Rohde	MARC 2000
Angela Anderson	Mississippi River Basin Alliance
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association