

**Minutes of the 163rd Quarterly Meeting  
of the  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**August 9, 2022  
St. Paul, Minnesota**

Tim Hall called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Participants were as follows:

UMRBA Representatives and Alternates:

Rick Pohlman	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Loren Wobig	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Dave Glover	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Tim Hall	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Jake Hansen	Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Barb Naramore	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Patrick Phenow	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Jennifer Hoggatt	Missouri Department of Natural Resource
Matt Vitello	Missouri Department of Conservation
Cheryl Ball	Missouri Department of Transportation
Steve Galarneau	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Federal UMRBA Liaisons:

Brian Chewning	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Sabrina Chandler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Mark Gaikowski	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC

Others in Attendance:

Kirk Hansen	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Megan Moore	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Nick Schlessler	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Ceil Strauss	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Katrina Knott	Missouri Department of Conservation
Erin Fanning	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Jeff Wentzel	Missouri Department of Health and Human Services
Stacey Fowler	Missouri Department of Transportation
Dan Baumann	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Mike Halsted	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Melissa Mullen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Jim Cole	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Don Duncan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Leanne Riggs	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Ann Banitt	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Angela Deen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP

Bob Stanick	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Nathan Wallerstedt	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Kim Thomas	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Andrew Goodall	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Rachel Hawes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jon Klingman	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marshall Plumley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Nicole Manasco	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Davi Michl	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Bre Popkin	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Carl Schoenfield	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Chuck Theiling	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Abby Hoyt	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS ( <i>virtual</i> )
Lance Engle	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Greg Kohler	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Shawn Sullivan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Jodi Creswell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Planning Division North
Brian Johnson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Planning Division North
Kat McCain	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, IWR
Anthony Civiello	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NWK
Travis Black	U.S. Department of Transportation, MARAD
Jennifer Kissel	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Ann Lavaty	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Zachary Leibowitz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Megan Maksimowicz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Chelsea Paxson	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Steve Schaff	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Jared Schmalstieg	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Amy Shields	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Kraig McPeek	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois-Iowa Ecological Services
Laura Muzal	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois-Iowa Field Office
Matt Mangan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Ecological Services
Olivia LeDee	U.S. Geological Survey, Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center
Jennifer Dieck	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Steve Buan	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NWS
Mike Welvaert	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NWS
Kim Lutz	America's Watershed Initiative
Lindsay Brice	Audubon
Paul Lewis	Eno Center for Transportation
Bob Beduhn	HDR Engineering
Paul Dierking	HDR Engineering
Doug Daigle	Lower Mississippi River Sub-Basin Committee (Hypoxia Task Force)
Heather Navarro	Midwest Climate Collaborative
Rick Stoff	<i>Our Mississippi</i>
Christine Favilla	Sierra Club
Olivia Dorothy	American Rivers
Jill Craftman	Izaak Walton League

Bryan Hopkins	The Nature Conservancy
Ibrahim Demir	University of Iowa
Enes Yildirim	University of Iowa
Kirsten Wallace	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Mark Ellis	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Natalie Lenzen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Lauren Salvato	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Erin Spry	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Andrew Stephenson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

### **Remembering Scott Morlock**

UMRBA Board Chair Tim Hall and USGS Mark Gaikowski paid tribute to Scott Morlock following his recent death. Morlock served as UMRBA’s Federal Liaison from USGS, and was committed to advancing UMRBA’s mission through science and strong partnership.

### **Minutes**

Barb Naramore moved and Jennifer Hoggatt seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the May 24, 2022 UMRBA quarterly meeting as written. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Executive Director’s Report**

Kirsten Wallace announced that Erin Spry joined UMRBA staff as Project Specialist effective May 31, 2022. Spry is working on the water quality and ecosystems portions of UMRBA’s work. Michaela Crowley and Kennedy Domerchie joined UMRBA as GIS and Planning Assistants working on UMRBA’s data development for the USEPA Inland Sensitivity Atlas.

Kirsten Wallace pointed to the Executive Director’s report in the agenda packet for a summary of the Association’s other work efforts since the May 2022 quarterly meeting. Wallace provided a few highlights as follows:

- Wallace extended congratulations to UMRR for its publication of the third LTRM status and trends report. Wallace applauded Jeff Houser and other involved partners at USGS, field stations, and others. This comprehensive analysis of ecological status and trends fulfills the promise, and exceeds expectations, of the program’s early years for long term resource monitoring. The report also provides accessibility of the information to the public.
- The UMRBA Water Level Management Regional Coordinating Committee published two reports that provide an updated quantitative analysis of costs, benefits, and risks associated with implementing water level management as well as consensus around implementing a suite of actions for improving the use of water level management as an ecological restoration and management tool. These two new reports are as follows:
  - Benefits, costs, and risks evaluation: <https://umrba.org/document/wlm-benefits-costs-risks>
  - Priority actions for implementation: <https://umrba.org/wlm-actions>
- Through NESP, UMRBA, the UMR states, USFWS, USGS, and the Corps continue to work hard to ramp up NESP to fully execute its appropriations and realize its potential as authorized. UMRBA staff met with DOI leadership on July 22, 2022 for the purposes of communicating the regional

opportunity to advance UMRR and NESP and to ensure top-down support for USFWS and USGS to effectively participate in those two programs as well as UMRBA's other regional planning efforts.

- UMRBA, NOAA, and the University of Minnesota announced a new partnership to enhance our knowledge on climate change and communications networks to facilitate two-way communications with less resources, more vulnerability communities in UMRBA's floodplain resilience planning work.

Mark Gaikowski thanked UMRBA for its outreach to DOI leadership. Gaikowski said JC Nelson is currently traveling with Assistant Secretary Tanya Trujillo and will highlight the Upper Mississippi River System region. Assistant Secretary Trujillo has indicated interest in traveling to the river and touring a habitat project. Olivia LeDee said she discussed the Upper Mississippi River with Assistant Secretary Trujillo in a meeting yesterday, during which the Assistant Secretary reiterated her interest in visiting the Upper Mississippi River.

Tim Hall pointed to UMRBA's April 2022 to June 2022 financial statements provided on pages B-30 to B-36 of the agenda packet. Steve Galarneau moved and Barb Naramore seconded a motion to approve the Association's budget report and balance sheet as included in the agenda packet. In response to a question from Barb Naramore, Wallace explained that the FY 2022 deficit will be around \$25,000 but that end-year adjustments are still being made. Departures from the budget include facilitation services for the April 2022 NESP meeting, reemergence of travel, and some delays in work for which UMRBA will invoice in FY 2023 rather than FY 2022. Wallace said she will provide a more detailed explanation of budget departures when all of the remaining items are finalized. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Climate Initiatives in the Midwest**

#### *Midwest Climate Collaborative*

Heather Navaro provided an introduction of the Midwest Climate Collaborative (MCC), which was launched via summit in January of 2022 for the purpose of creating a carbon neutral, climate resilient, and interconnected Midwest region. With climate change disproportionately affecting low-income communities and communities of color, equity and justice is at the core of MCC's work. MCC is housed within Washington University in St. Louis. It provides a forum for collaboration among researchers, practitioners, educators, industry, nongovernmental entities, and local governments located in 12 Midwest states. MCC programs feature researchers at the forefront of climate science, including sponsoring climate ambassadors, tracking commitments, and a climate asset map. MCC also aims to build capacity in climate research and adaptation. Navaro encouraged contacting MCC and to share research questions with the group. MCC's website is: [midwestclimatecollaborative.wustl.edu](https://midwestclimatecollaborative.wustl.edu).

#### *USGS Climate Adaptation Science Center*

Olivia LeDee provided an overview of the Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center (CASC), which is a USGS and university partnership. The Midwest CASC is founded on a five-year agreement to fund yearly research projects. Its FY 2023 research priorities include heavy precipitation and drought, loss of winter, barriers to adaptation, altered hydrology, and novel terrestrial landscapes. LeDee stated there is currently \$1.5 million in funds available for 4-6 future research projects in FY 2023 and encouraged proposals be submitted to her. LeDee highlighted three projects occurring this fiscal year: quantifying changes in wetland connectivity and nutrient reduction, integrating process-based modeling, and natural solutions to reducing impacts of extreme precipitation events in the Upper Mississippi River basin. LeDee noted UMRBA's involvement in the latter project.

## Expansion of the Middle Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge

Sabrina Carpenter announced the USFWS proposed expansion of Middle Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge by 90,000 acres. Public scoping is occurring August 3-14, 2022. Chandler requested input be directed to her.

## Flood Vulnerability

*National Flood Insurance Program Risk Rating 2.0*

### Overview of new pricing methodology

Ceil Strauss provided information about changes to FEMA flood insurance calculations. FEMA is offering training for the new Risk Rating 2.0 to reflect the risk more accurately and to address inequities. As of November 1, 2021, sites are rated with the new system and renewals are being updated as of April 1, 2022. Previously insurance rates were determined based the 100-year floodplain; new assessments are based on multiple factors, such as local topography, first floor elevation, flood frequency, replacement cost value, among others. FEMA maps are still in use but FEMA has discontinued its rating table. Mandatory flood insurance is still in place in the mapped areas for borrowers with a federal loan.

Additional resources are as follows:

- FEMA Risk Rating 2.0: <https://www.fema.gov/flood-insurance/risk-rating>
- Minnesota DNR Floodplain Training and Education: [https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt\\_section/floodplain/training.html](https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/floodplain/training.html)
- Association of State Floodplain Managers Flood Insurance: <https://www.floods.org/membership-communities/engage-and-serve/policy-committees/flood-insurance/>

### Perspective on potential implications to UMRS

Bob Beduhn of HDR Engineering explained how Risk Rating 2.0 impacts levee projects. Federal levees are now judged on a quality rating from a risk assessment process via a USACE score. Under the new Risk Rating 2.0, structures behind a certified levee are assigned a score that impacts their insurance rate. The Federal Flood Risk Management Standard outlines new funding for flood resilience projects. Projects must evaluate flood protection systems via three design perspectives: 500-year floodplain, freeboard value approach, or a climate informed science evaluation. For existing levees, engineers follow Corps guidance and use Levee Safety Tool: a 125-point checklist tool to gather information used to establish a rating for a levee. Levee design is influenced by Risk Rating 2.0 and new Corps guidance. Corps manual EM1110-2-1913 is now out for evaluation and comment.

In response to a question, Beduhn stated that planning costs are absorbed in design process and planning. Engineers use risk and consequence to assess risk of geotechnical levee failure; there is now more emphasis on flooding behind levees in high rain events. In response to a question from Sabrina Chandler regarding private levee requirements, Beduhn explained that there are requirements for new levee designs to include assessments of riverine impact and residual risk of flooding behind the levee. Engineers must consider a joint probability risk of both a flood and rain event.

*Iowa Agriculture Flood Vulnerability*

Ibrahim Demir presented on the University of Iowa's recent research of agricultural flood vulnerability in Iowa, noting that the state is made up of 85 percent agricultural land. Floods have resulted in \$1.6 billion in losses in 2019. As the magnitude and frequency of flooding increases, there is greater need for quantitative risk analyses of vulnerabilities.

Enes Yildirim introduced the partners involved in the research, which uses data from USDA, USACE, and University of Iowa data to depict land use, loss, inundation, and crop info. Maps are used to display the findings. Answering a question from Lauren Salvato, Yildirim said this vulnerability assessment could be used to identify high-risk areas helps decision makers. As an example, quantitative analyses may show that peak flood reductions outweigh crop production losses when making mitigation choices.

### **Missouri River Flood Projects**

Jennifer Hoggatt of Missouri Geological Survey presented Missouri River Flood Resiliency actions, founded on a memorandum of agreement (MOU) between Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Phase 1 uses a Planning Assistance to States (PAS) agreement; phase 2 includes a Flood Risk and Resiliency Study. The PAS was initiated in late 2019 with the Kansas City and Omaha Districts and the four states, based on stakeholder conversations to hear local perspectives. The group is acting on the Flood Risk and Resiliency Study to develop a flow frequency study and a suite of solutions having local input and ideas, with great cooperation between states and USACE. The group seeks a range of reasonable, actionable solutions, and provides USACE report-outs monthly as opportunities for states to ask questions.

Hoggatt discussed Missouri's actions, which included addition of verbiage in WRDA 2022 to allow study and construction projects and a cost-share pilot in Holt County launching later this year. A report will be completed in September. The Missouri Hydrology Information Center is funded to continue its work for the next four years as of July 2022, has added staff, and is currently working on gathering data from flood to drought conditions.

Tim Hall added that, from Iowa's perspective, the group is similar to a UMRBA framework on the Missouri River, and that cooperation with Kansas and Nebraska has been beneficial. Answering a question about the Systematic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC) process, Hall said that there were three PAS virtual stakeholder listening sessions, which will inform the group's next steps. The sessions are held in partnership with the University of Missouri to bring folks together and break through barriers. Dru Buntin added that informed consent is critical to the process.

### **UMRBA Reaches 8-9 Monitoring Pilot**

#### *PFAS Monitoring*

Jeff Wenzel, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, presented on an opportunity to collaborate on data collection of PFAS through the Reaches 8-9 pilot of the UMRBA Interstate Water Quality Monitoring Plan. Thanks to collaboration with UMRBA and USEPA, including funding from the an USEPA multi-purpose grant, staff are now able to review PFAS data and can now watch as UCMR5 and other projects emerge to test fish. Lauren Salvato noted that the Reaches 8-9 pilot report is available on the website, including a fish tissue sample appendix: <https://umrba.org/document/reaches8-9pilot>. Wenzel said Missouri DNR's next steps are to implement the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule at a smaller water intake to see if there are locations for fish testing.

### *Data Results and Implementation Feasibility Evaluation*

Salvato presented a summary of the UMRBA Interstate Water Quality Monitoring Plan Reaches 8-9 Pilot Condition Assessment. The UMRBA Interstate Water Quality Monitoring Plan facilitates interstate water quality management on the main stem of the Upper Mississippi River. The geographic extent of the Reaches 8-9 pilot includes the main stem of the Mississippi River from L&D 17 to L&D 21, 109 miles of river. Notably, three water intake operators participated in the pilot at Keokuk, Warsaw, and Quincy.

The pilot's condition class summary rates the Clean Water Act's (CWA's) four designated uses of the Mississippi on a scale of good, fair, or poor. The result of the pilot's condition summary shows only one "good" rating at Reach 9 in the aquatic life category. The drinking water assessment was rated "poor" in both reaches due to cyanotoxin detections, and the recreation assessment was rated "poor" in both reaches due to chlorophyll and *E. coli* in one reach. The fish consumption assessment showed decline of common carp and greater largemouth bass, PCBs, mercury, and PFAS.

The Evaluation Report released in tandem with the pilot's Condition Assessment provides recommendations to create a permanent data management system, dedicated staff, and reassessing the inclusion of water suppliers. Salvato stated that UMRBA's next steps are to revise the Interstate Water Quality Monitoring Plan, resolve outstanding questions, and secure resources to prepare for full-scale monitoring. Kirsten Wallace thanked the partners for working as a team to cover tasks and Lauren Salvato for her work in convening and leading the interstate project.

In response to a question from Tim Hall, Salvato said it would take an estimated \$2.4 million annually to monitor all 13 CWA reaches. Barb Naramore pointed out that the plan evaluates raw results for drinking water raw results but judging support of the drinking water standard based on finished results. Salvato confirmed that is correct but is unsure about the rationale for that approach.

### **UMRS Navigation and Ecosystem Management Report**

#### *Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program*

Andrew Goodall announced Rachel Hawes as the new NESP Ecosystem Program Manager as of June 2022.

Goodall explained NESP updates through the last quarter, as follows:

- The Corps is working to secure funding agreements to support UMRBA, the states, and federal agencies listed in NESP's authorizing legislation in their respective roles. The UMRBA Board submitted a request to transfer their \$200,000 financial support to UMRBA, which would hire staff that would serve on behalf of the states and at their direction. Goodall said that would require the Corps to arrange an MOU between the agency and UMRBA. Goodall said the MOUs will specify partners' responsibilities per the authorizing language, which will allow the Corps to enter into these financial arrangements and execute the program.
- An *ad hoc* group of NESP representatives is developing a charter for NESP partner agency consultation. An *ad hoc* group of agency partners are drafting a proposal that would be provided to the NESP representatives for their feedback and consideration.
- The Corps is drafting a recommendation to submit to its vertical team to establish the Advisory Panel with the membership of government agencies and river users per NESP's authorization.

Goodall referenced a question from Olivia Dorothy earlier in the meeting, and explained that the Advisory Panel will serve as a formal means for nongovernmental organizations to consult with the Corps on NESP.

- The Corps is currently evaluating NESP’s compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- ESA coordination was initiated with USFWS on June 27, 2022.
- The Corps is consulting with the construction contractor industry and navigation industry to identify and mitigate potential risks to project implementation of the L&D 25 lock modernization project, and anticipates awarding a construction contract in September 2022. The Corps will also work with ecosystem partners in identifying site-specific mitigation needs.
- The Corps has submitted a request for proposal for the design of L&D 22 fish passage, anticipating the award of a design contract in September 2022 pending negotiations. Goodall reported that, in early June 2022, the Chief of Engineers approved the final project implementation report for L&D 22 fish passage. The Corps has established the L&D 22 fish passage science team and is working with USFWS and USGS on pre-project monitoring activities.
- The Corps published a map of NESP projects in “active implementation” as well as ecosystem projects that have been approved by MVD and the three focus areas for navigation – i.e., mooring facilities, systemic mitigation, and the 1,200-foot lock at La Grange. The map is available at the following link: <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/NESP/>.

Olivia Dorothy asked about the Corps’ plans to request input from environmental nongovernmental organizations on navigation-related projects. Goodall said the Corps plans to utilize the Advisory Panel as a means for seeking input on NESP from the stakeholder interest groups, and the Corps plans to submit a recommendation for establishing the Advisory Panel to its Vertical Team by the end of this calendar year. In response to a question from Dorothy, Goodall said the ASA(CW) will determine who will serve on the Advisory Panel but that process-related details regarding the process for applications and selection are unknown.

Dorothy referred to the Office of Special Counsel’s recommendations in 2000 that resulted in an adaptive management approach to implementing the navigation projects and asked for a status update on that work. Goodall said he is unfamiliar with the Counsel’s findings and would respond to Dorothy’s question at a future time. Dorothy recalled that, following the Office of Special Council’s findings that the Corps was manipulating its economic analysis of the Navigation Feasibility Study, the Corps agreed to an adaptive management approach to navigation improvements to safeguard from that occurring again. Dorothy observed that the Advisory Panel does not appear to serve as an independent body and raised concern with the Corps’ schedule of lock construction without having established the Advisory Panel or initiated adaptive management.

In response to a question from Dorothy, Goodall explained that the Corps is currently evaluating NESP’s NEPA compliance and will be publishing a report on the findings. Dorothy asked whether the Corps’ environmental advisors are reviewing the economic data submitted to OMB that were attached to the 2019 NESP navigation cost evaluation. Dorothy explained that the Corps’ economists have provided a written assessment that the USDA economic information regarding NESP lock improvements that were provided by ASA(CW) R.D. James to OMB were incorrect. In response to a question from Dorothy, Goodall said the Corps’ 2019 economic analysis was done in accordance with guidelines and that there has been no further developments in respect to the report as transmitted by ASA(CW) James in 2019. Goodall said



he is unsure of the Corps' statement to which Dorothy is referring. Goodall offered to talk with Dorothy further about this matter offline but is unable to provide any further information at this time.

Christine Favilla asked whether mitigation is required and the process for determining needs and what the mitigation will entail. Goodall explained that mitigation is required for the L&D 25 lock modernization project and that the Corps will seek public input in alignment with the agency's typical processes. The Corps is evaluating the L&D 25 project-specific needs outside of the lock's immediate footprint that is needed to determine appropriate mitigation needs – e.g., staging areas. Noting the schedule for L&D 25 construction, Dorothy said she understands that the Corps will need a mitigation plan in order to initiate lock construction and mitigation concurrently. Goodall stated that the Corps is developing a draft mitigation plan for L&D 25 and would follow up with an anticipated timeframe for its release.

In response to a question from Dorothy, Goodall explained that the results of the NEPA compliance assessment will determine future needs related to environmental compliance. Dorothy raised concern with the timing for awarding a construction contract for L&D 25 prior to these decisions, and asked if Goodall anticipates delaying the award. Goodall said that the Corps will continue to evaluate projects on a case-by-case basis.

Andrew Stephenson read a comment from Nick Schlessler in the chat forum regarding defining comparable progress. Goodall explained that the District describes capability for NESP based on comparable progress in navigation and ecosystem based on their respective impact. Comparable progress is a decision that is deliberately evaluated in collaboration with partners.

Favilla asked if there will be a nongovernmental representative that will serve on the Advisory Panel. Goodall confirmed that NESP's authorization calls for two representatives from conservation and environmental advocacy interest groups. Dorothy expressed concern that the Corps is seeking input from navigation industry groups and is not providing the same opportunity from conservation or environmental nongovernmental interests. Goodall said he understands the concern, and said the Corps participated in public meetings of the Inland Waterways Users Board but has not had other special meetings with navigation interests. Dorothy referred to the June 25, 2022 meeting regarding L&D 25 and NESP small scale efficiency projects and asked for clarity on that meeting. Goodall confirmed that that meeting did occur with navigation industry and construction contractors.

Jill Crafton expressed confusion and frustration that environmental and conversation nongovernmental entities are not being included in the NESP deliberations, and underscored the regional agreement to balanced management of the river for navigation and ecosystem purposes. Goodall said the Corps has been focusing on establishing partnership with the state and federal agencies included in NESP's authorizing legislation and said NESP will work on opportunities to engage stakeholders in NESP. Kim Thomas acknowledged that NESP received a substantial amount of money with a new construction start with only piecemeal funding up to this point. Thomas explained the challenges associated with expeditiously building the program and partnership and acknowledged that the ecosystem investments will take longer to plan and implement than the navigation projects. For example, whereas the navigation projects are solely on Corps-owned lands, the ecosystem projects require multi-agency planning and real estate or project partnership agreements. Thomas asked for patience as NESP ramps up to implement its appropriations.

In response to Crafton's reference of the Missouri River collaboration, Tim Hall explained that the planning work has been ongoing for 3.5 years and acknowledged the time it took to ramp up and establish those lines of communication.

Barb Naramore referenced the PowerPoint slides that show the membership of the Advisory Panel per NESP's authorizing legislation, which includes state and federal agencies, a landowner, and representatives from conservation and environmental advocacy groups and agriculture and navigation industry advocacy groups. Naramore said she is hearing frustration in the absence of establishing that group, and pointed to Thomas' explanation of the challenges in doing so. Thomas said the Corps asked ASA(CW) to establish the Advisory Panel in 2009, but that request was denied in light of the inconsistent funding for NESP at the time. The District is elevating the establishment of the Advisory Panel as a priority, particularly following the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and FY 2022 appropriations to NESP. Thomas expressed appreciation for the feedback on where the program needs to focus.

Dorothy clarified that the problem is that the Corps is seeking advice from the navigation sector prior to establishing the Advisory Panel and not providing that same opportunity to conservation and environmental groups, who are supposed to be involved in the program. Dorothy also voiced confusion with the Advisory Panel's roles with respect to the program when decisions are already being made.

#### *Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program*

Marshall Plumley reported that the 2022 UMRR Report to Congress has undergone two cycles of partner review. MVR submitted the draft report to MVD on August 5, 2022. USACE Headquarters is scheduled to review the draft by end of August. Plumley expects the report to be completed and delivered to Congress in December 2022.

USGS published UMRR's third ecological status and trends using its long term resource monitoring dataset on June 22, 2022. The report's release was accompanied by a press release jointly issued by USACE and USGS. To date, the collective partners of federal and state agencies and nongovernmental organizations who shared the report on their respective platforms have tracked 70 engagements with media. Many of those engagements involved UMESC staff. Plumley applauded all partners who were involved in the development of the report (including data collection and research) and in the associated communications.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's water resources development act (WRDA) measure includes an increase of UMRR's annual appropriation of its habitat projects from \$40 million to \$75 million. It does not include a provision for increasing UMRR's long term resource monitoring annual appropriation authorization. Plumley acknowledged the current pressure on partners' staffing resources, and noted that an increase in HREPs appropriation of that magnitude would require substantial interagency coordination.

Plumley provide an overview of the ongoing HREPs and the schedule for implementation under the current \$55 million program (i.e., \$40 million for HREPs). Plumley explained that UMRR is currently evaluating inflation impacts, noting that this year's starting contractor bids have been up to 27 percent higher than estimated. Four construction contracts are due for completion this year, totaling 10 thousand acres of restored habitat.

Sabrina Chandler voiced concern over current funding levels for USFWS, stating that the agency could not meet current expectations. Chandler stated that leadership and biologist roles are currently unfilled, significantly limiting USFWS's capacity to meet its HREP and LTRM roles. With the increase in funding for HREPs, USFWS will continue to struggle to meet the needs of the program. Kim Thomas recognized Chandler's concerns and said the Corps will continue to carry message during its

Congressional visits and “effects statements.” Plumley said he anticipates that the increase of funding will cover additional inflation expenses on existing projects, but noted that an increase in ongoing habitat projects would begin in about five years. Chandler explained that USFWS is under a hiring freeze within the Midwest that will likely continue into the next year.

Barb Naramore asked if there are any interim opportunities to provide USFWS with some additional capacity or relief. Chandler answered that USFWS is engaging in conversations with the Corps about potential authorities to allow for creativity.

Karen Hagerty commented that the *ad hoc* LTRM implementation team is going back to the agency for information needs.

## **Navigation Report**

### *District-Based Channel Condition Reports*

#### St. Louis District

Lance Engle of the St. Louis District (MVS) reported moderate water levels, with the Meredosia gauge on the Illinois Waterway at three feet above minimum for the last month. Crews removed six million cubic yards of sediment from the river last year. The Dredge Potter, used for 95 percent of the work on the Mississippi River, was mobilized July 7, 2022 and will likely work through September. On the edges of the District, barges Dredge Goetz, Rock Island Strike Removal, and LEL Contract – Bill Holman are being borrowed from other Corps Districts to dredge geographically remote areas. Engle noted that Pool 25 has required no dredging for the season, which is very unusual. This pool usually requires 1 million cubic yards removed yearly. Other pools with chronic dredging areas are also seeing no work. The District plans to borrow the Jadwin from MVD in Memphis to work on some sites starting mid-August. Engle closed by announcing the Dredge Master Plan is nearly finalized.

#### Rock Island District

Jon Klingman of the Rock Island District (MVR) reported that staff are tracking 12 sites as having dredging needs, which is half of the normal site load. Goetz entered the District in August to assist with three jobs on the Illinois Waterway. Rock work is being done in Pool 13 at Soupbone Island beginning September 1, 2022. Pool 22 wing dams have made a big difference, changing a chronic dredge site to self-sustaining. The Pool 11 placement site is complete except for seeding of berms. The Pool 16 Buffalo placement site has had its entrance dredged; crews reworked berms and must hook up a pipe for the drop structure. The Pool 20 Canton agricultural field site now has a license from the railroad to pipe water to and from the river under the rail tracks. On the Illinois Waterway, Mackinaw DMMP has added 2.5 million cubic yards of capacity; Bulls Island DMMP is a 47-acre acquisition; Spring Valley DMMP is 98 percent complete. Corps Staff are undertaking an ambitious preliminary assessment to conduct a single DMMP for the District’s entire portion of the Illinois Waterway.

#### St. Paul District

Bob Stanick said the St. Paul District (MVP) has 284 miles of navigable channel and uses the m/v Goetz and mechanical dredge contracts. These contractors also do maintenance work. The channel is in good condition. The District dredges an average of 969,000 cubic yards annually; this year, the District has dredged 600,000 cubic yards to-date. DMMPs are at different stages. In Pool 2 implementation; Pool 4

is in signatory process and will seek RRT endorsement; Pool 5 land use plan; Pool 6 held a public meeting in June and comments are currently being evaluated. Jim Fischer asked if a DMMP assessment could be done on the entire Upper Mississippi River. Stanick said the Corps will evaluate that as an option following the Illinois Waterway assessment to determine feasibility and cost. Stanick said rural dredge locations are often more difficult to manage because there is no DMMP nearby or place to take the material. Cassville has this problem, USACE needs fee title to be able to place material. In response to a question from Fischer about the Pool 11 transfer site, Stanick said the Corps will acquire the site but not yet. Fischer urged the Corps to action on the real estate because the next flood could be very challenging.

### *Sediment Budget Scoring Project*

Nicole Manasco presented the USACE sediment budget blueprint, a proposed nationwide sediment management program. One of the biggest challenges of maintaining the Mississippi River's navigable channel is finding places to place sediment, and the goal of the report is to create a blueprint of sediment deposition designed by multiple groups. Data for scoping the blueprint were gathered from the Illinois State Water Survey and the USACE 2000 Cumulate Effects Study, which uses sediment monitoring station data that is no longer widely available as few sediment monitoring stations remain. The proposal for the Upper Mississippi River, "How to Develop a Large River Sediment Budget Blueprint Through Leveraging of Multi-Agency Partnerships," is organized around four tasks: methods research, a data inventory, a stakeholder and technical expert workshop, and a final sediment budget blueprint. Funding is not scoped currently, but NESP may fund initial sediment budget research at different scales. Monasco stated that she would like to see an interagency MOU to guide development of goals for the project. Jill Crafton expressed concern that dredging is creating a sediment problem and asserted that ecological approaches are needed to reduce sediment.

### *Waterborne Competitiveness*

Paul Lewis of the Eno Center for Transportation shared a report on Waterborne Competitiveness, an analysis of major inland waterways globally. The study asked how the U.S. compares to other countries by investigating funding and freight flows and provides recommendations to keep the nation competitive. The U.S. inland waterways include 12,000 miles of river systems which transport 500 million tons of domestic shipping annually. South America's inland navigation systems including the Amazon and the Paraguay-Paraná River systems are exhibiting growth, whereas Europe's and China's inland navigation systems are experiencing declines. In the case of China's systems, fragmentation of shipping routes is occurring. Lewis stated that the U.S. waterway system holds a lot of value as a waterway within its borders. Multi-agency planning is complex but a necessary tactic to maintain competitiveness. The final report is available at: <https://www.enotrans.org/eno-resources/waterborne-competitiveness-u-s-and-foreign-investments-in-inland-waterways/>.

### **Invasive Carp / Copi**

Invasive Carp presentations were rescheduled to the next UMRBA Quarterly meeting.

### **Administrative Issues**

#### *Future Meeting Schedule*

November 2022 — Quad Cities

— UMRBA quarterly meeting — November 15

— UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting — November 16

February-March 2023 — Virtual

— UMRBA quarterly meeting — February 28

— UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting — March 1

May 2023 — St. Paul

— UMRBA quarterly meeting — May 23

— UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting — May 24

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.