

**Minutes of the  
89th Quarterly Meeting  
of the  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**February 25, 2004  
St. Louis, Missouri**

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by UMRBA Chair Mike Wells. The following were present:

UMRBA Representatives and Alternates:

Don Vonnahme	Illinois Representative (IL DNR)
Gary Clark	Illinois Alternate (IL DNR)
John Hey	Iowa Representative (IA DOT)
Harold Hommes	Iowa Representative (IA Dept of Agriculture)
Diane Ford-Shivvers	Iowa Acting Representative (IA DNR)
Tim Schlagenhaft	Minnesota Acting Representative (MN DNR)
Mike Wells	Missouri Alternate (MO DNR)
Todd Ambs	Wisconsin Representative (WI DNR)
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin (WI DNR)

Federal Liaisons:

Greg Ruff	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVD)
Larry Shepard	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 7)
Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 5)
Linda Leake	U.S. Geological Survey (UMESC)
Charlie Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)
Gary Wooten	Natural Resources Conservation Service (IA State Office)
Bob Goodwin	Maritime Administration
Joe Rock	U.S. Coast Guard (St. Louis MSO)

Others in attendance:

Mike McGhee	Iowa DNR
Brent Halling	Iowa Dept. of Agriculture
Scott Stuewe	Illinois DNR
Rich Astrack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Dave Gates	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Dennis Stephens	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Don Duncan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Mike Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)

Marvin Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)
Joyce Collins	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Don Hultman	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Upper Miss Refuge)
Mike Slifer	U.S. Geological Survey (MO District)
Cheryl Grisler	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 7)
Angela Anderson	Mississippi River Basin Alliance
Heather Hampton Knodle	UMIMRA
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

### **Meeting Minutes**

Gary Clark moved and Diane Ford-Shivvers seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2003 meeting as drafted. The motion was approved by consensus.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Holly Stoerker reported that, on December 31, 2003, she received a letter from Wisconsin DNR Secretary Scott Hassett, on behalf of Governor Doyle, appointing Todd Ambs and Jordy Jordahl as the Governor's representatives to UMRBA. In addition, on January 13, 2004, UMRBA received a letter from Governor Pawlenty's Chief of Staff, Robert Schroeder, appointing DNR Deputy Commissioner Mark Holsten as the first alternate to the Minnesota EQB Chair as the UMRBA representative from Minnesota.

### **Testimony on Federal FY 2005 Appropriations**

It was agreed that the process of developing testimony on the FY 05 budget would be similar to previous years. In particular, UMRBA staff will prepare a draft for UMRBA members' review. Following approval, the testimony will be submitted to the appropriate House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees and the five state Congressional delegations.

Holly Stoerker provided a review of the agencies and major programs that UMRBA testimony has addressed in the past. The following suggestions were made for potential topics of emphasis in FY 2005:

- ▶ Economic modeling in the Corps of Engineers' Research & Development budget
- ▶ National caps for Corps of Engineers' Section 1135 and Section 206 continuing authorities
- ▶ Environmental Management Program (EMP) funding
- ▶ PED for navigation and ecosystem improvements being recommended in the Navigation Study
- ▶ USDA conservation programs
- ▶ Clean Water Act State Revolving Fund

- ▶ Traditional missions of FEMA and the Coast Guard within the Department of Homeland Security
- ▶ National fish and wildlife refuges
- ▶ Monitoring and assessment of the water quality of large rivers (i.e., EMAP and STAR)

### **UMRBA Water Quality Coordination Project**

Holly Stoerker reported that, in December 2003, the round-robin signature process for the Interstate Assessment Reach MOU was completed. The agreement calls for all five states to use the same set of river reaches, at a minimum, for their Clean Water Act assessments and listings. The reaches are based on USGS hydrologic unit codes and correspond to the river's major geomorphic segments. The number of reaches Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota use will decrease. The number of reaches used in Missouri and Wisconsin will increase.

Stoerker said that the final report of the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force was distributed January 26. It describes and compares the five states' monitoring activities, assessments, and 303(d) listings on the Mississippi River for the 2002 reporting cycle. The report includes a lot of basic information, but it is put together in new ways. In addition, it includes insights on why differences exist between the states.

The next meeting of the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force is scheduled for March 4-5, 2004, at which time the group will discuss the states' 2004 assessments and impaired waters listings for the river.

Todd Ambs commented that the work of the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force is very important. Wisconsin is particularly interested in making the impaired waters listing process more meaningful.

Larry Shepard encouraged UMRBA representatives to thank their Water Quality Task Force members for their efforts. He said the report that UMRBA recently published was a major accomplishment, made possible by the high degree of cooperation in this basin, which is not present in many other basins such as the Missouri River Basin.

### **EPA Action on States' 303(d) Lists**

Larry Shepard reported that Region 7 partially approved and partially disapproved the 2002 303(d) impaired waters lists submitted by Iowa and Missouri. In both cases, EPA added waterbodies to the lists. In Iowa, the Mississippi River was not included among the added waterbodies. However, in Missouri, EPA added chlordane and PCB impairment for the entire length of the Mississippi River, due to fish tissue contamination.

Shepard commented that the trend toward putting water quality listing methodologies and the lists themselves into state rules will likely delay the 2004 listing process in some states. Missouri is the only state in the basin that currently is required to put its methodology and list in rule.

Shepard reported that EPA Region 7 approved Kansas' and Nebraska's 2002 303(d) lists, as submitted. Kansas did not list the Missouri River, but Nebraska listed it for bacterial contamination and Iowa listed some reaches for bacteria and arsenic.

Bill Franz reported that EPA Region 5 approved Illinois' and Minnesota's 2002 303(d) lists, as submitted. EPA added ten waterbodies to Wisconsin's list, but those additions did not include the Mississippi River.

### **Sierra Club Petition on Mississippi River Water Quality Standards**

Larry Shepard explained that, as part of a consent decree and settlement agreement, EPA is considering a petition from the Sierra Club covering the Mississippi River between Burlington, Iowa and Memphis, Tennessee and the Missouri River between St. Louis and Omaha. The petition asserts that there are inconsistencies in designated uses, numeric water quality criteria, and state determinations of impairment on these waters. The petition requests that EPA publish water quality standards and monitoring requirements for these waters. February 26, 2004 marks the end of the one-year period that EPA had to respond to the petition. However, an extension is being negotiated. EPA is discussing its response to the petition with the affected states. Outstanding issues include how to address E. coli standards and nutrient criteria development plans.

### **Comprehensive Plan for Flood Damage Reduction**

Rich Astrack provided an overview of the Comprehensive Plan, which he emphasized is not a study, but intended to develop a flood damage reduction plan for the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. He explained that, currently, 6% of the floodplain above Pool 13 is leveed, in contrast to 50% in Pools 13-26, 80% on the open river, and 60% on the Illinois River.

The alternatives being evaluated include: a confined plan (raising all levees and floodwalls to contain a 500-year flood), various unconfined plans (raising the level of protection in some areas, if possible, without impacting other areas), nonstructural plans, and emergency action scenarios. The confined plan has been found to be unacceptable because of the impacts on water surface profiles, which would rise by 1.6 to 14 feet, depending on location. Astrack explained that development of the unconfined plans is an iterative process and used the trials around the Clarksville, Missouri area as an example.

Astrack explained that the emergency action scenarios evaluate the flood profile and economic impacts of various operational strategies. Four scenarios are being evaluated: raise urban levees 2 feet, raise urban levees 2 feet and agricultural levees 1 foot, raise all urban and agricultural levees 2 feet, and raise all urban and agricultural levees 3 feet. Gary Clark noted that the Emergency Action Scenarios are an important part of the Comprehensive Plan for the states and UMRBA. He thanked Astrack for the Corps' efforts to be responsive to the states' concerns.

Astrack explained that the Comprehensive Plan will be looking at nonstructural solutions, but will not evaluate flood damage reduction options associated with floodplain restoration. That is being addressed in the Navigation Study, which has a lower spatial resolution.

Environmental costs and benefits will not be considered in the emergency action scenarios, but will be included in the alternative plans being formulated.

Greg Ruff said that much progress has been made on development of a systemwide analysis tool and that a lot of good data is coming out of the planning effort. But the ultimate outcome of the planning effort has yet to be identified. Given that the Comprehensive Plan will not be at a feasibility study level of detail, he encouraged everyone to think about what the next steps should be.

Gretchen Benjamin questioned whether the emergency action plans will be implemented prior to whichever longer-term structural or nonstructural alternative is selected. Rich Astrack clarified that the emergency action scenarios would only be temporary operational changes, such as the actions taken during the 1993 Flood. Gary Clark emphasized that the scenarios are not a plan. Rather, they identify the implications of taking certain actions and will thus help to inform decisions, such as when to stop flood-fighting and allow levees to fail.

Holly Stoerker emphasized the importance of continuing the UMRBA's role in convening periodic conference calls of state floodplain managers, FEMA and the Corps. These conference calls can serve as another avenue for state input into the Comprehensive Plan, given that not all states are actively participating in the Collaboration Team that the Corps has established for the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Interbasin Diversion Consultation**

Holly Stoerker explained that the Interbasin Diversion Charter signed by the Governors in 1989 requires that, at the UMRBA Annual Meeting, each state report on out-of-basin diversion requests that may have been made during the previous year. All five UMRBA state representatives reported that no diversion requests, exceeding the charter threshold of 5 million gallons per day average in any 30-day period, had been made. UMRBA staff will transmit a letter to each of the five Governors describing the results of the required consultation on interbasin diversions.

In response to a question regarding the history of the Diversion Charter, Stoerker explained that Wisconsin had originally promoted such a Charter for the Upper Mississippi River because a similar charter had been executed for the Great Lakes. The Wisconsin permitting program could be standardized statewide if both basins were governed by the same requirements.

### **Don Vonnahme Recognition**

Mike Wells presented Don Vonnahme with a certificate of appreciation and UMRBA T-shirt. Vonnahme, who recently retired as Director of the Illinois Division of Water Resources, had served as Illinois' representative to the UMRBA since 1982. As the longest-serving representative from any of the five states, Vonnahme had served as UMRBA Chairman five times over the past 22 years.

## **Election of Officers**

Todd Ambs moved the election of Gary Clark as Chair of the UMRBA. The motion carried unanimously.

Diane Ford-Shivvers moved and Gary Clark seconded a motion to elect Todd Ambs as UMRBA Vice Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Corps of Engineers Reorganization**

Greg Ruff reported that Steve Cobb has been assigned to lead the New Orleans District Support Team and will be retiring in June. The new Rock Island and St. Louis District Team leader may be on board by the next UMRBA meeting in May.

## **Future Meetings**

The future quarterly meeting schedule for the combined GLC, UMRBA, and EMP-CC meetings includes May 18-20, 2004 in St. Paul and August 10-12, 2004 in the Quad Cities.

It was agreed that the fall meetings will be held November 16-18, 2004 in La Crosse.

*[Note: The May GLC meeting was subsequently cancelled and the location of the November meetings was subsequently changed to St. Louis.]*

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.