

**Minutes of the
116th Quarterly Meeting
of the
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**November 16, 2010
Rock Island, Illinois**

UMRBA Chair Todd Ambs called the meeting to order at 12:35 a.m. Participants were as follows:

UMRBA Representatives, Alternates, and State Members of the Water Quality Executive Committee:

Gary Clark	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Rick Mollahan	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Marcia Willhite	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Pat Boddy	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Laurie Martinson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Rebecca Wooden	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Mike Wells	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Robert Stout	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
John Madras	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Todd Ambs	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Federal UMRBA Liaisons and Federal Members of the Water Quality Executive Committee:

Deena Wheby	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Gary Meden	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Tim Henry	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Art Spratlin	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Kevin Foerster	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Mike Jawson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC

Others in Attendance:

Bernie Schonhoff	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Tim Schlagenhaft	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Janet Sternburg	Missouri Department of Conservation
Kevin Bluhm	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Chuck Spitzack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Ken Barr	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marv Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Hal Graef	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Kat McCain	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO
Bob Clevestine	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Refuges
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Brad Walker	Izaak Walton League

Gretchen Benjamin	The Nature Conservancy
Gary Loss	
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Kirsten Mickelsen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Peg Donnelly	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association/ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5

Minutes

Mike Wells moved and Gary Clark seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2010 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Barb Naramore expanded on her written Director's report as follows:

- USACE has exercised its option to extend the EMP staff services agreement through the end of federal FY 11. There is no agreement in place for NESP staff services after the current meeting cycle, but NESP staff have expressed interest in executing a contract for the balance of FY 11.
- The EMP Report to Congress is nearly complete, with partner review complete and UMRBA on track to deliver the final report to USACE by December 1, 2010, as scheduled. UMRBA is also handling reproduction of the report, and bulk printing is scheduled for early December.
- Naramore signed a cooperative agreement with U.S. EPA Region 5 on October 13, 2010, under which UMRBA will continue its oil spill contingency planning and mapping activities. The agreement provides \$270,000 in new federal funds for this work, which will extend throughout 2011 and into 2012.
- Naramore continues to work as part of the 8-person steering group seeking to guide next steps in developing a collaborative vision for the Mississippi River Basin. Thus far, the group has focused on reviewing management case studies from other large aquatic ecosystems, communicating back with participants in the June 2010 Summit, and considering issues related to process design.
- UMRBA staff has prepared its customary election results summary, which Naramore distributed to meeting participants.
- On October 19, 2010, the independent accounting firm of Mahoney, Ulbrich, Christiansen, and Russ (MUCR) completed its audit of UMRBA covering FY 09-10, with the auditors concluding that UMRBA's financial statement fairly represent the organization's financial status. The UMRBA Board discussed the audit findings with MUCR staff via conference call earlier this morning.
- The written Executive Director's report includes a Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet for the period July 1, 2010 through November 3, 2010.

Mike Wells moved and Laurie Martinson seconded a motion to authorize Naramore to execute a NESP support services contract with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, under which UMRBA will provide its traditional services for NECC's February, May, and August quarterly meetings, as well as potential special meetings at the request of USACE. The contract maximum is expected to be in the \$25,000-35,000 range. The motion carried unanimously.

Martinson moved and Wells seconded a motion to authorize Naramore to accept the Corps' exercise of Option Year 1 under the existing UMRBA/USACE contract for EMP support services. The contract maximum for Option Year 1 is \$68,495. The motion passed unanimously.

Wells moved and Gary Clark seconded a motion to accept the Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet dated November 3, 2010 and included in the written Executive Director's report for the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Wells moved and Martinson seconded a motion to accept MUCR's FY 09-10 audit report dated October 19, 2010. The motion carried unanimously.

Report from UMRBA Water Quality Executive Committee

Marcia Willhite reflected on the history and purpose of the states' water quality collaboration through UMRBA, emphasizing the value of coordinating at both the technical and policy levels, given the many differences that exist among the states' UMR water quality programs. She explained that the Water Quality Executive Committee (WQEC) has taken a building blocks approach in its work, starting with coordination on basic elements including uses, standards, and assessments. The increase in 604(b) water quality management planning grant funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided an important opportunity to accelerate those efforts. But the ARRA funding also came with the expectation that the states would increase their coordination focus on excess nutrients and nonpoint source issues on the UMR. Thus the 604(b)-funded effort includes elements focusing on bio-assessment, nutrients, and cross-programmatic coordination.

Willhite also said US EPA Region 7's draft arsenic TMDL for portions of the UMR in Iowa illustrated UMRBA's value as a forum for ongoing coordination. She explained that EPA's draft TMDL raised important questions concerning interstate consistency, the challenge of protecting human health uses on the UMR, and related issues. By consulting and commenting through UMRBA's WQEC, Willhite said the states were able to advocate successfully for tabling the draft TMDL in favor of a more promising regional dialog.

According to Willhite, the WQEC's 2011 water quality priorities include:

- Complete work on current projects, including aquatic life designated uses, nutrients, and bio-assessment, and determine appropriate next steps related to each.
- Engage appropriately on nutrient and nonpoint source issues.
- Foster continued collaboration and communication among the states and with US EPA and other federal agencies.
- Pursue the stable, ongoing funding needed to support the states' UMR water quality work through UMRBA.

Dave Hokanson then provided brief updates on each of six current areas of interstate water quality work, including the states' ongoing collaboration, aquatic life designated uses project, human health use support dialog, bio-assessment guidance, nutrients report, and cross-programmatic workshops. In response to a question from Mike Wells, Hokanson indicated that UMRBA's current intergovernmental personnel agreement (IPA) with US EPA, which has supported the aquatic life designated uses effort, is scheduled to end on February 12, 2011. Wells suggested that renewing the current IPA or establishing a new one might offer a way for US EPA to continue its support of the states' UMR water quality work. Willhite said the WQEC would consider this and other possible next steps at its meeting the following day.

Hokanson observed that the interconnections among the various elements of UMRBA's water quality work are increasingly evident and are being considered as each element is implemented. Todd Ambs commended Hokanson and others for the tremendous progress they have made with very limited staff resources. Wells concurred, emphasizing that the states are just getting traction on some very important water quality issues and should not lose momentum. Wells stressed that the interstate water quality issues on the UMR are national in scale and thus require US EPA's active engagement.

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Hokanson said Iowa made some modifications to its fish consumption advisories following UMRBA's 2005 comparative report on fish advisories. These changes enhanced interstate consistency on the UMR somewhat. However, Hokanson said the current human health use discussion has not, thus far, focused on remaining fish advisory differences among the states.

Ambs said bringing the state water program directors together through creation of the WQEC has been critical to the success of interstate water quality efforts. He applauded the UMRBA Board for supporting creation of the WQEC in 2006. Willhite concurred with Ambs' assessment.

Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study

Lamar McKissack reported that USACE held 31 public and 11 tribal meetings as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process for the Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study (MRAPS). The Corps received over 1,200 scoping comments by the September 20, 2010 deadline. McKissack explained that the study team is currently analyzing the comments and anticipates completing its draft scoping report early in 2011. That draft report will be open for comment, and a round of public meetings will follow its release. McKissack acknowledged that the scoping effort is lengthy, but explained that the MRAPS issues are complex and the study team wants to be sure it hears and understands people's perspectives.

While emphasizing that the study team has not yet completed its analysis of the scoping comments, McKissack said major themes appear to include:

1. Review adverse effects of disrupting the pre-project sediment transport process.
2. Mitigate economic losses from the loss of bottomlands by the mainstem reservoirs.
3. Maintain or increase the current level of hydropower outputs.
4. Recognize the past adverse effects of flow variation on Missouri River navigation and evaluate future navigation demands associated with land transportation constraints.
5. Address tribal cultural losses from construction of mainstem reservoirs.
6. Maintain or increase the current level of flood protection.
7. Recognize the need for increased recreation infrastructure and consider the effects of reservoir levels on recreation.
8. Recognize the increasing water supply demands from municipal and industrial uses and the additional rural water systems, both deployed and anticipated.
9. Formulate water management plans to benefit navigation on the Mississippi River.
10. Determine how changes to the authorized purposes might affect the major Missouri River ecosystem restoration projects already underway.

McKissack stressed that this list of themes is not comprehensive and is simply intended to provide a sense of perspectives expressed frequently. He also reported that USACE has completed a draft list of infrastructure sites that are candidates for review under MRAPS. He explained that USACE has not made any final determinations regarding which of these sites will actually be examined as part of the study. The list is available at <http://mraps.org/draft-list-infrastructure>.

In 2011, the MRAPS team also intends to focus on expanding the role of the states, tribes, and other federal agencies as cooperating entities in the study under NEPA. McKissack said the study team is sensitive to the need to keep demands on staff time reasonable. He also described ongoing efforts to coordinate MRAPS with the Missouri River Ecosystem Restoration Plan (MRERP), including plans for a common modeling approach and sharing affected environment work where practical.

McKissack noted that MRAPS is subject to the new Corps' project review requirements, including District Quality Control (DQC), Agency Technical Review (ATR), and Independent External Peer Review (IEPR). As is the case throughout the Corps, the MRAPS study team is still assessing the precise implications of these new requirements for study schedule and process. The St. Paul District will have a lead role in assisting the Kansas City and Omaha Districts with quality review throughout the study process.

According to McKissack, USACE will employ a variety of means to ensure ongoing engagement with the public, stakeholders, cooperating agencies, and tribes throughout the study process. This will include newsletters, interim product reviews, briefings, public meetings, press releases, and extensive use of the MRAPS web site (www.mraps.org).

MRAPS has not received any new funding through the Continuing Resolution Authority (CRA) under which the Corps and most federal agencies are operating. Thus the study is operating on carryover funds from FY 10 so far in FY 11. McKissack explained that much of what he described in terms of MRAPS's work plan for the current year will require new FY 11 funding. Current efforts with carryover funds are focused on completing the scoping analysis and preliminary scoping report.

Designation of the UMR Floodplain as a Wetland of International Significance

Kevin Foerster described recent events celebrating the designation of 300,000 acres of the UMR floodplain as a Wetland of International Significance under the Ramsar Convention. The designation includes areas under both state and federal management between Wabasha, Minnesota and the Quad Cities. According to Foerster, the Ramsar designation will not alter management of the sites, but is an important recognition of the area's global ecological significance. He explained that a series of celebratory events on October 10 engaged the public in a broad range of activities at several sites within the designated area. An October 14 invitation-only event included the Secretary of the Ramsar Convention as well as senior Interior Department leaders and state agency representatives. Foerster thanked the states and other federal agencies for their support in the seeking the designation.

USACE Project Review

Gary Meden provided an overview of Engineering Circular (EC) 1165-2-209, a comprehensive description of the Corps' review requirements for civil works projects. Released in January 2010, the EC updates project review standards to implement the new requirements enacted in the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). The EC identifies three levels of project review:

- District Quality Control/Quality Assurance (DQC)
- Agency Technical Review (ATR)
- Independent External Peer Review (IEPR)

Meden explained that DQC is unchanged under the new EC. It consists of an internal review of project planners' basic science and engineering and is performed within the home district for the project, though by staff not directly involved in the original work. By contrast, the ATR is performed within the Corps, but outside of the study district. The ATR is an in-depth review to assess if the analyses and results are reasonable and technically correct, consistent with applicable guidelines and policies, and explained in a clear manner for the public and decision makers. Meden said the Corps has also been performing ATRs for some time, though they were previously known as Independent Technical Reviews. He observed that the Corps' increasingly common practice of engaging staff from multiple districts in project planning can complicate the process of finding independent reviewers for the ATR teams. In addition, the ATR team lead must come from outside of the division in which the project was planned. Meden noted that ATRs must be completed for each of several major milestones within a project's development. A major milestone ATR typically takes six to eight weeks to complete, with costs ranging from \$20,000 to \$50,000, though time and costs can be lower if there have been few changes to a project since its previous ATR.

Post-WRDA 07, there are two types of IEPRs, both of which must be performed wholly outside of USACE. Type 1 applies to all types of projects, while Type 2 is a safety assurance review applicable to projects involving human life and safety, such as flood damage reduction projects. Meden explained that, under EC 1165-2-209, Type 1 IEPRs are mandatory unless the Chief of Engineers has issued an exemption for the project or program. Meden said exemptions have been rare thus far. The Corps' approach is more stringent than the WRDA 07 language itself, which established a series of triggers for mandatory IEPRs related to project cost and controversy. According to Meden, Type 1 IEPRs have been taking approximately 75 days, with costs ranging from \$150,000 to \$300,000 or more. He acknowledged that these time and cost figures can represent a particular burden for small projects.

Corps procedures also require planning staff to define their project review plans prior to initiating the planning process — i.e., the project management plan (PMP) must address compliance with DQC, ATR, and IEPR requirements. These project review plans must be approved by the Division Commander.

Meden observed that the new project review requirements come at a time when the Corps is under considerable countervailing pressure to reduce planning costs and time. Programmatic IEPR exemptions could offer some relief for the continuing authorities programs or programs like EMP and NESP, but thus far the Chief of Engineers has not granted any such exemptions. Meden said there are other opportunities to introduce minor efficiencies, such as relieving the Corps from having to respond formally to comments that represent only the reviewer's personal opinion.

Board Recognitions

Laurie Martinson announced that this meeting will be Todd Ambs' last as Wisconsin's UMRBA representative. She noted that Ambs has more than 30 years of water resources experience, with both state agencies and nongovernmental organizations. Governor Doyle appointed Ambs as his UMRBA Representative shortly after Ambs assumed the Water Division Administrator position at Wisconsin DNR in 2003. Martinson presented Ambs with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the UMRBA Board. Ambs said he has truly appreciated his time with UMRBA and described his service as a valuable learning experience. He added that he will still be quite interested in UMR issues, given that he is now President of River Network, a national organization connecting groups committed to river protection and restoration.

Ambs announced that Gary Clark will be retiring from Illinois DNR at the end of 2010. Ambs said Clark has been involved in river issues on behalf of Illinois going back to the work of the Upper

Mississippi River Basin Commission. After serving for several years as a UMRBA Alternate, Clark became Illinois' UMRBA Representative in 2004, following his appointment as Director of Illinois DNR's Office of Water Resources. Ambs noted Clark's leadership not only on UMRBA but also with the Great Lakes Commission and Ohio River Commission and presented Clark with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the UMRBA Board. Clark said he has been privileged to work with UMRBA over the years and has been pleased to see the Association grow into a nationally respected forum for coordinating state and federal water management. He emphasized that the states' work through UMRBA really does make an important difference, citing progress in the areas of ecosystem restoration, navigation, and water quality.

UMRS Comprehensive Plan

Chuck Spitzack reviewed progress in implementing the Comp Plan's FY 10 work plan, noting that funding was limited to \$263,000 in new money and some carryover funds:

- Reconstruct aging infrastructure — assigned study manager and initiated some work
- Protect critical transportation infrastructure — assigned study manager and formed project design team, identified transportation features for screening, and initiated analysis
- Conduct tributary studies — focus has been on the Iowa-Cedar basin, including completion of a draft management plan looking at risk management and watershed sustainability.

Spitzack explained that controversy and questions surrounding Plan H, one of the systemic alternatives evaluated but not recommended in the Comp Plan, required some reallocation of funds in FY 10. As a result, the Corps made less progress on the aging infrastructure and critical transportation infrastructure tasks than originally planned.

Spitzack described the FY 11 work plan as quite constrained, explaining that the Comp Plan is not receiving any money under the Continuing Resolution Authority (CRA) and is thus currently limited to approximately \$100,000 in carryover funds that will soon be exhausted. The carryover funds are dedicated to public meetings in December, one related to Plan H and the other a series of public involvement workshops on the Iowa-Cedar plan. The prospects for FY 11 money are uncertain, given that the House markup did not include any Comp Plan funding, while the Senate Committee-approved bill includes \$750,000. If FY 11 money becomes available, Spitzack said the Corps' focus would be on the three FY 10 work plan items described above, plus facilitation and technical support for systemic flood risk management. He noted that the interagency Iowa-Cedar work underscores the significant potential for integrated, comprehensive approaches in the tributary watersheds.

Spitzack summarized major findings from the 2008 Comp Plan report, including:

- The existing flood risk management system prevents 95-97 percent of potential average annual flood damages.
- Residual risk, however, could result in catastrophic losses.
- None of the systemic plans evaluated had net National Economic Development (NED) benefits. Benefit-cost ratios for all systemic alternatives, including Plan H, were less than 0.1.
- Based on the Comp Plan findings, USACE and ASA(CW) did not recommend a systemic plan.
- Independent of USACE and the ASA(CW), the Mississippi River Commission did recommend Plan H, with some caveats.

He explained that Plan H, which is strongly favored by the Upper Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers Association (UMIMRA), calls for a 500-year level of protection in areas with existing levees and floodwalls, using either improvements or buyouts, depending on which is the most cost effective alternative in a particular area. However, some landowners and government officials in Missouri have recently voiced opposition to Plan H, citing concern with induced rises and loss of tax base in three counties (Lincoln, Pike, and St. Charles) that would not likely see levee improvements under the plan. Spitzack emphasized that the Corps did not recommend Plan H, or any other systemic alternative, but is attempting to facilitate stakeholder understanding of the Comp Plan's analysis and conclusions and the implications of implementing any of the systemic alternatives evaluated. As a first step, the Corps is holding a meeting in Old Monroe, Missouri on December 1. The meeting will include an open house session followed by a discussion period.

Mike Wells noted that the Comp Plan was authorized as a three-year study in 1999, with the reconnaissance report ultimately completed in August 2008. Wells asked what authority the Corps is using to continue working on the issues of critical transportation crossings, reconstructing aging infrastructure, tributary analysis, or facilitating stakeholder understanding. Spitzack explained that Congress removed the timeframe from the study authority due to low funding. In addition, the Corps has not yet completed the study as authorized, though Spitzack described the August 2008 report as a good first step. Therefore, according to Spitzack, the Corps has the authority to continue work in the areas he outlined, though its ability to do so is obviously contingent on receiving funding. Wells requested a copy of the Comp Plan's implementation guidance. [Note: Subsequent to the meeting, Spitzack confirmed that USACE did not issue implementation guidance for the Comp Plan. However, he did supply approved study fact sheets from 2001 and 2004, which Naramore distributed to the UMRBA Board on December 16, 2010.]

Ecosystem and Navigation Updates

Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

Chuck Spitzack reported that the NESP team recently solicited partner comment on lock sequencing. In particular, they asked whether partners had a compelling reason to depart from the Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Capital Plan's recommendation to initiate work on L&D 25 first. Overall, the IMTS Plan's recommended order is L&D 25, La Grange, L&D 22, and L&D 24, with construction of the remaining three authorized new locks falling beyond the Plan's 20-year time horizon. The Corps received approximately six comments, with no one calling for a shift from the IMTS Plan's recommended order. Spitzack said the NESP team will reconfirm the preferred construction order in late FY 11, after cost estimates and value assessments are complete for L&D 25, La Grange, and L&D 22.

Spitzack reviewed the history of preconstruction engineering and design (PED) funding for NESP, which has totaled \$58.6 million between FY 05 and FY 10 and ranged from \$6.2 million to \$14.0 million annually. He observed that the general trend in annual funding has been downward during this period. Approximately seven percent of this total has gone to program management, with a similar amount going to the economic reevaluation. The remaining 86 percent has been split roughly evenly between NESP's ecosystem restoration and navigation components.

NESP's FY 10 allocation totaled \$6.8 million. Major accomplishments included:

- Navigation (\$3,150,000)
 - Completed draft design documentation reports for Lock 22
 - Prepared small scale measures for implementation
 - Developed revised implementation strategy – “Blueprint for Action”
 - Investigated need for supplemental evaluation

- Ecosystem (\$3,150,000)
 - Completed planning for some projects and tested approval process (Pool 2 Wing Dams, Herculaneum, Lock 22 Fish Passage)
 - Completed reach planning (NECC & EMP-CC will be asked to endorse in February 2011)
- Public Outreach
 - Implemented “Our Mississippi” initiative

The Continuing Resolution Authority (CRA) and the resulting uncertainty regarding appropriations have complicated development of NESP’s FY 11 work plan. Spitzack said the NESP team is currently planning for a \$3 million program, but emphasized that the ultimate number could be lower or higher, with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees having previously identified \$1 million and \$4 million, respectively, for NESP. The Administration did not include NESP in its FY 11 budget request. Under a \$3 million scenario, the navigation and ecosystem restoration components would each receive \$1.325 million.

On the question of supplemental evaluation, Spitzack said the Corps is still discussing internally whether there is any further reevaluation that would be both feasible and responsive to the outstanding questions posed by the ASA(CW). Spitzack also noted that partners will have an opportunity to provide input on an after action report examining the reach planning process.

EMP/NESP Transition Plan

Marv Hubbell reported that he has revised the May 2010 draft EMP/NESP Transition Plan in response to additional comments from MVD and Corps HQ. Hubbell said internal coordination on the redraft is virtually complete and he anticipates that Colonel McGinley will formally submit the Transition Plan to MVD within the next few days. Relative to the May 2010 version that partners reviewed, Hubbell said the revised Transition Plan:

- provides more background information on the two programs,
- emphasizes the importance of keeping the EMP fully functional unless and until Congress directs a transition, and
- includes tables listing completed and in-progress HREPs.

Environmental Management Program

Hubbell announced that the 2010 EMP Report to Congress (RTC) is virtually complete, with only final graphics work and printing remaining. He thanked EMP partners, and especially UMRBA, for their contributions to the RTC and said the report will be submitted to MVD by December 1, with general distribution following shortly thereafter.

Hubbell also briefly reviewed the decision to streamline the RTC and create a separate Implementation Issues Assessment (IIA) in response to schedule demands. He explained that the streamlined RTC reports on program accomplishments, updates the Habitat Needs Assessment, and identifies any needed legislative adjustments, and thus complies with EMP’s authorizing language. The IIA process will, in turn, give partners slightly more time to address other important issues that may require policy or implementation adjustments by the Corps or other partners, but that are not thought likely to require Congressional action. Hubbell said the IIA schedule has not been finalized. However, the effort will likely begin in early 2011 and take approximately one-year to complete. The HREP strategic planning process will also begin around this same time, but will likely take longer to complete. Hubbell emphasized the importance of close coordination between the two efforts.

Hubbell said EMP's FY 10 funding totaled \$16.47 million. He highlighted the following FY 10 accomplishments and considerations:

- Regional Administration — overall administrative funding reduced from FY 09, but continued all initiatives and increased spending for RTC
- LTRMP — nearly 93% of funding went to support base monitoring efforts (Outputs 1.1 & 2.1 of the LTRMP Strategic & Operational Plan)
- HREP
 - Regional initiatives for model certification and program review plan were initiated.
 - MVD approved fact sheets on 22 new projects
 - Advanced 22 existing HREPs – 10 in construction and 12 in planning, engineering, or design. Initiated construction on two new projects.

Hubbell said FY 11 funding is uncertain for EMP, as it is for other Corps programs. For planning purposes, the EMP team is assuming an FY 11 appropriation of \$21.15 million, the amount included in the President's budget and the House markup. Hubbell noted that the Senate Appropriations Committee included \$19.0 million for EMP in its FY 11 measure, and said it would not be unprecedented for the final appropriation to fall below the lower of the two House and Senate amounts. Among the FY 11 work plan highlights, Hubbell cited regional initiatives to certify models and complete a program review plan.

In response to a question from Barb Naramore, Jeff DeZellar said the EMP program review plan will be modeled on those developed for the Corps' continuing authorities programs and will address all aspects of the new project review requirements (i.e., District Quality Control, Agency Technical Review, and Independent External Peer Review). DeZellar said he expects EMP will ultimately be successful in obtaining a programmatic IEPR exemption. In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Hubbell said it will likely be some time before Corps HQ is prepared to act on programmatic exemption requests.

Hubbell and DeZellar explained that the model certification process can be quite complex and time consuming. Hubbell said there are eight models in use by EMP, NESP, and/or the 519 Program that require certification. Corps staff from these programs are coordinating the certification regionally and sharing the costs, rather than pursuing certifications as individual programs. In the interim, EMP is permitted to use uncertified models.

Hubbell said other FY 11 priorities will include completing the EMP/NESP Transition Plan, initiating the HREP strategic planning process, advancing the Implementation Issues Assessment, and supporting the ASA(CW)'s designation of the UMRS as one of 10 nationally significant ecosystems for the Corps. Work plan highlights include supporting construction of eight HREPs and planning, engineering, and design work on another 16 projects. LTRMP priorities will include implementing the base monitoring program, advancing the land cover/land use effort, and serving the newly acquired bathymetry and LiDAR data.

Principles and Guidelines Update

Barb Naramore provided a brief update on efforts to update the 1983 Principles and Guidelines (P&G) governing water resources planning. The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued draft Principles and Standards (P&S) in December 2009, electing to defer work on the more detailed Implementation Guidelines. UMRBA submitted comments on the draft P&S during the public review period, which closed in April 2010. CEQ also submitted its December 2009 draft P&S to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) for a mandatory review. Naramore reported that the NAS panel is nearing

completion of its work and is expected to release its report within the next few weeks. Jeff Jacobs, who has staffed several Mississippi River-related panels for NAS is the staff person assigned to the P&S review panel.

CEQ is also in the midst of considering the large volume of public comments it received. At the invitation of CEQ, Naramore participated in an October 27 roundtable discussion of the draft P&S and pending Implementation Guidelines. This was the first of four small sessions that CEQ and the federal agencies have planned to inform their ongoing P&G work. Participants represented a range of organizations, including industry and environmental advocacy groups, flood risk management organizations, universities, and interstate water commissions. Naramore said the conversation focused on how to implement proposed provisions related to ecosystem and social considerations in water resources planning. CEQ staff at the meeting indicated that they hope to release the draft Implementation Guidelines in June 2011, though they described this as an ambitious schedule.

Naramore noted that UMRBA's written P&S comments highlighted the difficulty of evaluating the draft P&S in the absence of the Implementation Guidelines. UMRBA staff will continue to monitor P&G developments and will circulate the NAS report to the Board when it is released.

Administrative Issues

Barb Naramore noted that the UMRBA Board is deferring action on the Treasurer Position agenda item until its February 15, 2011 meeting.

Naramore reported that the next two quarterly meeting series are scheduled for February 15-17, 2011 in St. Louis and May 17-19, 2011 in the Quad Cities, with UMRBA's meeting falling on the first day of each series. The Board set the summer quarterly meetings for August 16-18, 2011 in the Quad Cities. Naramore noted that, pending further discussion by the EMP-CC and NECC, it is possible those two groups will consolidate their May and August meetings to a single day. This would not affect the dates provided above for the UMRBA meetings.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.