

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

**November 16, 2006  
Quarterly Meeting**

**Crowne Plaza Riverfront Hotel  
St. Paul, Minnesota**

Charlie Wooley of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. on November 16, 2006. Other EMP-CC representatives present were Terry Smith (USACE), Mike Jawson (USGS), Rick Mollahan (IL DNR), Martin Konrad (IA DNR), Tim Schlagenhaft (MN DNR), Janet Sternburg (MO DOC), Gretchen Benjamin (WI DNR), and Al Fenedick (USEPA). A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

**Minutes from the August 2006 Meeting**

Gretchen Benjamin moved and Martin Konrad seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the August 23, 2006 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

**Program Management**

*FY 06 Year End Update*

Marv Hubbell noted that the EMP completed FY 06 under a complex set of new rules and circumstances, including the following:

- No savings and slippage assessment
- Prohibition on new project starts
- Prohibition on continuing contracts
- Increased flexibility to carry money forward into the next fiscal year
- Increased restrictions on reprogramming funds among Corps projects

Adjusting to this new environment was challenging, according to Hubbell. The flexibility to shift funds within the program, including the \$805,000 that was initially held back from the LTRMP, was critical to the EMP's overall fiscal performance in FY 06. Hubbell expressed appreciation for all of the partners' flexibility as the EMP worked to adapt to the new rules. He also reported that some of the LTRMP holdback was returned to the monitoring program late in the fiscal year for equipment refreshment. For the year, budgeted and actual amounts under the EMP's three major accounts were as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Administrative	\$0.525m	\$0.447m
LTRMP	\$6.037m	\$5.239m
HREP	\$13.238m	\$14.114m

Other FY 06 highlights included celebrating the EMP's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary; adopting the EMP Operating Approach document; initiating an APE refinement process; completing five HREPs; welcoming a new MVR District Commander; and naming new Corps managers for the EMP and LTRMP, a new UMESC center director, a new MVD EMP liaison, and a new Iowa EMP-CC representative.

#### *FY 07 Status and Outlook*

Hubbell reported that the FY 07 energy and water appropriations measure is still pending in Congress. The House-passed bill includes \$20.0 million for the EMP, while the Senate Appropriations Committee has approved \$16.0 million. Assuming no savings and slippage assessment and a one percent rescission, program funding in this range would result in between \$4.825 and \$6.041 million for the LTRMP and between \$10.540 and \$13.199 million for HREPs. The 2004 LTRMP restructuring plan assumes the LTRMP allocation will be at least \$4.363 million annually. Administrative costs under the \$16.0 to \$20.0 million scenario would range from \$447,000 to \$525,000.

#### *LTRMP Budget Categories*

Hubbell briefly summarized the history of the 2004 LTRMP restructuring plan, explaining that the plan established two categories of program activities — i.e., Minimal Sustainable Program (MSP) and Additional Program Elements (APE). These two categories were observed in FY 05, the first year of the plan. However, in FY 06, an additional MSP+ category emerged, leading to questions about how this new category was to be defined and its priority relative to APEs. Hubbell reported that, consistent with the 2004 restructuring plan, there will be only two LTRMP budget categories in FY 07 — i.e., MSP and APEs. Items funded under MSP+ in FY 06 will be considered for funding as APEs in FY 07-09, according to Hubbell. This includes equipment refreshment, data visualization tools, bathymetry, glide path, and Status and Trends. However, he noted that these last two items are not expected to be funded beyond FY 07.

Under this two category approach, Hubbell said the A-Team will continue to rank those APE projects that are technical in nature, while the EMP-CC will be asked to rank the administrative items. The Corps and USGS will then develop a final plan for all APEs. Hubbell stressed his intent to make the process as open and transparent as possible. This extends to including the A-Team chair as an observer when the Corps and USGS determine the final APE plan. He also acknowledged that it will not be possible to implement the ranking approach for administrative APEs in FY 07, but said it is his intended approach for FY 08 and beyond.

In response to a question from Tim Schlagenhaft, Hubbell explained that administrative APEs would have to submit upfront plans for partner review, just as is currently done with the technical APEs. Schlagenhaft asked whether the administrative APEs would automatically receive priority over technical APEs. He also asked why Hubbell was categorizing bathymetry as an administrative APE, noting that it seems quite comparable to other technical APEs. Hubbell emphasized his intent to make the process as transparent as possible.

#### *WRDA 06 Update*

Hubbell reported that both the House and Senate Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bills for 2006 include language that would allow nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to be nonfederal sponsors for HREPs. In addition, the Senate measure includes a provision that would expand the purpose of the LTRMP to include research on elevated nutrient levels and development of remediation plans. The prospects for reconciliation of the House and Senate bills and action on a conference measure yet this year are uncertain, according to Hubbell.

## **Public Outreach**

### *Partner Reports*

Mike Jawson reported that UMESC held an open house highlighting its recent “Taking the Pulse” publication. Staff from the Corps and Wisconsin DNR also participated. There were approximately 1,400 attendees.

Janet Sternburg said Missouri DOC’s Hannibal office is reaching out to schools with an adopt-a-sturgeon program. There is good interest among the schools, and the department would like to develop web tracking so students could follow their sturgeon’s movements.

Sharonne Baylor reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service is continuing to place informational signs at HREP construction sites to help the public understand what is underway. As projects are finished, the Service places a “completed” banner across the sign. Baylor also said that Service employees have been making extensive use of both the postcards and pull-up displays developed for the EMP anniversary celebration. She suggested developing more generic (i.e., non-anniversary) versions of these materials. Charlie Wooley added that a single, integrated web site for the EMP would be a valuable tool. He observed that the program’s current web presence is spread across several different sites. Mike Jawson expressed UMESC’s willingness to develop and host such a site, contingent upon the provision of the necessary resources.

Gretchen Benjamin noted that the EMP only expended \$7,000 of its \$25,000 public involvement budget in FY 06. She emphasized that the program should be fully expending these resources and agreed that an enhanced web site would be an excellent benefit. Marv Hubbell explained that public involvement expenditures were low in FY 06 due, in part, to the many partner contributions and other Corps resources used to support the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

Don Powell reported that MVP has distributed more than 100 copies to the EMP anniversary DVD. Hubbell noted that MVR has hosted several recent tours of the completed Pool 11 Islands HREP. Participants have included the Mississippi River Commission, U.S. EPA staff, and Quad Cities media.

### *FY 07 Outreach Plan*

Marv Hubbell briefly outlined the Corps’ FY 07 public outreach plan, with an anticipated budget of \$25,000. Highlights include:

- Developing non-anniversary versions of some of the outreach materials originally created for the EMP’s 20th anniversary celebration — this includes the pull-up poster displays and the postcards.
- Creating a prototype museum display for the EMP that could be modified as needed to customize it for different portions of the river and different museum environments, with a goal of eventually locating displays in, at minimum, museums in the Twin Cities, Dubuque, and St. Louis
- Raising the EMP’s profile at the Corps’ own visitors’ centers, in part through staff education

Hubbell said the Corps would also look at web site enhancements.

Tim Schlagenhaft encouraged creating a summary of the pending Status and Trends Report that would be suitable for broad public distribution. Mike Jawson said there are no specific plans for such a summary, but noted that UMESC’s recent Taking the Pulse document is in much the same vein and could perhaps be modified slightly to serve as a summary for the Status and Trends Report. Hubbell

observed that any expenditure on a Status and Trends Report summary should come from the budget for that report, not from the EMP's public outreach budget.

Gretchen Benjamin expressed support for Hubbell's focus on staff education, noting that this would undoubtedly be helpful in all of the partner agencies. Dan McGuinness observed that the Great River Road maps identify more than 100 interpretive centers along the Mississippi River. As part of public outreach efforts, he encouraged the program partners to supply the 30 or so centers within the EMP's geographic zone with materials about the program.

Gary Wege suggested forming an outreach subgroup for the EMP. Janet Sternburg noted that a previous group, comprised of Don Hultman, Gretchen Benjamin, and herself, had focused primarily on the timing and coordination of Congressional outreach among EMP stakeholders. Wege said a group of professional public affairs staff from the partner agencies could bring their communications expertise to the program.

Hubbell said he envisioned the Corps would have primary responsibility for developing the outreach materials described above, but would coordinate closely with the partner agencies. Barb Naramore observed that the Corps' outreach experts did an excellent job translating the partners' ideas for the anniversary celebration into a series of very successful products. The combination of their communications expertise and the partners' program knowledge was quite effective. The EMP-CC members did not take action on the suggestion to form an outreach subgroup, electing instead to rely on Corps program and public information staff to develop the museum prototype and other outreach materials in consultation with the EMP-CC.

### **Enhancing HREP Utilization of Available LTRMP Data**

Marv Hubbell briefly described the FY 06 pilot effort to enhance the HREP component's use of LTRMP and associated natural resource data. The FY 06 effort used a UMESC staff member to provide and interpret information to assist in planning the Huron and Beaver Islands HREPs. Hubbell stressed that past habitat projects have made good use of various data sources, but said the overall program could be improved by a more comprehensive approach to ensuring that the relevant data are available and used. He observed that very few programs have the opportunity to integrate monitoring and restoration and urged the program partners to make the most of the EMP's capacity in this regard.

For FY 07, the Corps is proposing a one-year expanded pilot, with an estimated cost between \$50,000 and \$70,000. This would build on the FY 06 small-scale pilot, with the costs charged as a regional expense and thus borne proportionately (i.e., 2/3 from HREP and 1/3 from LTRMP). The purpose would be to enhance, not replace, the data and analysis contributions that HREP partner agencies have routinely made to habitat projects. A single UMESC staff person would support between 6 and 9 project delivery teams (PDTs). While this individual would respond directly to most of the teams' requests, other experts would be tapped as needed. Hubbell emphasized that the goal is to support all habitat project phases, from initial planning to seeing how completed projects are actually managed relative to original expectations.

In response to a question from Charlie Wooley, Hubbell confirmed that the goal of this effort is to get real time information to resource managers. This information could then be used to inform the development of future projects. Wooley stressed that access to this kind of information is key to adaptive management.

Janet Sternburg asked how the Corps proposes to determine which PDTs have access to this support person during the pilot. Hubbell said the prime candidates would be projects still in the planning stage, where there is flexibility to make adjustments. Gretchen Benjamin noted that the partners had

previously discussed holding a workshop to help managers learn how to access and interpret available data. She asked whether the UMESC support person could help develop such a workshop. Hubbell said this would certainly be a possibility, but was not currently part of the proposed FY 07 pilot.

Tim Schlagenhaft asked whether the focus would be more on planning new projects or evaluating completed HREPs. Hubbell cautioned against overestimating what could be accomplished under the pilot. Initially, the primary focus will likely be on coming up to speed on how to access and apply the data. Schlagenhaft suggested one approach could be to take a couple of completed projects and ask how we could have designed and implemented them better using LTRMP data. He stressed that project evaluation is as important as project planning.

Bob Clevenstine expressed support for the pilot. He said better integrating the HREP and LTRMP components will not happen on its own and needs to be an explicit focus of the partnership. Barry Johnson asked for confirmation that the Corps is not proposing to modify LTRMP practices to evaluate HREPs. Hubbell concurred that this was not the case. Clevenstine urged partners to remain open to the possibility that the pilot will identify some needed changes in monitoring. Johnson said this would need to be considered carefully. According to Johnson, if there is an efficient, cost-effective way for the field stations to contribute to HREP monitoring, this would merit discussion. But he emphasized his hope that we are not talking about a wholesale redesign of the monitoring program to support HREPs.

Hubbell cited outpool sampling as an information need that might be identified through the pilot. In response to a question from Jennie Sauer, Hubbell said he would not be looking for the dedicated UMESC staff person to design such a sampling program. However, Hubbell said he could anticipate wanting to access other expertise at UMESC under the pilot to explore the possibility of developing outpool sampling to support HREPs.

Schlagenhaft observed that increased access to, and better utilization of, LTRMP and related data could be very valuable to non-HREP management work as well. For example, he cited the information needs of managers working on water level management. Schlagenhaft said that, if the pilot is successful, he would recommend broadening the data support to other management activities.

After some further discussion, Hubbell indicated that the Corps plans to proceed with the FY 07 pilot as outlined above, assuming the overall EMP allocation for the year is at least \$16.0 million. If total EMP funding for the year falls below that amount, he said the Corps will consult further with program partners before implementing the data utilization pilot. The EMP-CC members expressed support for this approach, with Wooley emphasizing the goal of getting timely information to resource managers. Sternburg requested interim updates on the pilot at the February and May meetings, with an evaluation available for partner review at the August 2007 meeting.

## **Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects**

### *USACE Response to EPA Letters re TMDL/Habitat Project Links*

Marv Hubbell reported that the Corps is crafting its response to EPA's June 2006 letters inquiring how water quality impairments are considered in implementing ecosystem restoration projects. Hubbell said the Corps' response letter will likely request a meeting between EPA and Corps staff, discuss linkages between the relevant authorities, support EPA's participation on PDTs, identify a recommended pilot area for enhanced coordination, support the UMRBA's draft proposal for a broader dialog, urge coordinated monitoring efforts, and acknowledge the critical role of the state environmental agencies. He explained that the Corps' view of the issues and opportunities raised in EPA's letters has broadened since its initial receipt of the letters.

Al Fenedick encouraged Hubbell to confer with Bill Franz about the Corps' anticipated response before actually sending the letter. Fenedick noted that EPA's water division is seeking to engage a variety of people in dialog concerning the challenges presented by total maximum daily loads (TMDLs).

Hubbell also said the Corps may consider tapping its support services contract with the UMRBA to support UMRBA's proposal for a broader dialog about the intersection of Clean Water Act responsibilities and ecosystem restoration activities. He suggested the level of support might amount to ¼ of the \$12,000 set aside in the contract for additional meetings (i.e., \$3,000). Gretchen Benjamin stressed the importance of a substantial EPA contribution if the UMRBA's proposal is to move forward. Benjamin said she believes that, as the agency that raised the issue, EPA should provide the preponderance of the modest resources needed to support the multi-participant dialog.

Charlie Wooley encouraged the Corps and EPA to consider the roles of the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the agricultural community more broadly, particularly with the pending Farm Bill reauthorization. Tim Schlagenhaft urged everyone involved in discussing the links between HREPs and TMDLs to remember that the EMP is missing some critical restoration tools, including floodplain restoration. He emphasized that we may need to consider broadening the EMP to function as a more complete restoration program. While the partners previously agreed to defer this discussion pending the outcome of WRDA 06 deliberations, Schlagenhaft said it will soon be time to revisit the question of floodplain restoration under the EMP, particularly given the ongoing delays with WRDA. Hubbell concurred, and suggested the May meeting as a possible time for this discussion.

#### *HREP Database*

Marv Hubbell said he hopes to have the HREP database, with GIS capabilities, fully functional in the very near future. He said it would likely be available on the web for partner and public access by mid- to late January.

#### *HREP Planning*

Marv Hubbell noted that the EMP-CC endorsed the HREP Planning and Sequencing Framework in November 2003, following several years of development work. Since then, the framework has not actually been implemented. Hubbell acknowledged that the substantial delay has been frustrating and said he understands the partners' desire to move forward with the new planning framework.

Hubbell reported that there are currently 17 HREP proposals pending in the three districts, including 6 from MVP, 6 from MVR, and 5 from MVS. Developing the standard fact sheets to facilitate review by the System Ecological Team (SET) has proven to be more challenging than anticipated. Among the problems are some issues with the habitat classification system used in the Habitat Needs Assessment (HNA). Hubbell distributed a fact sheet for MVP's North and Sturgeon Lakes project as an example of what is being sought. Current plans are to distribute fact sheets for the 17 proposed HREPs to the SET on Monday, November 27. The SET will then meet to review and rank these projects during the week of January 8 and will provide a written report prior to the EMP-CC's February meeting. Hubbell said this would allow the Program Planning Team (PPT) to meet in March or April to evaluate the non-ecological issues.

Dan McGuinness noted that many of the 17 proposed project areas are also on Audubon's list of Important Bird Areas (IBAs). He offered to share Audubon bird data with project planners. In addition, he said Audubon members might well want to advocate at the state level for any necessary cost share funding.

Hubbell also announced that, at Bob Clevestine's suggestion, the Corps will be encouraging SET members to participate in a special training class in March or April. This "principles of modeling" course includes a focus on how to evaluate potential restoration opportunities. Hubbell said he expects the training will help SET members refine their approach to evaluating HREP proposals on a system scale. Thus, while the SET is scheduled to provide its project rankings to the EMP-CC by February, Hubbell said the members may want to modify those recommendations slightly after the training.

Hubbell noted that the HREP Planning and Sequencing Framework calls for establishment of a PPT, consisting of EMP-CC members representing the Corps, Service, USGS, and the five states, as well as the District HREP managers and MVD's EMP liaison. Hubbell asked the individuals who serve in those capacities to contact him by December 7 to confirm their willingness to participate on the PPT or, in the alternative, to identify who will be participating on their behalf. The HREP framework calls for Hubbell, as EMP Program Manager, to lead the PPT.

Tim Schlagenhaft asked for clarification regarding the role of the PPT. Barb Naramore explained that the SET is charged with taking a system-level look at the DETs' project proposals, but is to consider only ecological criteria in evaluating and ranking the projects. In contrast, the PPT's role is to look at other factors that should be considered in determining the ultimate project sequence. Termed "administrative considerations" in the HREP framework, these factors include things like cost share participation, the level of public support, workload allocation, and geographic distribution. The purpose of the PPT is to determine an administratively workable set of priority HREPs from among a pool of projects, all of which the SET has judged to have considerable ecological merit.

Janet Sternburg asked whether the SET's role could be described as optimizing the ecological benefits from the projects. Hubbell said this is substantially correct, but encouraged the program partners to keep their expectations realistic. DET representatives will be present at SET meetings to provide information as needed. Hubbell said implementing the HREP framework for the first time will be a learning experience, and there may need to be modifications. For example, he noted that the framework anticipates that the SET will meet annually. Hubbell said this may be too often, but stressed that waiting 3 to 5 years is clearly too long.

Naramore asked for clarification regarding the Corps' proposed schedule, questioning whether the PPT should meet in March or April if the SET is going to revisit its recommendations following completion of training in that same time period. She said it would seem to make more sense to hold off on the PPT meeting until after the SET has finalized its recommendations. Clevestine said he does not expect that the SET would make major changes to its recommendations following the training. However, Hubbell agreed that it would probably be preferable to defer the PPT meeting until the SET has finalized its recommendations. In response to a question from Naramore, Hubbell said the current SET members are John Barko, Mike Griffin, Carl Korschgen, and Jim Garvey. Chuck Theiling is tasked with providing staff support to the SET.

After some further discussion, it was agreed that the first formal PPT meeting will take place in conjunction with the May EMP-CC meeting. It was further agreed that some preliminary work, such as determining how the PPT wants to conduct its business, might be possible at the February meeting.

### *District HREP Reports*

Don Powell summarized MVP's FY 06 HREP program, noting that 82 percent of its HREP expenditures went to construction, with planning receiving 2 percent, design 7 percent, evaluation 4 percent, and management 5 percent. On the construction front, most of the funding went to the Spring Lake Islands project, which was completed in FY 06, save for some revegetation work. The project's primary purpose is to restore aquatic vegetation. MVP also awarded the Pool Slough contract in March

and virtually completed the project in September. The only remaining work is to acquire a pump for the project, which is a moist soil management unit for migratory waterfowl. General Strock participated in the ground breaking for the Long Meadow Lake project, which should be largely completed by the end of November. Pool 8 Islands Phase III Stage 1 was completed in September. This stage of the project involves establishing rock structures to protect the Coon Creek delta from erosion.

Powell also described MVP's potential FY 07 work plan, which is based on a total EMP allocation for the year of between \$16 and \$20 million. Under that scenario, the district would increase its planning allocation to allow completion of plans for Capoli Slough and Harpers Slough. There would also be funding to initiate planning on one new project. This would be one of the projects with fact sheets currently pending before the SET. Planning for the Clear Lake HREP project will involve coordination with an operation and maintenance embankment project. Clear Lake is a dredging project for fisheries and would supply topsoil to the embankment project. The O&M program would therefore pay a portion of project costs. MVP's FY 07 design focus would be on Pool 8 Islands Phase III Stages 2A and 2B. Plans and specs would also be developed for Harpers Slough, and there would be some design work on Capoli Slough. The district's construction priorities would include final work on Spring Lake, Long Meadow Lake, and Pool Slough; potential dredging at Clear Lake; and the award and start of a new contract for Pool 8 Islands Phase III Stages 2A and 2B. Construction accounts for approximately 76 percent of MVP's planned HREP expenditures in FY 07.

Marv Hubbell announced that Mike Thompson has taken a new position within the St. Louis District. Brian Markert is serving a 120-day detail as MVS's HREP manager. Markert reported that MVS's FY 07 program will include completing plan formulation for Pool 25/26 and initiating definite project reports (DPRs) for Wilkinson Island and Ted Shanks. Much of the design work for Pool 25/26 has been completed during plan formulation, but there will be some remaining design work on the project in FY 07. In light of the new contracting restrictions, the Batchtown project is being broken into smaller parts. Design work in FY 07 will focus on Phase III A, which would proceed to construction in the same year. Batchtown Phases III B and C would be developed in future years. A third party evaluation is ongoing to determine whether there is a latent defect with a pump at the Swan Lake project. Markert also indicated that MVS would like to submit two additional fact sheets for the SET's consideration. These would be substitutes for the Wilkinson Island and Ted Shanks projects, both of which already have approved fact sheets.

Hubbell summarized MVR's FY 07 work plan. The district has submitted DPRs for Pool 12 Overwintering and Fox Island and is awaiting approval. The public review draft of the Rice Lake DPR should be finished in late winter or early spring. MVR will initiate planning on Huron Island and Beaver Island in FY 07, including some additional modeling to maximize the use of natural river processes to reduce O&M. Hubbell said establishing a base contract with options that can be exercised contingent on funding has been working well for MVR and has been an effective response to the prohibition on continuing contracts. This approach is being employed for Lake Odessa. MVR expects to devote its entire FY 07 construction budget to that project, including the base contract, which is already under construction, and various options. Design work on Fox Island should be completed in FY 07, with the project proceeding to construction in FY 08. Hubbell noted that MVR will be funding some bioresponse monitoring as part of its FY 07 evaluation efforts. This bioresponse work had originally been proposed as an APE. The district also expects to continue working through the Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate projects. In FY 06, Service personnel examined how well the wildlife habitat appraisal guide predicted outcomes at the Bay Island project. Similar work will be underway in FY 07. Bob Clevestine expressed his opinion that the guide is a useful incremental analysis tool, but stressed the importance of field testing it by comparing predicted and actual outcomes.



## **Long Term Resource Monitoring Program**

### *FY 06 Product Status Wrap-Up*

Mike Jawson reported on the LTRMP's fourth quarter product highlights, including publication of two LTRMP reports, release of the graphical web browser for stratified random sampling water quality data, and two presentations at professional meetings and conferences. Of the 15 APEs funded in FY 06, 11 were completed prior to the close of the fiscal year. Jawson explained that the remaining four were delayed for various reasons, but should all be completed in the near future. According to Jawson, USGS and Corps staff are continuing their work on the Status and Trends Report. Work remains on the hydraulics analysis and the lessons learned chapter. He estimated that the release will now be delayed until early in calendar year 2007. Tim Schlagenhaft restated his comments from earlier meetings, emphasizing the importance of completing the Status and Trends Report as soon as possible.

### *Anticipated FY 07 Work Plan*

Mike Jawson indicated that the scope of the MSP in FY 07 is expected to be the same as for FY 05 and 06 — i.e., monitoring the three components, analysis and reporting, statistical evaluation, data management, GIS support, and bathymetry support. He also reported that the Corps and USGS convened on September 18 to review the FY 07 APE proposals and the A-Team's recommendations regarding those proposals. The energy and water appropriations measure has not yet been enacted, and thus the level of funding available for APEs in FY 07 was not known at the time of the meeting (and is still not known). Therefore, the Corps and USGS elected to place the FY 07 APE proposals in high, medium, and low priority categories. As agreed among the partners, the A-Team Chair was permitted to observe this prioritization process. Jawson explained that the Corps and USGS will defer any further prioritization work until the budget is known and it is clear within which category (i.e., high, medium, or low) the proposals need to be rank ordered. Jawson briefly presented a slide listing the eight APE proposals that were placed in the high priority group.

Jawson also reiterated Marv Hubbell's earlier statement concerning elimination of the MSP+ category in FY 07. Work funded under MSP+ in FY 06 will be considered for funding as administrative APEs in FY 07. Each administrative APE will be required to have a written scope, defined products, etc., just as is currently required of all of the technical APEs. Holly Stoerker followed up on Tim Schlagenhaft's earlier question, asking why bathymetry was being considered as an administrative rather than a technical APE. Hubbell explained that the technical APE proposals come in response to a request for proposals. In contrast, the administrative APEs are things that are not well-suited for an individual researcher to respond to. This would include bathymetry. Jawson acknowledged that "administrative" may not be the best description of these items. Instead, he said they are really more like program management items and consist of things that are important, but do not fit in well with the MSP or technical APEs.

Barb Naramore observed that, in asking people to make priorities and trade-offs, it is important to keep like things together. In this regard, she suggested that the bathymetry has more in common with the technical APEs than it does with the other administrative APEs. Hubbell acknowledged that there is no perfect categorization scheme. He said the Corps is doing its best to maintain consistency and transparency. He said that bathymetry will be treated as an administrative APE, but stressed that the A-Team will be aware of these administrative items, even though it will not be asked to prioritize them.

### *Scoping Future Data and Statistics Presentations*

Mike Jawson noted that, following Barry Johnson's August overview of basic concepts related to statistical analysis of LTRMP data, UMESC offered to follow up with a more detailed series of

presentations. Jawson asked the EMP-CC members whether, in fact, they would like to have such a series. Martin Konrad said he would like to see a focus on the LTRMP's monitoring accomplishments since publication of the last Status and Trends Report. He said he would also like presentations summarizing APE products. Konrad explained that he was not seeking the kinds of technical details that might be of interest to the A-Team, but rather a broader sense of the products that are emerging from the APE investments.

Gretchen Benjamin asked what topics UMESC might cover in a series of statistical presentations. Johnson said the talks could be tailored to the EMP-CC's interests. Barb Naramore noted that, in his August presentation, Johnson suggested focusing on topics including status, trends, temporal and spatial patterns, relations among factors, and effects of management actions. Charlie Wooley said he would like to have such a series. It was agreed that USGS would develop a series of future presentations building on Johnson's August overview and the potential topics he outlined there.

### *A-Team Report*

Janet Sternburg distributed a written A-Team report from the group's chair, Rob Maher. She highlighted Maher's satisfaction with the APE prioritization process he observed between the Corps and USGS. According to Sternburg, Maher was pleased to see that the Corps and USGS carefully considered the A-Team's input regarding APE priorities.

Sternburg observed that the USGS's hesitancy to share the Corps/USGS final APE priorities with the A-Team hampered that group's October meeting. She encouraged the partners to consider whether the results of the Corps/USGS prioritization could be shared more promptly. Mike Jawson said he does not have any concerns sharing those final priorities with the A-Team prior to the EMP-CC, if that is what the partners want. He said the USGS's understanding had been that the EMP-CC wanted to see the rankings first. Jennie Sauer said USGS would want to ensure that all PIs are informed of the Corps and USGS decision at the same time. She explained that it would have been problematic to have released the rankings at the October 2007 A-Team meeting because some PIs would have heard before others. Barb Naramore observed that it should be possible, in the future, to inform all PIs of the rankings simultaneously and still get the information out to all of the partners prior to the A-Team's fall meeting. Jawson concurred and said USGS would share the final rankings with the PIs, A-Team, and EMP-CC simultaneously in the future and would make this announcement prior to the A-Team's fall meeting. If final budget numbers are not available at the time of the distribution, the announcement would include a caveat that the rankings will have to be revisited when the funding level is known for the year.

Sternburg also briefly described the A-Team's October discussions concerning the status of FY 06 APEs and refinement of the future APE process. According to Sternburg, this included considerable discussion of ways in which the A-Team's focus on science and technical questions could be increased, while reducing the amount of time dedicated to administrative issues. However, she deferred further discussion until the next agenda item.

### *APE Refinement Process and Broader Partner Dialog*

Mike Jawson briefly summarized discussions at the August EMP-CC meeting that led to the October 17-18 LTRMP partnership unity meeting. The unity meeting addressed four major topics:

- Health of the partnership
- Role of additional (i.e., restored) monitoring
- Future LTRMP goals and objectives
- Refining the APE process

Regarding the health of the partnership, Jawson said meeting participants reaffirmed the partnership's fundamental soundness and made modest but important suggestions regarding various roles and responsibilities. Of particular note, there was strong interest in increasing the A-Team's focus on science and technical issues, enhancing interactions and communications between the A-Team and EMP-CC, and ensuring that EMP-CC meetings are designed to foster substantive dialog.

According to Jawson, the Fish and Wildlife Service had an opportunity to voice its reservations regarding the value of its participation on the A-Team. These concerns were, in part, responsible for the recommendation to increase the A-Team's focus on science and technical issues and reduce the amount of time the group devotes to administrative issues. It was acknowledged that this will require UMESC and the field stations to develop other mechanisms to address some of those administrative matters.

Janet Sternburg stressed the state A-Team members' strong desire to keep the Fish and Wildlife Service actively engaged on the team. In addition to making the kinds of changes described by Jawson, Sternburg said the A-Team will be striving to ensure there is clarity when the A-Team members are being asked to articulate their state or agency's position. In the past, she acknowledged, it has not always been clear who is speaking in an official capacity and who is voicing a personal opinion. She said the A-Team will also be asking component specialists and others to attend A-Team meetings for substantive discussions and presentations. Charlie Wooley expressed the Service's appreciation for the states' willingness to listen to its concerns and make some adjustments in the A-Team's operations.

Concerning the role of monitoring, Jawson acknowledged the state A-Team members' recent proposal was not for *additional* monitoring, but was rather to *restore* a portion of the monitoring that was eliminated under the 2004 restructuring plan. Jawson said it is clear from the discussions that this proposal is not simply for FY 07. Rather, there is an expectation among its proponents that this increment of monitoring would be restored for the remainder of the restructuring plan — i.e., through FY 09. Jawson expressed his personal perspective that the restored monitoring should be treated as an administrative, rather than a technical, APE. He explained that the monitoring is unlikely to fit particularly well with the focusing questions being developed to guide the FY 08 and 09 technical APEs. As such, it would presumably not compete well with APEs that are more responsive to those questions.

EMP-CC members discussed the issue of how to consider the monitoring restoration proposal. It was agreed that, funding permitting, the restored monitoring would be a priority APE in FY 07. It was further agreed to consider the issue of how to handle it for FY 08 and 09 at the February 2007 EMP-CC meeting.

Regarding future LTRMP goals and objectives, Jawson reported that unity meeting participants concurred that the four basic goals outlined in the 1992 Operating Plan are fundamentally sound, but not sufficiently detailed to guide program implementation. Participants also concluded that it is important to begin strategic planning for the LTRMP's next five-year increment (i.e., FY 10-14) in the near future. February 2007 was suggested as a starting date. Marv Hubbell observed that the 2004 restructuring plan was developed and implemented in a bit of a rush. He expressed his hope that the partners could engage in a more deliberate process this time.

Tim Schlagenhaft observed that the LTRMP strategic planning process will be challenging. He said the partners will need a well-defined process, timeline, and scope to guide them. Schlagenhaft also recommended having a dedicated facilitator. Janet Sternburg also endorsed the idea of a facilitator and said she has been very impressed in the past with professional facilitators from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Charlie Wooley said he would talk with Hubbell about the possibility of using a Service facilitator.

Following up on the state EMP-CC members' recommendation from the August EMP-CC meeting, the unity meeting participants considered a variety of ways in which the APE development and selection process for FY 08 and beyond might be refined. Among the participants' leading recommendations, according to Jawson, was to increase the APEs' focus on management needs. They saw development of priority focusing questions as an important step in this effort. Toward that end, each EMP partner agency was asked to submit, by November 9, its top three priority questions that could be addressed through APE projects. Jawson explained that USGS is now working with the partners to refine those questions, as necessary. Next, the Corps, USGS, and A-Team will each rank the questions separately, after which they will attempt to develop a consensus ranking. The results of that effort will be reported to the EMP-CC at its February 2007 meeting, with the objective of identifying the partnership's collective priority questions to guide development of FY 08 APE proposals.

Jawson further explained that, depending on the specificity of those priority focusing questions, USGS may proceed directly to requesting full proposals, eliminating the letter of intent step. A decision on this potential process refinement will be made after the priority questions are identified. At some point in the future, Jawson said, the partners may even want to consider skipping the RFP altogether and simply assigning work teams to specific tasks designed to answer the partnership's questions.

### **Other Business**

Charlie Wooley announced that the next EMP-CC meeting will be held on February 22, 2007 in St. Louis, and will be preceded by a UMRBA meeting on February 20 and NECC/ECC meetings on February 21. The May meetings will be held May 22-24, 2007 in the Quad Cities, though the precise lineup of meetings for May is not yet known. [Note: subsequent to the November EMP-CC meeting, the schedule for May was set as follows: UMRBA on May 22; EMP-CC in the morning of May 23; special adaptive management workshop in the afternoon of May 23, continuing on the morning of May 24 if needed; and NECC/ECC meetings on May 24.] The August meetings will be held August 21-23, 2007 in La Crosse. [Note: tentative plans established subsequent to the November EMP-CC meeting call for the UMRBA to meet on August 21, EMP-CC on August 22, and NECC/ECC on August 23. It is possible that a Clean Water Act/ecosystem restoration workshop will also take place on portions of August 22 and 23.]

Bob Clevestine said his perception is that the elapsed time from HREP identification to completion is getting longer. He asked whether this was in fact the case. Marv Hubbell said he did not know, but that the Corps could examine the question. In addition, even if the time is not growing, Hubbell emphasized that it is still possible to look for opportunities to increase the efficiency of the process. He noted that the time required for project planning is partly a matter of staffing, and that staff within the Corps have been particularly strained in recent years by the large number of Iraq- and Katrina-related personnel details. Staff changes in other partner agencies have also presented challenges. However, Hubbell stressed that it remains important to keep the HREP planning process efficient. He said one key to keeping things moving as staff turns over is to record decisions as they are made, to avoid revisiting issues unnecessarily as staff changes.

Janet Sternburg recalled that, a few years ago, the partners agreed to examine the design process and look for improvements. She urged that this be done. Hubbell expressed his hope that the recently completed HREP Design Manual could be a useful tool in this regard. Sternburg also stressed the need for the states and other partners to ensure that they engage the full range of their relevant expertise early in the project planning process. Hubbell said the PDTs need to formally acknowledge the full range of experts involved in planning a particular project.

Tim Schlagenhaft agreed with the importance of accelerating the planning process to the extent possible. He said sometimes conditions change or improve during the course of project planning, yet the project is still executed as originally envisioned. Reducing the project planning period would lower the chances of building a sub-optimal or unnecessary project, according to Schlagenhaft.

Wooley praised Hubbell and Jawson for their presentations and thanked Sternburg for her excellent A-Team report.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

**EMP-CC Attendance List  
November 16, 2006**

**EMP-CC Members**

Terry Smith	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Charlie Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Mike Jawson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Al Fenedick	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Rick Mollahan	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Martin Konrad	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Tim Schlagenhaft	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Janet Sternburg	Missouri Department of Conservation
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**Others in Attendance**

Rich Worthington	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, HQ
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Ken Barr	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marvin Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Hank DeHaan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jeff DeZellar	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jon Hendrickson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island Field Office
Sharonne Baylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Scott Yess	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMRCC
Bob Clevestine	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island Field Office
Gary Wege	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jennie Sauer	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Walt Popp	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Bill Lorenzen	U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS St. Paul
Tom Boland	MACTEC, St. Louis
Dan McGuinness	National Audubon Society
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association