Minutes of the
Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program
Coordinating Committee

October 31, 2018
Quarterly Meeting

Crowne Plaza Aire MSP Airport-Mall of America
Bloomington, Minnesota

Sabrina Chandler of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. on October 31, 2018. Other UMRR Coordinating Committee representatives present were Brian Chewning (USACE), Jeff Houser (USGS) on behalf of Mark Gaikowski, Randy Schulz (IA DNR), Megan Moore (MN DNR), Matt Vitello (MO DoC), Jim Fischer (WI DNR), and Marty Adkins (NRCS) via phone. A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

Minutes of the August 15, 2018 Meeting

Tim Yager noted that, on page A-1, the meeting location was the "Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center." Jeff Houser asked that the names listed in paragraph six on page A-7 be changed to "Deanne Drake, Kraig Hoff, and Andy Bartels." Megan Moore requested that, in paragraph four on page A-8, the location of the two years of monitoring be changed to Pool 8 rather than Lake Pepin as currently written. Karen Hagerty clarified that her correction to the May 16, 2018 meeting minutes was for the word external to be removed when preceding communications team.

Jim Fischer moved and Matt Vitello seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the August 15, 2018 UMRR Coordinating Committee meeting as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Regional Management and Partnership Collaboration

FY 2018 Fiscal Update

Marshall Plumley presented a new format for the Corps' UMRR quarterly fiscal reports generated from the UMRR Database and distributed a handout of the UMRR FY 2018 fourth quarter report.

Plumley reported that $2.70 million in FY 2017 carry-over was added to UMRR's FY 2018 appropriation of $33.17 million, resulting in a $35.87 million program. He explained that the FY 2018 internal program allocations were revised since reported at the August 15, 2018 UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting. Specifically, the carry-over funds were allocated to habitat project implementation and approximately $3.1 million was essentially repaid from LTRM to HREPs. Plumley reported that UMRR achieved a 99 percent obligation of FY 2018 funds, and thanked partners for the dedication and hard work. He underscored the importance of a high execution rate for maintaining support from the Administration and Congress.

Plumley reviewed UMRR's FY 2018 final obligation allocations of $35.57 million is as follows:

- Regional Administration and Programmatic Efforts – $1,075,402

- Regional Science and Monitoring – $6,202,520
  - Long term resource monitoring – $1,925,884
  - Regional science in support of restoration – $3,219,453
  - Regional science staff support – $4,704
  - Habitat project evaluations – $941,142
  - Habitat Needs Assessment II – $111,337
- Habitat Restoration – $28,293,189
  - MVP – $7,126,879
  - MVR – $13,331,818
  - MVS – $7,808,727
  - Model certification – $25,765

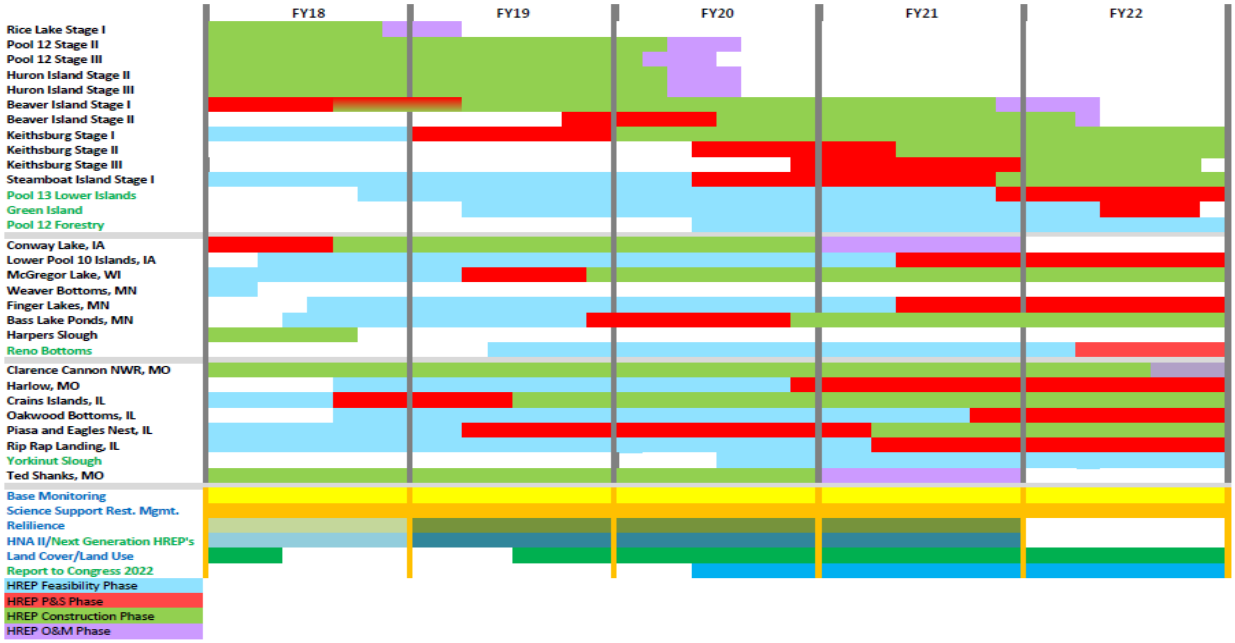
FY 2019 Funding

Plumley reported that the FY 2019 energy and water appropriations measure was enacted on September 28, 2018 and includes $33.17 million for UMRR. This represents the program's full annual authorized funding level and reflects a continuation of UMRR's increasing appropriations trend. UMRR's FY 2019 internal allocations are as follows:

- Regional Administration and Programmatic Efforts – $1,100,000
- Regional Science and Monitoring – $10,295,000
  - Long term resource monitoring – $4,920,000
  - Regional science in support of restoration – $3,750,000
  - Regional science staff support – $200,000
  - Habitat project evaluations – $975,000
  - Habitat Needs Assessment II – $450,000
- Habitat Restoration – $21,775,000
  - MVP – $7,670,000
  - MVR – $7,695,000
  - MVS – $6,310,000
  - Model certification – $100,000

UMRR Five-Year Plan

Plumley reported that the only change to the five-year plan as outlined at the August 2018 quarterly meeting is that Beaver Island is being delayed. The Districts' goal is to ensure an appropriate number of projects in planning, design, and construction. He pointed out that opportunities to introduce new HREPs into planning will begin in FYs 2021 and 2022.



In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Tom Novak acknowledged that the chart incorrectly indicates that Weaver Bottoms is in feasibility. The project has been deferred and will be removed from the chart in future reporting.

Brian Chewning asked for the five-year average of UMRR's science and monitoring funding, noting its $10 million allocation in FY 2019. Plumley said he would follow-up with Chewning. Karen Hagerty said LTRM funding is fairly consistent from year-to-year, but additional LTRM funding has been allocated to advance HREP priorities, including ecological resilience and HNA II. Hagerty added that project evaluations are also part of that funding.

Statements of UMRR Significance

Plumley introduced work underway to develop written statements of UMRR's significance locally, regionally, and nationally. The Corps plans to create storyboards that tell a narrative regarding the significance themes. Plumley anticipates that these statements of significance will also inform conversation regarding a future desired condition for the UMRS. The statements of significance will relate to three overarching areas to describe UMRR's impact, including institutional significance, public significance, and technical significance.

Institutional significance recognizes the impact that UMRR has had on laws, adopted plans, and other policy statements of public agencies, tribes, or private groups. For example, in the 1986 Water Resources Development Act, Congress recognized the UMRS as a nationally significant ecosystem and navigation system. Public significance is evidenced by people who are engaged in activities that reflect an interest or concern for a particular resource impacted through UMRR. An example statement is that the UMRS is home to more than 30 million residents who rely on river water for public related uses. Technical significance pertains to UMRR activities that increase scientific knowledge or judgment of critical resource characteristics. For example, a portion of the UMRS has been characterized as the single most important inland area for migrating diving ducks in the U.S." Plumley indicated that Corps staff are planning to have these draft statements completed by the end of calendar year 2018.

Jim Fischer stated his support for this effort and acknowledged its importance, especially with regard to defining a desired future condition for the UMRS.

Communications

Angie Freyermuth presented an update on the most recent draft UMRR communications plan and acknowledged comments from the UMRR Communications Team that the draft plan seemed disconnected from the 2015-2025 UMRR Strategic and Operating Plan. In response, Freyermuth explained how the draft communications plan relates to Goal 3 of the strategic plan – i.e., engage and collaborate with other organizations and individuals to help accomplish the UMRR vision. In particular, Freyermuth offered the following connections of the draft communications plan to Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1 of Communications Plan: Improve public awareness of UMRR accomplishments and garner increased public support for how UMRR and associated monitoring brings value to the nation.
  - Strategy 1.1: Develop a consistent method for external communication amongst the UMRR Coordinating Committee.
  - Strategy 1.4: Leverage opportunities at existing venues to educate and inform various target audiences. This includes networking and building relations with new partners within the UMR watershed.
- Goal 2 of Communications Plan: Synchronize and enhance communication and engagement to Congress about program accomplishments and program progress toward restoring the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS).
  - Action 1: Through consistent and synchronized messaging, the Upper Mississippi River (UMR) states, local communities, and nonprofits educate and inform key decision makers about UMRR and its value to the nation.

Kirsten Wallace acknowledged that the *ad hoc* 2015-2025 UMRR Strategic Planning Team had extensive deliberations over the plan's language, acknowledging that much of the terms are nuanced and are based on underlying decisions and assumptions. Wallace suggested a conversation during the next UMRR Communications Team meeting focused on the strategic plan, including how the UMRR Coordinating Committee envisioned external communications and what considerations were deferred to a communications team. Freyermuth agreed, and suggested that the UMRR Coordinating Committee utilize the principles of Systematic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC) to determine who or what organizations should be targeted.

In response to a question from Sabrina Chandler, Freyermuth said the latest draft communications plan was sent to the UMRR Communications Team on October 12, 2018. Marshall Plumley assured that an adequate review from the UMRR Coordinating Committee is still needed. In response to a suggestion from Plumley, the UMRR Coordinating Committee agreed to host a meeting with the Communications Team in conjunction with its February 27, 2019 quarterly meeting to a) discuss the intention of the UMRR Strategic Plan's objectives and strategies and b) provide more detailed direction regarding UMRR's communications, including a suite of targeted individuals and organizations and actions.

Jim Fischer thanked Freyermuth and Sam Heilig for their work, noting that the draft plan includes a suite of helpful communications tools. He suggested that the plan take a more targeted, strategic effort to ensure that partners are collectively advancing communications goals in the most effective and efficient ways. Randy Schultz requested that the most recent draft UMRR communications plan be sent to the UMRR Coordinating Committee.

Freyermuth expressed support for Wallace's suggestion, saying that she wants the plan to be what the Committee wants and that it would be helpful to understand the meaning of language used in the Strategic Plan. Hagerty suggested that the Communications Team start by addressing some high

priority communication projects. Freyermuth said the Rock Island District is initiating work on the UMRR webpage update and will continue utilizing its social media presence to promote the program's activities.

Megan Moore recognized that, while helpful, Freyermuth and Heilig's time spent on UMRR communications is limited, and requested discussion on whether the UMRR Coordinating Committee would like to see more resources devoted to communications implementation. Hagerty noted that the Rock Island District is allocating funds for Freyermuth and Heilig's time separate from UMRR's appropriation. Moore observed that Freyermuth and Heilig face multiple demands and are not able to be solely focused on the program. Freyermuth confirmed that her and Heilig's work requirements are often spread across multiple different projects, but assured they are committing time to UMRR.

Jim Fischer observed that there seems to be sufficient funding for UMRR to increase its expenditure on communications. Sabrina Chandler asked if there was some issue that precluded dedicating funds to Freyermuth and Heilig to secure more of their time. Hagerty recalled that former District Commander Craig Baumgartner did not want the District to represent a single project and wanted a more well-balanced communications presence. Wallace acknowledged that the Coordinating Committee should have pushed back a bit harder, noting that UMRR is a considerable portion of the District's overall budget and construction budget in particular. Given UMRR's national significance, Wallace said UMRR should have a strategic communications effort and a stand-alone website. In response to a question from Chandler, Wallace and Freyermuth explained that the Corps' Everglades program has a specific authorization regarding external communications that UMRR does not. Freyermuth added that Everglades' authorization was in response to regional demographics.

Fischer recalled a discussion about having a state agency member on the team and that Wisconsin communications staff have interest but also get pulled away on other projects. Fischer raised the question again about using UMRR funds to pay for a full-time dedicated staff for UMRR communications. Andy Barnes added that Col. Baumgartner is also concerned over perceptions of spending federal dollars on lobbying for a specific program. Chandler concurred with Barnes' recollection and restated the request for the Communication Team and Coordinating Committee to meet on February 27, 2019, calling for a clear set of objectives for communications. Fischer suggested a review of the 2015-2025 UMRR Strategic Plan. Hagerty said all relevant documents can be found on the UMRR website and handed out business cards with the link and contact information. Chandler agreed with Fischer that a more evident connection should be made between the Communication Plan and the UMRR Strategic Plan.

UMRR Showcase Presentations

MVP HREP Site Inspections

Jon Hendrickson explained that MVP performed site inspections for 27 constructed HREPs on August 7-9, 2018 and August 21-23, 2018. The site inspections involved 62 people representing seven agencies, many disciplines, and various expertise. Attendees included staff from the Corps (MVP and MVR), USFWS, UMESC, Iowa DNR, Wisconsin DNR, and Minnesota DNR. Disciplines represented included hydrology and hydraulics, GIS, fisheries, wildlife, water quality, mussels, geomorphology, aquatic ecology, forestry, planning, channel maintenance, and construction. The inspections were funded through 2018 HREP allocations and project O&M needs. The goal of the site inspections was to understand lessons learned from the projects in addition to completing project evaluation reports (PERs). Hendrickson noted that Island 42 was the oldest project visited at 32 years old, representing over half of its 50-year project life. Many staff who now work on HREP planning and design had not seen firsthand the wide variety of HREP features and their respective performance.

Kevin Hanson explained how he used the UMRR Database to create two interactive story maps of the inspection sites. All the information came from the UMRR Database with additional new photos, such as aerial photos that demonstrate historic and present conditions that show change over time at project locations. Users can click on map features to access additional information and pictures. Currently, the story maps are accessible via a password protected application. Hanson has found story maps like this can condense information usually found in PERs and are useful for relaying information about projects easily and concisely.

Hendrickson explained different features that were inspected during the visits, including various aspects of island construction and some experimental structures such as rock log structures between islands to diversify stream flow. Of these, Hendrickson highlighted a 120-foot ecoberm at L&D 4 where the rock face is subject to damage from wave and ice action and suggested that vegetation should be maintained on the rock sill at Pool 8 because it is intended as an overflow structure. Hendrickson provided an overview of the Indian Slough HREP, constructed in 1993 with the intent to reduce the loss of shallow and deep water habitat and restore backwater fisheries. During the inspection visit, participants noticed significant woody vegetation growing on a partial closure, some tree drop structures were sheared off by ice action, and riffles were deemed a success. Hendrickson said lessons learned from Indian Slough HREP would be included in the third edition of the UMRR HREP Design Handbook. Hendrickson noted that future site inspections would occur every three to five years, rotating among pools and types of projects.

Jeff Houser said he learned a lot from attending the trip and using the storyboards, which presented lots of information in a user-friendly format. In response to a question from Karen Hagerty, Hanson confirmed that UMRR Coordinating Committee can have access to the storyboards by contacting him to receive the password. Hagerty suggested that the storyboards be shared on the UMRR website.

Kirsten Wallace said she could see many uses for the storyboard presentations and requested that the password be sent to the Coordinating Committee. Jim Fischer asked how much effort was involved in creating the storyboards and if there was potential to update them for use as a communication tool. Hanson said that much of the initial effort was in learning the content and information about the projects, but noted that the UMRR Database was very helpful as a resource for finding that information. Now that the storyboard structure is in place, updates would not be difficult.

Jennie Sauer reiterated that a number of trip attendees from UMESC found it very helpful to see projects firsthand. Hanson emphasized that storyboards allowed users to cross between spatial scales, with some suggesting that the storyboards may be a more effective reporting tool than the existing PER structure or other static reports. Marshall Plumley said he found tremendous value in using the Database for this effort, and acknowledged the possibilities for using storyboards for communication in the future. Wallace agreed and mentioned the importance of having a single UMRR website in addition to the LTRM status and trends site.

Aquatic Vegetation Responses to HREP Island Construction

Deanne Drake and Alicia Carhart presented on their research findings regarding aquatic vegetation responses to UMRR's Pool 8 Islands habitat project. Drake said the research was initially inspired by Heidi Langrehr's 2007 research on macrophyte community responses to island construction. The research examined 18 years of LTRM aquatic vegetation data – 10 years before construction, two years during construction, and six years post-construction – to evaluate the programmatic objectives of restoring "diverse and abundant native aquatic vegetation communities."

Drake explained that, if the Pool 8 Islands project worked as intended, then aquatic vegetation prevalence and diversity would increase soon after island construction, with the greatest response closer

to the project. Therefore, the research explored both direct (i.e., less than 400 meters from islands) and indirect effects (i.e., greater than 400 meters downstream from islands) by comparing results to negative reference sites in Pool 13 (with no islands) and positive reference sites in Pool 8 where islands had already existed.

The results concluded that Pool 8 Islands resulted in indirect growth in aquatic vegetation but no direct effects, which were likely limited due to high prevalence of aquatic vegetation prior to the island construction – i.e., 80 percent covered. Indirect effect areas showed marked improvement from pre-HREP condition, from 10 percent covered to 80 percent covered, with species richness also increasing. This increase is attributed to decreased wind fetch. There was no substantial change in species richness over time in the target condition, which remained about 80 percent covered. However, species diversity and abundance reached high levels in the direct effects and targeted areas. Drake acknowledged that the long-term effects of the Pool 8 islands may not be fully understood until the ecosystem experiences another downturn in aquatic vegetation.

In response to a question by Lauren Salvato, Deanne Drake said there are no plans to monitor a potential disturbance or to precipitate a future downturn in vegetation but noted that LTRM would be the best way to detect a change. In response to a question from Tim Yager, Drake said the study was not designed to consider drawdown effects. Future studies could be designed if experimental drawdowns occurred in the future. Karen Hagerty said the Lower Pool 13 habitat project may include drawdowns and offered to connect Drake to the project manager. Jim Fischer added that it is important to keep water level management effects in mind as studies occur as water level changes and island construction have different effects.

Alicia Carhart discussed the species composition of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) research in Pool 8, by first explaining the difficulty in disentangling the effects of basin-scale drivers from local-scale drivers. The Pool 8 Islands habitat project provides greater insight into how island restoration can influence SAV communities, given species-specific differences in morphology and tolerance to physical factors such as wind fetch, flow velocity, and depth. Carhart said SAV has been increasing in Pool 8 since 2002 and this trend lead to the following four primary questions regarding species composition dynamics:

1) Question: Are there dominant species driving trends in SAV?

   Answer: A multivariate analysis shows that, of 18 SAV species present in Pool 8, wild celery and water stargrass were the most dominate species and have a stronger ability to withstand disturbances. Coontail and elodea were the least influential species.

2) Question: Are there differences in species composition among general aquatic areas?

   Answer: Overall, changes in SAV frequency since 2002 were primarily driven by the lower impounded area.

3) Question: Have changes in species composition occurred similarly across these different areas and do these changes differ from those observed within restored areas?

   Answer: The lower impounded areas and backwaters experienced significant increase in SAV frequency. One small area experienced a decline in SAV frequency.

4) Question: How do the changes in composition compare with the changes across all species?

   Answer: No significant change occurred in upper Pool 8, the floodplain lakes, or lower impounded area. The Pool 8 Islands project site was the only area in Pool 8 to experience a unidirectional change in species composition and thus can be associated with island restoration.

Carhart explained that these shifts are consistent with current understandings of life history requirements for the primary species responsible for the observed changes. The changes are likely linked to wind fetch and velocity. Protected, backwater-like habitats may become critical if the area experiences another vegetation crash in the future.

In response to a question from Kevin Hanson, Carhart explained that image classifications were derived from interpolations from the LTRM data. Gretchen Benjamin recalled that a collapse in backwater vegetation occurred in 1988 and asked how that data fit into this study. Benjamin noted a rebound in 1989. Jim Fischer added that backwater areas within the UMR National Wildlife Refuge maintained vegetation, but recalled that species composition was vastly different from 1988 to 1989. Benjamin agreed. Drake recognized that positive frequency includes any amount of vegetation present and is not indicative of abundance. Dave Potter mentioned that the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee conducts monitoring every ten years in all pools using methods similar to LTRM, and asked whether this analysis can be applied in the other pools at that sampling frequency. Carhart said answering that question will require some statistical analysis. Jennie Sauer added that the UMRCC data is somewhat different in each pool and therefore any conclusions would be anecdotal. Fischer expressed his gratitude to Drake and Carhart for their work as well as those who have been involved in UMRR's LTRM data collection that are now allowing for these scientific assessments. Sauer echoed Fischer's sentiments regarding how we can learn from the LTRM data sets.

Habitat Needs Assessment II

Sara Schmuecker provided a status update for HNA II on behalf of the tri-chairs and expressed gratitude to all who have been involved in developing HNA II. Schmuecker reminded that the HNA II included the development of two companion reports: 1) "Indicators of Ecosystem Structure & Function for the Upper Mississippi River System" and 2) "Habitat Needs Assessment II: Linking Science to Management Perspectives." The purpose of the HNA-II and its associated documents was to a) develop data sets and quantitative measures (i.e., indicators) regarding UMRS ecosystem structure and function and b) conduct an assessment based on the indicators with respect to the goals and objectives of UMRR and its implementing agencies. The hope is that future restoration planning efforts, including the development of management targets, would utilize this information.

The HNA II identifies 12 indicators of ecosystem structure and function related to connectivity, diversity and redundancy, and controlling variables. It also includes four hydrogeomorphic data sets that map 13 aquatic functional classes, representing the fundamental aspects of UMRS habitats. The information is provided in a cluster analysis that groups navigation pools sharing similar ecological conditions. Results of the cluster analysis can be used to quantify comparisons among different areas and, potentially, to define future management "regions." Schmuecker reported that USGS has finalized proofing of the "Indicators of Ecosystem Structure & Function for the Upper Mississippi River System." It will be published along with the second, companion management report.

Schmuecker provided a brief overview of the "HNA II: Linking Science to Management Perspectives" report development, including the use of District teams to assess the habitat condition among their respective jurisdictions and to rank indicators based on priorities. Indicators considered most important were cross-walked with future desired conditions for each cluster of navigation pools. These desired future conditions can be used to inform UMRR's evaluation of its future HREP selection.

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Schmuecker said no major comments were received from the HNA II Steering Committee or A-Team since the UMRR Coordinating Committee's August 2018 quarterly meeting. Fischer said he appreciates the modifications made to the management report in response to comments at the Coordinating Committee's August 2018 meeting. Following a request from Schmuecker, Fischer moved and Megan Moore seconded a motion to endorse the "Habitat Needs

Assessment II: Linking Science to Management Perspectives" report. The motion passed unanimously. Marshall Plumley said the Corps will prepare the two reports for publication, with hard copies printed and made available online by December 1.

Long Term Resource Monitoring and Science

FY 2018 4th Quarter Report

Jeff Houser reported that accomplishments of the fourth quarter of FY 2018 include the publication of the following:

- The manuscript, "State-Level Freshwater Mussel Programs: Current Status and a Research Framework to Aid in Mussel Management and Conservation" (previous non-LTRM work by Bouska)
- Two completion reports:
    1) Feasibility of using UMRR land cover data to map delta formations in UMR backwaters
    2) Experimental and comparative approaches to determine factors supporting or limiting SAV in the Illinois River and its backwaters

Houser said UMESC staff assisted undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse regarding research on the effects of large wood distribution in the UMRS and fish abundance and diversity using existing LTRM data. UMESC anticipates continuing its partnership with universities and colleges.

Houser reported that 2018 UMRR LTRM provisional water quality data for winter, spring, and summer are available online. This is being served earlier than normal in response to partners' requests for the data. Initial QA/QC has been completed but minor corrections may still occur. The final publication of the data will include the fall water quality data.

FY 2018 Science Proposals

Houser said ongoing FY 2018 science proposals include the following:

- Effectiveness of LTRM vegetation data to quantify waterfowl habitat quality
- Investigating vital rate drivers of the UMRS fishes to support management and restoration.
- Developing a better understanding of geomorphic changes through repeated measurement of bed elevation and overlay of land cover data.
- Floodplain forest dendrochronology.
- Understanding constraints on SAV distribution in the UMRS: the role of water level fluctuations.

Houser reported that a formal request for science proposal for utilizing the FY 2019 UMRR science funds was distributed on October 12, 2018. Submissions are due December 14, 2018. The request asks that proposals continue to advance priorities identified at the 2018 UMRR Science meeting. In addition to research proposals, the LTRM management team is planning to allocate significant funds to the 2020 LC/LU dataset. Karen Hagerty added that the selection process will be consistent with previous efforts and be coordinated with the A-Team before being proposed to the UMRR Coordinating Committee at its February 27, 2019 meeting.

UMRS Resilience Assessment

Houser reported that, on an October 16, 2018 conference call, the UMRR ecological resilience working group reviewed draft potential alternate regimes in the UMRS ecosystem – e.g., a clear, vegetated state versus a turbid, sparsely vegetated state. Houser said Kristen Bouska is developing these conceptual models for the working group's review and will ultimately describe them in a manuscript. The conceptual models will also be used to focus future UMRR research.

Sabrina Chandler expressed support for continuing to use the results of the 2018 science meeting to set research priorities, ensuring that funds are spent appropriately and effectively.

USACE LTRM Report

Karen Hagerty reported that the anticipated FY 2019 UMRR budget for LTRM is $6.17 million, including $4.92 for base monitoring and $1.25 million for science in support of restoration – i.e., analysis under base monitoring. Additionally, $2.5 million is available for "science in support of restoration and management," resulting in a total of $8.67 million for FY 2019.

Hagerty said the UMRR LTRM Management Team's preferred options for FY 2019 additional science in support of restoration funding include a) the acquisition and processing of the 2020 decadal LC/LU dataset over five years (up to $2 million) and b) projects addressing the 2018/19 science focal areas (up to $450,000). Jim Fischer requested that equipment or technology investment needs also be considered.

A-Team Report

Matt Vitello reported that the A-Team met in person on October 2-3, 2018 in Dubuque in conjunction with the UMRCC technical session on water quality. Members discussed LTRM updates, resilience studies, and water quality as well as the 2020 LC/LU dataset. The A-Team considered recommending priority pools for the 2020 LC/LU processing after the trend pools are complete as well as preparing for the next LTRM status and trends report update. The A-Team's next in-person meeting will likely be scheduled in January 2019, focusing primarily on its review of the FY 2019 science proposals as well a more in-depth review of the status and trends indicators.

Habitat Restoration

District Reports

St. Paul District

Tom Novak reported that the St. Paul District strives to have three projects in planning, one in design, and one in construction, but that it currently has a 4-0-1 ratio. If UMRR's appropriations remain near its full authorized funding level, the Corps may want to achieve a portfolio of two projects in planning, two in design, and one in construction. Novak said Bass Lake Ponds feasibility study is advancing quickly, and the District anticipates awarding construction contracts for the project as well as McGregor Lake in FY 2019. Just prior to turning over the Harpers Slough project to USFWS, the project was overtopped due to flooding and will likely require reseeding. Conway Lake experienced delays and construction will now likely be initiated in FY 2020. MVP's other FY 2019 planning priorities include Lower Pool 10 Islands and Reno Bottoms

In response to questions from Jim Fischer regarding Bass Lake Ponds, Novak said the primary goal of the water control structures is to promote vegetation for waterfowl production. Sabrina Chandler explained that the project's O&M will include removing debris and reducing beaver damage and said operation costs

are minimal for the structures. Fischer asked if maintenance costs would change with the new construction. Chandler replied that the existing culvert pipes and are not maintained, so maintenance costs will increase compared to now, but future structures will allow for modifications for management purposes. In response to a question from Fischer regarding the delay of construction on Conway Lake, Novak indicated that he was not overly concerned and said the contract extends through 2021. Novak stated that since funds have been obligated already, the delay would not affect the program's ability to obligate.

Rock Island District

Marshall Plumley reported that MVR has three projects in planning: Keithsburg Division, Steamboat Island, and Lower Pool 13. The District is planning to host a scoping meeting for Lower Pool 13 in late November 2018 and intends to integrate LTRM staff early in planning. Pool 13 is an LTRM trend pool and, therefore, provides substantial learning opportunities. The construction contract for Beaver Island Stage I was terminated following a valid protest regarding the description of work. A new bid will be advertised in November 2018 with the intent to award a contract in early January 2019. As a result of Beaver Island's delay, MVR is preparing to accelerate Keithsburg Division feasibility. Opportunity exists to initiate construction of Keithsburg Division Stage I and Beaver Island Stage IB in FY 2019. Construction is ongoing for Pool 12 Overwintering Stages II and III and Huron Island Stage II and III. However, high water is currently delaying construction on both projects. Additionally, the performance evaluation for Fox Island is rescheduled for FY 2019 resulting from high water.

In response to a question from Megan Moore, Plumley explained that the contract protest was filed due to ambiguous language in the contract that prevented a bidder from sufficiently preparing a bid. The issue was deemed valid and the award terminated so the contract could be revised and re-awarded following a new bidding process.

St. Louis District

Shane Simmons reported that, due to various details, there has been some shifting of MVS's HREP responsibilities among District staff. Simmons will go on detail and Luke Meyers will fill the role of MVS HREP District Manager until Brian Markert returns from detail. MVS's FY 2019 planning priorities include Rip Rap Landing, Piasa & Eagles Nest Islands, Harlow Islands, Oakwood Bottoms, and Yorkinut Slough. Simmons reported that MVD recently approved the Yorkinut Slough habitat project fact sheet, and a planning workshop will be scheduled soon. The District is scheduled to initiate construction on Clarence Cannon levee setback and Crains Open River Islands in late FY 2019. Construction is ongoing for Ted Shanks and Clarence Cannon habitat projects. A ribbon cutting ceremony for Ted Shanks was well attended by agency leadership.

HREP Selection Process

Marshall Plumley reported that the UMRR Coordinating Committee and District-based executive and technical-level river team chairs (i.e., Project Planning Team) convened via conference call on August 8, 2018 to review the 2003 HREP Sequencing Framework and how the process may need to change given the program's maturity and expanded level of knowledge about the river and habitat projects. Plumley shared draft versions of a scoping document for the FY 2021-2025 next generation HREP selection process as well as the 2003 UMRR HREP Planning and Sequencing Framework. The PPT is scheduled to meet on October 31, 2018 to review a) a draft schedule for developing FY 2021-2025 next generation HREP implementation plan and b) potential modifications to the 2003 UMRR HREP Planning and Sequencing Framework based on the August 8 discussions. Another in-person meeting is being planned for winter 2018 or 2019 for the purpose of providing sufficient guidance to the District-based river teams

necessary to effectively and efficiently select the next generation of UMRR habitat projects. This includes utilizing the HNA II and ecological resilience conceptual models.

UMRR HREP Workshop

Plumley explained that a workshop is being planned for spring 2019 with the goal of convening restoration practitioners and LTRM staff to exchange lessons learned from completed habitat projects and to help determine a future direction of HREPs. Potential agenda topics include risk-informed planning, landscape restoration, HNA II applications to project planning, modeling needs, among other things. Plumley said he is organizing an *ad hoc* group of partners to plan for this workshop, with its first planning call scheduled for November 5, 2018.

Other Business

Gretchen Benjamin reported that TNC met with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and ASA(CW) staff in mid-October 2018. OMB staff raised concerns regarding overhead costs – i.e., feasibility and monitoring – and timeline for completing projects. Benjamin said she explained that the UMR ecosystem is losing one- to three-percent of its quality and quantity of habitat annually and that, at its current rate of investment, UMRR is only able to restore 0.5 percent of habitat annually. Marshall Plumley noted that nine percent of UMRR's total FY 2018 funds were spent on feasibility with the remaining funds spent on construction. UMRBA is scheduled to meet with ASA(CW) R.D. James and OMB in early November and will discuss the states' request for UMRR funding.

The upcoming quarterly meetings are as follows:

- **February 2019 – Dubuque, IA**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting – February 26
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – February 27**
- **May 2019 – St. Louis**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting – May 21
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – May 22**
- **August 2019 – La Crosse**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting – August 20
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – August 21**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

UMRR Coordinating Committee Attendance List

October 31, 2018

UMRR Coordinating Committee Members

Brian Chewning	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Sabrina Chandler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Jeff Houser	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC [in place of Mark Gaikowski]
Marty Adkins	Natural Resources Conservation Service [on the phone]
Randy Shultz	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Megan Moore	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Matt Vitello	Missouri Department of Conservation
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Others In Attendance

Thatch Shepard	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Chris Erickson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Kevin Hanson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jon Hendrickson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Shahin Khazrajafari	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Tom Novak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
David Potter	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Andy Barnes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Angie Freyermuth	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR [on the phone]
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marshall Plumley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jasen Brown	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS [on the phone]
Greg Kohler	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Shane Simmons	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Tyler Porter	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO [on the phone]
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Sandra Morrison	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jennie Sauer	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Alicia Carhart	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Deanne Drake	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Kurt Rasmussen	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources [on the phone]
Olivia Dorothy	American Rivers
Gretchen Benjamin	The Nature Conservancy
Mark Ellis	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Lauren Salvato	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Andrew Stephenson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Kirsten Wallace	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association