

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

**February 21, 2008
Quarterly Meeting**

**Sheraton Westport Plaza
St. Louis, Missouri**

Terry Smith of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. on February 21, 2008. Other EMP-CC representatives present were Don Hultman (USFWS), Linda Leake (USGS), Rick Mollahan (IL DNR), Martin Konrad (IA DNR), Walt Popp (MN DNR), Janet Sternburg (MO DOC), Gretchen Benjamin (WI DNR), and Al Fenedick (USEPA). Smith expressed Charles Barton's regrets for not being available to chair the meeting.

Minutes from the November 15, 2007 Meeting

Martin Konrad moved and Gretchen Benjamin seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the November 15, 2007 EMP-CC meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Program Management

FY 08 Work Plan Overview

Marv Hubbell reported that, with a \$16.851 million appropriation, the FY 08 EMP funding distribution includes the following:

- LTRMP — \$5.134 million
- MVP — \$3.365 million
- MVR — \$4.487 million
- MVS — \$3.365 million
- Regional management — \$500,000

Hubbell further explained that with the significant FY 08 funding constraints, each district will have a choice as to whether to support continuation of the FY 07 LTRMP/HREP integration effort this fiscal year. He distributed the EMP spreadsheets for the first quarter of FY 08.

Hubbell also explained that committee report language from Congressional appropriators bars the initiation of new HREPs in FY 08, restricting funds to "ongoing design and construction projects." Under the Administration's interpretation of this language, the definition of "ongoing design" includes those projects for which there was an expenditure of funds prior to FY 08 for the development of a DPR. "Ongoing construction" includes those projects for which there was a completed DPR and an expenditure of funds prior to FY 08 for project engineering, design, or construction. Hubbell said this allows for the completion of DPRs already in development, the award of contract options or task orders on existing contracts, and the award of additional construction contracts that would support continued implementation of a DPR.

President's FY 09 Request

Hubbell reported that the President's FY 09 budget request includes \$20.0 million for the EMP. He also explained that, if Congress were to extend its restrictive language on new starts to FY 09, this would have significant adverse effects on the HREP program, with MVS experiencing the greatest difficulty. Assuming no such restrictions in FY 09, and appropriation at the President's requested \$20.0 million level, the FY 09 program would include planning or design on 16 projects, construction on 7 projects, and the collection of related data. If the restrictive language were extended, Hubbell said construction would only be possible on 3 of those 7 projects.

Hubbell distributed one-page summaries for each state, highlighting the EMP's accomplishments. He asked EMP-CC members to review the summaries and apprise him of any errors. Gretchen Benjamin noted that the summary sheets reflect lower figures for expenditures and acres benefited than have been previously reported. Hubbell said he didn't think there have been any substantial corrections to the expenditure numbers, but explained that some previous overestimates on acres benefited have been corrected. He added that the methodology used to calculate acres benefited has not been rigorously consistent over the EMP's history and across districts.

EMP Management

Hubbell observed that authorization of NESP, and Congressional restrictions on how EMP funds are spent in FY 08, raise obvious questions about future management of the EMP. Hubbell said MVD's clear guidance is to plan for the EMP as a fully functioning program going forward. The districts are not assuming that the FY 08 restrictions will necessarily be extended beyond this year. So, for example, MVR will be working this year to ready the Fox Island and Rice Lake projects for construction.

Public Involvement

Hubbell reported that the Corps has entered into a new agreement with the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque. The EMP will provide \$35,000 through this agreement, under which the Museum and the Corps will develop a traveling display that will focus on ecosystem restoration efforts throughout the UMRS. According to Hubbell, the EMP and other programs will be mentioned, but the emphasis will be on restoration more generally. The traveling display will be appropriate for museums, visitors' centers, and other similar venues, but not for outdoor or other very short-term events.

Hubbell said the itinerary for the display has not been established, but encouraged partners to contact Justine Barati with their recommendations. Gretchen Benjamin said she would like to see the display in Winona when the Dredge Thompson is retired. Barb Naramore suggested that the display be developed in such a way that it could be easily supplemented with more program-specific information.

Don Hultman reported that groups working through the National Refuge Friends will be visiting Washington, D.C. in the near future. Hultman said he would make certain that the UMRS refuge groups have access to the summary sheets Hubbell provided earlier. Hultman also noted that Fish and Wildlife Service Director Hall will meet this August in La Crosse with assistant directors and eight regional directors. Hultman said Region 3 staff are looking at options for getting these leaders out on the Upper Mississippi while they are in the area.

Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects

FY 08 Work Plan

Don Powell reported that MVP will devote approximately 75 percent of its FY 08 allocation to construction. Planning efforts will continue on Capoli Slough and Harpers Slough, but have been deferred on three other projects that the district had previously intended to initiate. Design efforts will focus on the Finger/Clear Lake HREP and Pool 8 Islands Phase III Stage 3. With more funding, Powell said Pool 8 Phase III Stage 3 could be ready to advertise this year. MVP's FY 08 construction efforts will focus on Pool 8 Islands Phase III Stages 2A and 2B. Stage 2A is nearing completion. There is a \$1.9 million option available on Stage 2B this year. The district's channel maintenance program is paying to transport some of the dredged material needed for Pool 8 from a nearby disposal site. Powell said MVP will try to extend the award date of remaining Stage 2B options into next year. Spring Lake is almost complete, according to Powell. MVP will supply trees to agency and citizen volunteers to plant. Top soil placement remains to be done at Finger/Clear Lake. Given funding constraints, Powell said MVP will conduct minimal performance evaluation and baseline monitoring work in FY 08. The district will transfer funds to the Service for project planning and review, consistent with its typical practice.

Janet Sternburg asked whether the Corps goes back to address performance issues or negative effects when they are noted in project evaluation reports (PERs). Powell said the Corps can and has done this, citing the Finger/Clear Lake HREP as an example. He explained that the original Finger Lakes project was completed in 1996. Subsequently, Clear Lake, one of the five Finger Lakes, was found not to be functioning well due to shallow depths. Under the current project, the Corps is going back and dredging Clear Lake to address this problem. Marv Hubbell cited Mud Lake as another example of going back to address an issue. In the case of Mud Lake, a member of the design team identified a problem with too much flow, and that issue was successfully addressed. Hubbell explained that this was not part of the formal project evaluation process in this instance. But he emphasized that the intervention was important to the ultimate success of the project.

Brian Markert said MVS will also direct most of its FY 08 allocation to construction. Specifically, the next increment of the Batchtown project cannot be sub-divided. Therefore, in order to comply with Congressional requirements to fully fund contracts upon award, the majority of the district's HREP funds will be directed to this project in FY 08. Minimal planning efforts will proceed on Pool 25/26 and Ted Shanks, with planning being deferred on Wilkinson Island. Design efforts will also be significantly curtailed due to funding constraints. Markert observed that this could cause future problems in the project development pipeline, perhaps resulting in a shortage of projects ready for construction. In addition to Batchtown, MVS's FY 08 construction program includes funds to address ongoing problems with the Swan Lake project.

In response to questions from Sternburg, Markert explained that delays in the Ted Shanks project are due to funding constraints, not the restrictive committee report language. The Ted Shanks project was far enough along in planning so as to qualify as an "ongoing design" effort. With the funding-related delays, Markert now estimates that the DPR for Ted Shanks should be completed in FY 10. He also noted that steel and rock costs have increased significantly, raising costs on projects that require large quantities of these materials.

Hubbell reported that Fox Island is a top planning priority for MVR in FY 08. The district would like to get the DPR to MVD within one month, and complete plans and specs this fiscal year. This would set the stage for construction on Fox Island in FY 09. Lake Odessa is MVR's construction priority this year. MVR has exercised its Stage IIA option on Lake Odessa. The decision on whether to exercise the Stage IIB option will depend on the cost estimate. MVR expects to complete the project cooperation

agreement (PCA) for Rice Lake this fiscal year and begin work on plans and specs. This would set the project up for construction in FY 10. Hubbell also noted that both MVR and MVP may need to help MVS with a projected \$200,000 deficit in its FY 08 HREP program. In response to a question from Bernie Schonhoff, Hubbell said planning on Huron Island will be reduced this year to about \$60,000 to support modeling and LiDAR verification. There will not be any planning work on the Beaver Island project.

HREP Bioresponse Monitoring Report

Hubbell reported that, in response to EMP-CC members' requests, Charlene Carmack had worked with other Corps staff to develop an overview of HREP bioresponse monitoring to-date. Hubbell observed that the three districts' approaches have varied substantially in terms of the number of projects monitored and the intensity of that monitoring. Explaining that Carmack looked only at direct monitoring of organisms and mostly at work done or funded by the Corps, Hubbell summarized the districts' efforts as follows:

- 8 of 23 HREPs in MVR have had some bioresponse monitoring, with fisheries surveys on 6 of those projects, vegetation surveys on 5, and wildlife surveys on 3;
- 2 of 23 HREPs in MVS have had some bioresponse monitoring, with vegetation surveys on both projects and fisheries and wildlife surveys on one of the projects; and
- 7 of 31 HREPs in MVP have had some bioresponse monitoring, with fisheries surveys on all 7 projects and vegetation surveys on 6 of the 7 projects.

Hubbell summarized some of the insights gained, including findings regarding the relative success of various approaches to revegetation; overall fisheries, vegetation, and wildlife response; and post-project changes in human use patterns. He noted that MVS has done bioresponse monitoring on fewer projects, but that its monitoring was relatively intensive. Markert clarified that MVS did both fisheries and waterfowl monitoring on Swan Lake.

Hubbell asked whether this report on past bioresponse monitoring was responsive to the EMP-CC members' request. Sternburg expressed her appreciation for Carmack's efforts and asked how partners can access the bioresponse data and reports. Hubbell said the Corps would work to ensure that bioresponse, as well as chemical and physical, monitoring results are available to EMP partners. Barb Naramore suggested that making project monitoring reports available as part of the HREP database would be quite helpful. Hubbell explained that some of the results are developed into formal reports, while others are captured more informally in things like site visit reports. Depending on how the information is captured, it may reside in different places. Gretchen Benjamin emphasized the need to ensure long-term data accessibility. In answer to a question from Walt Popp, Powell said physical and chemical response data may be available prior to release of the evaluation report. Powell suggested that Popp contact Dan Wilcox for such advance access to monitoring data on MVP projects.

Hubbell strongly encouraged the states and Fish and Wildlife Service to provide the appropriate district HREP coordinator with the results of any project monitoring that they conduct. He observed that non-Corps staff do a fair amount of such monitoring outside of the formal post-project evaluation plan, but that the results are often not incorporated into project evaluations.

In response to a question from Sternburg, Hubbell said specific projects have been selected for bioresponse monitoring for a variety of reasons in the past. For example, he said the Pool 11 Islands HREP was selected because its design lent itself to exploring the optimal spacing between patches of overwintering habitat for fish. With Lake Chautauqua, the Corps wanted to explore issues of primary productivity, and the Banner Marsh project was a chance to look at wet prairie habitat. Powell said MVP has tried to assess bioresponse to each of its major project types. For instance, bioresponse

monitoring at Finger Lakes provided insight regarding how much water is needed when introducing flow in backwater areas. Markert said that the Swan Lake project incorporated many different features, some of which MVS was employing for the first time; so the district chose to evaluate Swan Lake quite thoroughly.

Barry Johnson asked whether the EMP has ever developed a project with the intent of answering a specific question. Hubbell said that, by and large, the EMP has not used this approach. However, he noted that the Pool 12 project is designed to answer questions about the physical relationship of features and their outcomes. Hubbell said this is the first time an HREP has been designed to test a hypothesis.

HREP Showcase

Markert presented an HREP showcase highlighting the Swan Lake project at the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. The area is jointly managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Illinois DNR. According to Markert, the Swan Lake planning report was completed in the early 1990s, with construction in the mid-90s. Some of the project elements were, at the time, new or untested concepts. This was the first time that the EMP partnered with NRCS and local landowners to use upland sediment control measures to reduce sediment delivery to the project area. A variety of innovative construction methods were also employed, including the use of recycled sheet pile to construct fish passage features.

Overall, Markert described the project as a success. Among the significant indicators of success, water quality has improved; wind fetch, wave formation, and turbidity have been reduced; aquatic plant growth has increased; and waterfowl response has been strong. However, operationally, the function of the pump on the lower management unit has presented some challenges. Specifically, managers can't de-water the unit sufficiently to effectively consolidate sediments. Efforts are underway to address this problem. In addition, since construction, Swan Lake has not been achieving its wind fetch reduction goal on the lower management unit. Last year, as part of the pilot effort to enhance the use of LTRMP data and analysis in the HREP program, MVS and UMESC staff did some modeling on this problem. Other challenges at Swan Lake include movement of accumulated sediments, loss of deep water habitat, and additional sources of upland sediment.

According to Markert, next steps with the Swan Lake project include developing modifications to project features and operations to better meet project objectives. USACE and its project partners will then monitor and evaluate the results of those efforts.

Long Term Resource Monitoring Program

Key Findings/Products

Linda Leake reported that FY 08 first quarter highlights for the LTRMP include three project completion reports and one manuscript, addressing the following topics:

1. Importance of the UMR forest corridor to neotropical migrants (completion report)
2. Development of a demonstration floodplain forest restoration database for the UMRS (completion report)
3. Evaluation of Hydrolab self-cleaning turbidity sensor (completion report)
4. Reduced condition factor of two native fish species coincident with the invasion of Asian carp in the Illinois River (manuscript)

FY 08 Proposed Scope of Work

Leake said the minimum sustainable program (MSP) scope for FY 08 has been developed. It includes monitoring the three core components (i.e., fish, water quality, and aquatic vegetation), analysis and reporting, statistical evaluation, data management, GIS support, and bathymetry support. The milestone spreadsheet contained in the meeting packet includes anticipated product delivery dates for the MSP work.

Leake reported that, of the 15 technical Additional Program Element (APE) proposals for FY 08, six have been selected for funding. According to Leake, the selected projects all address one of the five focal questions and were ranked high or medium-high by USACE, USGS, and the A-Team. The funded APEs include:

1. developing an empirical framework for reconstructing and modeling UMRS floodplain disturbance histories;
2. setting quantitative fish management targets for LTRMP monitoring;
3. developing survey methods to map mussel assemblages in the UMRS;
4. analysis of aquatic vegetation sampling data in Pools 6, 9, 18, and 19;
5. experimental and comparative approaches to determine factors supporting or limiting submersed aquatic vegetation in the Illinois River and its backwaters; and
6. hydrologic connectivity between off channel areas and the main channel.

Leake observed that the later in the fiscal year APE funds are awarded, the harder it is for investigators to complete their work in the same fiscal year. She said the flexibility to carry funding forward into FY 09 for completion will help ensure that the investigators have sufficient time, given the late decisions on the FY 08 APE projects. Leake also emphasized the importance of the investigators meeting the schedules to which they agree. Noting that product delays are problematic for the entire LTRMP, Leake said UMESC is prepared to assist investigators where possible in meeting their deadlines.

Leake reported that the Corps and USGS are recommending funding for the following administrative APEs in FY 08:

- basic field station equipment refreshment (\$60,000 out of \$130,000 in identified needs),
- completing the LTRMP Strategic Planning effort,
- support for data visualization tools,
- an annual meeting for field station personnel (planned for June in Muscatine),
- publications, and
- continuing the LTRMP/HREP integration effort.

Marv Hubbell noted that, when the distinction was made last year between technical and administrative APEs, it was agreed that the Corps and USGS would coordinate directly with the EMP-CC regarding administrative APEs, rather than through the A-Team. He then went on to explain that the Corps and USGS have not included the restored monitoring project as part of their recommended package of administrative APEs for FY 08, electing instead to present three possible options for the EMP-CC partners' consideration. Those options are as follows:

1. one or more medium-ranked technical APEs,
2. additional field station equipment refreshment, or
3. restored water quality and fisheries monitoring.

According to Hubbell, the restored monitoring would require approximately \$74,000, and that is roughly how much is available after funding the recommended package of other administrative APEs.

Barry Johnson explained that the four medium-ranked APEs available for consideration would each individually cost less than \$74,000. He briefly summarized each of those project proposals:

1. continued evaluation of emergent vegetation response to water level management on Pools 5 and 8 through the collection and interpretation of aerial photos (\$40.9k)
2. matching indicators to management objectives using statistical criteria (\$37.5k)
3. conceptual modeling of river ecosystem structures, functions, and services influenced by floodplain connectivity (\$49.5k)
4. statistical and geospatial analyses of mussel communities on the UMR (\$57.7k)

With regard to the equipment refreshment option, Leake explained that \$60,000 in mission-critical items would be funded under the administrative APE package being recommended by the Corps and USGS. The remaining \$70,000 presented as an alternative to the restored monitoring or the technical APEs consists of additional needs identified by the field stations, but not characterized as critical. Leake also explained that USGS did not make any effort to review or equalize the equipment needs identified by the field stations.

Martin Konrad asked for clarification regarding the option to add one or more medium-ranked technical APEs, noting that any two of them would exceed the \$74,000 said to be available. Hubbell said a decision to fund two additional projects would mean some offsets would have to be identified elsewhere in the LTRMP budget, such as the meeting for field station personnel. Leake suggested another option would be to prioritize a first and second choice among the medium-ranked APEs, deferring final approval on the second project until the LTRMP's overall funding picture firms up. If sufficient funds are not available to support the second project, than whatever funds are available could be put toward additional items on the equipment refreshment list.

Responding to the options presented by the Corps and USGS, the other EMP-CC members expressed the following priorities and perspectives:

- Wisconsin — top priority is restored monitoring; 2nd choice is the water level management and indicators APEs
- Minnesota — top priority is restored monitoring; 2nd choice is the water level management and floodplain connectivity modeling APEs
- Iowa — top priority is restored monitoring; 2nd choice is the water level management and indicators APEs; understands that March 31 is now the deadline for the pending FY 07 restored monitoring report and believes this same timeline should be used in FY 08
- Illinois — top priority is restored monitoring; 2nd choice is additional equipment refreshment
- Missouri — top priority is restored monitoring; 2nd choice is floodplain connectivity modeling APE and additional equipment refreshment; emphasizes the important of selecting a realistic deadline for the restored monitoring report
- USFWS — top priority is the mussel communities APE and additional equipment refreshment; Service has been seeking additional mussel information for some time; this is particularly critical now that drawdowns are becoming almost routine; concerned with the precedent of funding an ongoing project when products are not being delivered
- USEPA — defers to states and USFWS, but thinks equipment refreshment is important to the LTRMP's viability and that the restored monitoring project has merit

Leake said all investigators have been cautioned that late products will affect their eligibility for new work. She stressed the need for all project proposals to include realistic timelines. Walt Popp said the states were remiss in agreeing to a December 31 deadline for the restored monitoring report, observing that the fisheries data QA/QC is not even completed until December or January. Gretchen Benjamin asked about the possibility of an interim progress report. Leake said this was explored, but the investigators concluded there was not sufficient information available to do anything meaningful. She emphasized that, when unforeseen circumstances force the delay of a product, the investigator needs to work with UMESC managers and the Corps to agree upon a revised schedule.

Hubbell said he found the preceding discussion to be very helpful and healthy. Benjamin expressed appreciation for the advance materials, saying they provided her with the information she needed to make the decision being asked of her. Hubbell said he understood the perspectives offered by the states and Service, not just concerning relative priorities but also regarding the issue of product delays and the importance of timely information.

LiDAR and Bathymetry

Hubbell announced that Hank DeHaan has received a promotion and will now be serving as MVR's program manager for the Illinois River Section 519 program, as well as the environmental continuing authorities programs in the district. Hubbell said MVR will name a temporary LTRMP manager, and then fill the position permanently in a few months.

DeHaan reported that no new LiDAR or bathymetry data collection is being initiated under EMP in FY 08, due to fiscal constraints. However, the cooperative effort between the Corps and Iowa to produce a LiDAR coverage for Pools 8-24 will continue. In addition, Corps and USGS staff are developing a strategic plan for LiDAR and bathymetry that will include a current status map, identified priorities, and potential acquisition plans. As an example of the issues to be addressed, DeHaan noted that some areas of the river are near to having a complete coverage, raising questions about whether these areas should be finished before additional data collection is done elsewhere. He said the strategic plan should be ready to present at the EMP-CC's May meeting.

DeHaan further explained that the ongoing cooperative effort between the Corps and Iowa will produce a bluff-to-bluff LiDAR coverage at a 6" resolution for Pools 8-24. This same methodology could be applied to the rest of the system for approximately \$700,000, but only for a limited time, after which the estimated costs would increase. Efforts to obtain remaining imagery and process the coverage for Pools 8-24 will continue in FY 08, using funds made available under the FY 07 contract. DeHaan also reported that USGS will be looking at the optimal ways to serve the LiDAR data.

Status and Trends Report

Johnson reported that he is in the process of addressing comments from the USGS editorial staff on the Status and Trends Report. He estimated that this process should be completed within the next couple of weeks, after which the report will go to the publisher. The final Status and Trends Report should be available in April or May. Johnson also distributed copies of the draft report, explaining that this version reflects responses to stakeholder comments, but not to the editors' comments. He also said a document describing how USGS responded to all of the stakeholder comment is available upon request.

Information Access

Leake recalled that, at its November 2007 meeting, the EMP-CC had a fairly extensive discussion concerning the need to balance timely information access with publication in peer-reviewed journals.

She noted that journal publication is by far the lengthiest process. USGS's own internal review process for its publications is much shorter, but still requires several weeks, under the best of circumstances. She described USGS's internal process, which applies to all documents circulated to the public, as follows:

- Author submission
- Supervisor approval (1-2 weeks)
- Peer review (3 weeks)
- Back to author (1-2 weeks)
- Supervisor ensures comments were addressed (1-2 weeks)
- Editorial review (1-2 weeks) (not required for some publications, such as completion reports)
- Science Center approval (1-2 weeks)
- Bureau approval (1-2 weeks)
- USGS publishing network

Leake said USGS managers are well-aware of the need to ensure timely access to information while preserving their staff's ability to publish in journals, an essential part of their professional advancement. She identified the following three options for accelerating access to LTRMP findings:

1. Increased use of presentations, such as the A-Team has been requesting at its meetings of late
2. Expanded distribution of project completion reports — in order to do this, the released report would be a one page summary, similar to an expanded abstract; no manuscript would be attached; USGS would submit these reports to USACE, which would then be responsible for forwarding them to the program partnership; more internal review steps would be required if USGS were to distribute the completion reports directly to the full partnership
3. More use of open-file reports prior to manuscript publication — these are citable, published reports; they would be shorter than the manuscript and would need to have a different title, but might be a good option when the completion report's expanded abstract approach does not provide sufficient detail

Leake said USGS will survey program partners regarding their preferences for receiving information and get back to the EMP-CC with its findings and recommendations.

Leake recalled that, at the November EMP-CC meeting, Gretchen Benjamin had suggested creating some kind of centralized documentation of the questions that have been asked under the LTRMP and the resulting answers. As a first step in exploring this possibility, Leake said she would like to make certain that people understand how they can currently access existing LTRMP products. She provided the following summary:

- LTRMP Reports (includes program, reprint, special, & technical reports)—these number 300 and are all available in the UMESC library; all are also listed online, with reports from 2000 forward available online as PDFs
- Project Status Reports — these number 50 and are all available online
- USGS Fact Sheets/Open-File Reports — these number 4 and are all available online
- Web Annual Component Updates/Reports — these number 16 and are all available online
- Manuscripts — these number 80 and are all listed online; reprints should be requested of the author

Documents on UMESC's web site are searchable.

Leake said it would be possible to tease out questions and answers from the LTRMP's more than 400 publications, in the form of a bibliography or software application. But she cautioned that this would be a considerable undertaking and said USGS needs more specificity regarding what people want before it could develop a meaningful scope and cost estimate. Benjamin said the impetus for her suggestion in November was concern that we capture what we've learned more effectively before institutional memory erodes through retirements. Without such a centralized system, Benjamin said she is concerned that LTRMP will expend resources unnecessarily re-asking questions.

Leake observed that it could be quite costly to go back in time to create such an inventory. Documenting questions asked and insights gained moving forward would be a simpler task, according to Leake. Benjamin acknowledged this and suggested that the first step might be to create a system for ongoing and future work, deferring a decision about whether to go back in time. Barb Naramore said one significant challenge would be to ensure sufficient consistency among the database's entries that they can be searched effectively on something other than very broad terms. This would be particularly challenging over time and across multiple investigators, she observed. DeHaan noted that NESP's decision support system includes a knowledge component, using a keyword approach. He encouraged partners to keep the EMP and NESP efforts aligned in this area.

Johnson cautioned that such a database would not give users a systemic perspective on the questions asked and insights gained. That perspective, he explained, requires someone to synthesize the information. Leake reported that UMESC has a new librarian on staff who is very conversant with information access issues and available software tools. Leake said this person could explore options for developing a searchable database of LTRMP research questions and findings.

A-Team Report

Sternberg distributed a written A-Team report, summarizing the Team's January conference call. She expressed the A-Team's appreciation to USGS and USACE for their efforts to improve timely access to LTRMP information. She said the A-Team is also pleased with the renewed emphasis on timely product completion.

Strategic Planning Update

Hubbell reported that the LTRMP Strategic Planning Team held its fourth meeting on December 17-19. At this meeting, the team worked further on the draft outcomes (i.e., goals) and outputs (i.e., specific products that support the goals), focusing primarily on refining their scope and articulating their interrelationships. Hubbell said the December meeting also included considerable discussion of how these outcomes and outputs will further LTRMP's ultimate mission of informing decision makers and river managers. Questions of relative priority among the outcomes and outputs, and how that relates to the allocation of inputs (i.e., resources needed to support the desired outcomes and outputs), remain to be addressed.

Hubbell encouraged program partners and stakeholders to convey any comments or concerns to their point of contact on the Planning Team. He said the team has worked hard to maintain an open process and is genuinely interested in receiving input at any time. The Planning Team is scheduled to meet again in March, after which it will issue a review draft of the plan for stakeholder comment. The team will reflect on those comments at its July meeting, with the intent of providing a revised plan for the EMP-CC's consideration at its August meeting.

EMP/NESP Integration Issues

Chuck Spitzack emphasized the need to implement NESP and EMP as separate programs, but in a coordinated fashion, unless and until the Corps is directed to do otherwise. He described the Corps' approach to developing the required NESP implementation reports to Congress, the first of which is due in June 2009. Spitzack said the NESP leadership team will be creating a statement of work on how to develop the report. Various implementation teams, such as the four reach planning teams, system planning team, and Science Panel, will then have responsibility for developing different parts of the report. The June 2009 report will address baselines, milestones, goals, and priorities for the NESP ecosystem restoration projects.

Regarding institutional arrangements (IA), Spitzack characterized the 2005 partner workshops as having been extremely productive. He said the input from those workshops provides an important base upon which the Corps can build as it renews its consideration of IA issues now that NESP has been authorized. Spitzack explained that Corps staff have been reviewing the NESP authority's Advisory Panel requirements as well as previous IA proposals and comments on those ideas. He said the Corps wants to avoid an IA structure that would be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), and observed that the UMRBA's proposal to add NGO representation to a combined EMP-CC and NECC would appear to trigger FACA. Spitzack invited further partner comment and suggestions.

Martin Konrad said the state EMP-CC representatives, as well as the UMRBA members, are concerned that a clear partnership consensus on future institutional arrangements has not emerged, despite extensive discussions in the past. While stressing that it is not the states' intent to leave anyone out, Konrad said the previous large group discussions have simply been too wide-ranging and unfocused to be effective. As an alternative approach, Konrad said the state EMP-CC members are proposing a more focused effort, under which a small work group, selected to include a range of relevant perspectives, would be charged with discussing IA needs and options. That group would then report back with a package of recommendations for the full partnership's consideration in May. Konrad said he hoped that Rebecca Soileau would be able to coordinate and facilitate this small group.

Konrad identified the following proposed membership for the small IA group:

- Terry Smith (MVD)
- Chuck Spitzack (NESP Manager)
- Ken Barr (NECC Chair)
- Marv Hubbell (EMP Manager)
- Rick Nelson (FWS, NECC)
- Linda Leake (USGS, LTRMP)
- Catherine McCalvin (TNC)
- Paul Rhode (WCI, ECC)
- Gretchen Benjamin (EMP-CC, NECC, district groups)
- Janet Sternberg (EMP-CC, A-Team, NECC, district groups)
- Barb Naramore (UMRBA)

Gretchen Benjamin emphasized that the proposed small group would simply be coming up with a working draft to present to the broader partnership. She said she views this as a way of getting this important IA discussion moving again. Jon Duyvejonck expressed concern that the work of the old IA project delivery team (PDT) would be set aside. Konrad said that is not the intent. Rather, the states believe that the IA PDT is too large and its previous discussions too unfocused. Konrad expressed optimism that a smaller, more nimble group could work through the current issues and come back to the full partnership with a viable proposal. Benjamin said the new IA group would certainly consider the

IA PDT's previous work. But she also emphasized that the larger group had not reached a consensus when its efforts were put on hold back in 2005. Specifically, Benjamin noted that there was a draft on which many parties, including the UMRBA, commented extensively. To-date, the Corps has not responded to those comments.

Soileau said she is encouraged by the individuals apparently willing to work on the states' proposed group. She acknowledged the past challenges in working with a 40-person IA PDT. Soileau said she is currently working on some products, including a cross-walk of the various IA proposals that have been put forward, that would likely be quite helpful to the small group in its work.

In response to a question from Konrad, those individuals suggested for the small group who were present affirmed their willingness to serve on the group. Rick Nelson stressed the need to identify the problem we are trying to solve in proposing changes to our existing IA. Don Hultman said the Service supports the states' recommendation for a small group and recommended suspending the larger IA PDT while the small group works. Ken Barr observed that the small group may want to come back to the partnership with a suite of options rather than a single recommendation. Dan McGuinness said Audubon supports having McCalvin and Rhode represent NGO perspectives on the small group. Al Fenedick said he would like to participate in the small group on behalf of USEPA.

Benjamin moved and Fenedick seconded a motion expressing the EMP-CC's support for the approach outlined by Konrad, with the goal of having the small group report back to the NECC/ECC, EMP-CC, and UMRBA in May with its IA recommendations. The motion carried unanimously. The EMP-CC members asked Konrad to present the proposal to the NECC tomorrow for that group's consideration.

Other Business

Ken Barr recommended that the EMP-CC and NECC consider meeting jointly on the afternoon of May 21, 2008.

Barb Naramore announced that the upcoming quarterly meetings are schedule as follows:

- **May 2008 — Twin Cities**
 - UMRBA — May 20
 - NECC/ECC — May 21
 - **Joint NECC/ECC and EMP-CC — afternoon of May 21** (if needed)
 - **EMP-CC — May 22**

- **August 2008 — La Crosse**
 - UMRBA — August 5
 - **EMP-CC — August 6**
 - **Joint EMP-CC and NECC/ECC — afternoon of August 6** (if needed)
 - NECC/ECC — August 7

- **November 2008 — Quad Cities**
 - UMRBA — November 18
 - NECC/ECC — November 19
 - **Joint NECC/ECC and EMP-CC — afternoon of November 19** (if needed)
 - **EMP-CC — November 20**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

**EMP-CC Attendance List
February 21, 2008**

EMP-CC Members

Terry Smith	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Don Hultman	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Linda Leake	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
Walt Popp	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Janet Sternburg	Missouri Department of Conservation
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Others in Attendance

Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Rebecca Soileau	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jeff DeZellar	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Chuck Spitzack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marvin Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Hank DeHaan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Ken Barr	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Brian Johnson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Kip Runyon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Rick Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO
Scott Yess	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Bernie Schonhoff	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Dan McGuinness	Audubon
Catherine McCalvin	The Nature Conservancy
Heather Schoonover	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Mark Tompkins	CH2M Hill
Gary Loss	CDM
Tom Boland	MACTEC
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association