Minutes of the
Upper Mississippi River System
Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee

February 25, 2010
Quarterly Meeting

Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel
St. Louis, Missouri

Ken Barr of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. on February 25, 2010. A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

Minutes from the November 18, 2009 Meeting

The draft minutes of the November 18, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

Program Management

Scott Whitney reported that, with an FY 10 appropriation of $6.276 million, NESP continues planning and design on several ecosystem restoration and small- and large-scale navigation projects, in preparation for a possible construction start in FY 11. He said NESP was not included in the President's FY 11 budget request, and thus NESP will again be reliant on a Congressional add. Whitney presented five FY 11 implementation scenarios, developed by District staff, for the following funding levels: $10 million in General Investigation (GI) funds; and $10 million, $15 million, $20 million, and $97.978 million (full funding) in Construction General (CG) funds. Whitney said NESP staff are crafting a brochure, *Blueprint for Action*, that describes NESP's authorization and funding needs. The brochure highlights NESP's readiness to construct, outlines a general implementation schedule, and identifies specific FY 11 priorities under a $20 million CG funding scenario. He said the Corps will provide copies to program partners. Whitney reported that Corps staff are also developing a more detailed handout.

Janet Sternburg asked why Scheniman Chute and Buffalo Islands are only included in the full funding scenario. Brian Johnson explained that MVS can only initiate planning on one side channel project at the lower funding levels. He said Herculaneum is the district's top priority to implement in FY 11, and thus it is identified as a new start before Scheniman Chute and Buffalo Islands. Sternburg said Herculaneum is a good project. However, it is not a side channel restoration project, which is a top priority for the Missouri DoC.

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Whitney said the LTRMP will likely remain under the EMP until NESP receives sufficient construction funding to support transition. In response to a question from Jon Duyvejonck, Whitney confirmed that $20 million in NESP funding would not be sufficient to support transition. The CG implementation scenarios will be shared with Congress to demonstrate NESP's FY 11 construction capabilities. Gary Meden explained that it is important to share this full CG capability information with Congress, lest members assume that a lower, more likely, funding scenario represents the program's full capability.

Whitney said Corps staff has modeled direct and indirect employment effects under each implementation scenario. In response to a question from Janet Sternburg, Ken Barr said the job creation estimates include public and private sector jobs. Meden noted that a majority of the jobs created will be in the private sector.

Whitney noted that the Corps can only initiate some work under higher funding levels. As an example, he said the L&D 22 guidewall cannot be implemented in small increments. To manage impacts to navigation, the guidewall construction must be concentrated in time.

Floodplain Restoration

Draft UMR Systemic Forest Management Plan

Jeff DeZellar said post-settlement modifications to the UMRS have significantly altered the Mississippi River and its floodplain, including ecological processes for plant growth and survival. The UMR Systemic Forest Management Plan's purpose is to "provide a guide for the sustainable management of UMRS forests, including opportunities for their restoration, to ensure that the UMRS maintains its recognition as a nationally treasured ecological resource." The Plan will establish goals and objectives; provide guidance for forest restoration activities; establish a foundation to improve and enhance stakeholder coordination; develop a better understanding of the resource; identify problems, opportunities, and data needs; and develop recommendations to ensure long-term sustainability. DeZellar described the following priority actions, as outlined in the Plan:

- develop a system-wide hydrogeomorphic model (HGM),
- collect data to capture extensive baseline vegetation inventories and fine-scale elevation contours,
- identify and prioritize forest restoration projects, and
- coordinate systemic data management.

DeZellar reported that the Corps has finalized a UMRS HGM feasibility report, and implemented several site-specific HGM analyses and workshops. An HGM is currently underway for Pools 4 to 10, and will be initiated for Pools 24 to 26 this year. DeZellar said the Corps plans to finalize a project implementation report (PIR) for the Reno Bottoms reforestation project in FY 10. Reno Bottoms is located in Upper Pool 9, and will include eradication and control of reed canary grass, increased topographic diversity, and forest establishment.

DeZellar said the draft UMR Systemic Forest Management Plan can be found at ftp://ftp.usace.army.mil/pub/mvp/UMR%20Forest%20Plan/. The Corps is currently revising the draft Plan to reflect partner input. A final draft will be provided to NECC for discussion at its May 19, 2010 meeting. The Corps anticipates finalizing the Plan by September 2010.

Floodplain Restoration System Team Update

Todd Strole summarized the Floodplain Restoration System Team's (FRST's) October 19, 2009 and January 25, 2010 conference calls. Discussion topics included the NRCS's Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI), the Root River restoration project, the Corps' Decision Support System (DSS), and strategies for future floodplain restoration. Strole said the FRST has generated considerable interest among partners. Approximately 60 members are on the FRST distribution list, and an average of 40 individuals participated on the last two conference calls. Strole said the Team's possible future activities include identifying opportunities for floodplain restoration and continued communication of program issues and strategies. He listed the Team's floodplain restoration strategies, as including:

- Build upon existing easements
- Integrate flood storage easements into flood protection strategies

- Participate in markets for various ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration, nutrient processing, and flood storage
- Integrate biomass crops into reconnected floodplain
- Pre-plan to incorporate floodplain restoration elements into emergency P.L. 84-99 repairs

In response to a question from Chuck Theiling, Strole said integrating floodplain restoration into P.L. 84-99 would likely require Congressional action.

Strole said TNC/USACE Interpersonnel Agreement (IPA), under which he is working, will conclude in December 2010. At that time, he wants to hand over the FRST to the Corps with viable future goals and objectives for the Team. Strole said possibilities include continuing to identify areas for potential floodplain restoration, forming sub-groups to address particular issues or portions of the River, or simply maintaining the distribution list as a communication forum. He asked partners to contact him (tstrole@tnc.org) with input regarding FRST's future goals and functions. Strole acknowledged the need for FRST to coordinate with the NESP Forest Team.

Jon Duyvejonck suggested that FRST consider utilizing the USFWS's Private Lands Program to implement small floodplain restoration projects. In response to a suggestion from Janet Sternburg, Ken Barr and Strole said they will invite the Corps regulatory staff who are working on mitigation to participate on FRST. In response to a question from Karen Hagerty, Strole said the FRST has not yet identified floodplain restoration opportunities on the Illinois River reach. Chuck Theiling suggested that the FRST also invite landowners to participate on the Team. Brian Johnson suggested that the Team identify policy issues, as well as possible solutions, related to floodplain restoration.

Root River Restoration Project

DeZellar reported that, in December 2009, Corps HQ approved a cost-share agreement with the Minnesota DNR for the Root River floodplain restoration project. He said this is NESP's first approved cost-share agreement. DeZellar said it took almost three years to negotiate the cost-share agreement, and expressed optimism that this agreement can serve as a template for future projects. The Corps and Minnesota DNR are drafting a project management plan (PMP) that will scope the feasibility report and the path forward to construction.

Tim Schlagenhaft reported that floodplain restoration is a top priority for Minnesota. He expressed appreciation to those who have helped develop and finalize the cost-share agreement. Schlagenhaft said the 500-year floodplain will define the project area. He said hydraulic modeling will be used to examine the distribution of flows over a range of events. This will aid in the feasibility study identifying options for floodplain restoration. Schlagenhaft noted that the modeling efforts will not likely extend to sediment or hydrogeomorphic modeling due to cost constraints. Beyond the current project's scope, other options for enhancing the Root River might include levee removal and channel restoration, but those would need to be part of a separate effort. The current project will focus on acquisition opportunities. Schlagenhaft said MN DNR has approximately $1 million of Legacy funding available this year to acquire four parcels.

Janet Sternburg asked if Minnesota has been identifying willing sellers and areas for possible restoration opportunities. Schlagenhaft said frequent flooding has lead to almost routine levee breaches, and many times these private levees will go unrepaired, creating opportunities for floodplain restoration. Frequent flooding is also motivating farmers to sell their land. He said the UMR Systemic Forest Plan could assist in identifying the best-value projects. Sternburg asked if Minnesota DNR would consider providing incentives for farmers to grow flood-tolerant crops. Schlagenhaft said Minnesota DNR is willing to entertain innovative options to enhance floodplain functions.

DeZellar mentioned that the Corps' regional HGM initiative may be able to cover Root River. In response to a question from Scott Yess, Schlagenhaft said private lands constitute about 50 percent of the Root River floodplain. Ken Barr emphasized that cost shared floodplain restoration will be an important element of NESP and thanked Minnesota, MVP, and MVD for their efforts on this ground breaking project.

Reach Planning

Chuck Theiling reviewed the reach planning process. He said the four reach planning teams (RPTs) are currently selecting priority areas for potential restoration, and briefly summarized the status of each team's efforts. The RPTs will then identify priority projects within these areas for possible planning, and will provide descriptions of these projects in their reach reports. Theiling said that, on February 5, 2010, the Regional Support Team (RST) distributed a draft UMRS Ecosystem Restoration Objectives 2010 planning document. The draft describes the reach planning process, systemic goals and objectives, and project evaluation and adaptive management techniques. It can be found at http://umesc-gisdb03.er.usgs.gov/umr/dss.aspx#, under the documents tab. He explained that Corps staff will integrate the four floodplain reach objectives reports into the current draft system report, and will distribute the revised draft to partners for consideration at the May 19, 2010 EMP-CC/NECC joint session.

In response to a question from Brian Johnson, Ken Barr and Marv Hubbell said reach planning is a program-neutral effort and that both NESP and EMP will need to initiate planning on new projects this fiscal year. Tim Schlagenhaft asked if partners will prioritize the selected projects based on the greatest potential systemic value. Barr said, while the river teams will prioritize projects within their respective floodplain reach, projects should also be considered at a systemic level. Hubbell noted that the EMP's planning framework provides a structure for considering both ecological and administrative factors at the system scale in setting program priorities. He encouraged partners to review that framework.

Theiling suggested that, in future reach planning cycles, EMP-CC and NECC partners employ a structured decision making process to select projects that best address ecosystem objectives. He observed that the decision making process needs to account for relative priorities among objectives, different needs among areas, and whether particular actions are responsive to identified needs. Theiling emphasized that reach planning is simply using data to inform project identification and selection, but that data cannot define the quality of the ecosystem objectives. Mike Jawson agreed, but said the data are essential to measuring ecosystem quality.

Fish Passage

L&D 3 Fish Passage

Jeff DeZellar reported that MVD has approved a fact sheet for the L&D 3 fish passage project, allowing MVP to proceed with project planning under EMP, using reallocated EMP stimulus funds. Once the stimulus funds are expended, the Corps will consult program partners before deciding whether to devote any further EMP funds to planning, design, or construction of the L&D 3 project.

Don Arnosti noted that the winning bid for the L&D 3 navigation safety and embankment project came in $20 million below the Corps' estimate. He asked whether these funds could be used to construct the fish passage. DeZellar and Elizabeth Ivy said the $20 million will likely be needed for mitigation, contract modifications, real estate costs, and emergency reserves for the navigation safety and embankment project.

Jim Fischer recognized that the Corps and its partners were in a difficult situation when they decided to move forward with the L&D 3 fish passage feasibility study under EMP. Fischer said this was the best option, under the circumstances. He expressed appreciation to the Corps for its efforts to resolve issues and initiate project planning.

L&D 22 Fish Passage

Mark Cornish summarized the NECC's January 19, 2010 conference call on fish passage. He reported that Corps staff are currently finalizing a draft L&D 22 fish passage project implementation report (PIR), which has undergone independent technical review (ITR). Project features include a debris boom, stoplogs, a bridge, and a fishway. The project also includes an adaptive management component, and will serve as a learning tool for future fish passage projects.

Cornish said Corps staff hope to complete model certification and an agency technical review (ATR) and independent external peer review (IEPR) of the project design in March, an alternatives formulation briefing (AFB) in April, and public and agency review of the final draft PIR in May and June. [Subsequent to the meeting, Corps staff said the model certification process will extend into April.] Cornish said the total estimated project cost, including monitoring and adaptive management, is $76.9 million. A new Corps requirement that projects with total costs over $40 million include a 40 percent contingency has contributed to the increased project cost. Ken Barr said he thinks the contingency will likely be reduced to 25 percent, the typical contingency for Corps projects, lowering project costs. Cornish also noted that the approximately $18 million estimated for adaptive management will be implemented over several years.

Janet Sternburg said Missouri DoC still supports the L&D 22 fish passage project. She asked if the project could be separated into stages, thereby freeing up funds on an annual basis for other restoration projects. Cornish explained that the project can be divided into two stages: 1) construction of the dewatering coffer dam, debris boom, bridge, and stoplogs and 2) construction of the fish passage structure. Stage one will cost approximately $31.274 million, and stage two will cost approximately $26.519 million. Barr noted that, even if construction is staged, NESP would still need to be funded at about $60 million annually before initiating any work on a project of this magnitude.

Cornish described the ecohydraulic modeling tool that the Corps used to evaluate the L&D 22 fish passage design. He reported that, based on the model's assumptions about fish behavior, the design appears sound. In response to a question from Marv Hubbell, Cornish said the model can estimate the percentage of fish that would use the fish passage. Cornish said this model has not yet been certified, but field biologists have confirmed that the model's predictions correspond well to observed fish behavior. Chuck Theiling asked if the Corps will monitor fish behavior to determine the model's accuracy. Cornish said the Corps will do any studies necessary to validate the model. In response to a question from Barry Johnson, Cornish said the PIR describes the proposed fish passage configuration. Brian Johnson asked if the ecohydraulic model can predict behaviors of various fish species. Cornish explained that the model is based on algorithms, and can be adjusted to reflect any type of fish behavior.

Bernie Hoyer observed that the total cost of the L&D 22 fish passage project is significant, under even the most optimistic funding scenarios. He suggested that the partnership revisit its priorities to determine whether the fish passage funding would be more effective if directed to other projects. Barr acknowledged that L&D 22 fish passage is not feasible under flow funding scenarios. But he stressed that the partner-endorsed feasibility recommendation for a fully funded NESP included four fish passage projects, which are also included in the NESP authorization.

Science Panel

Barry Johnson said the Science Panel is currently revising its draft water level management report to reflect comments submitted by Panel members and NESP's Regional Support Team. The Panel plans to submit a final draft to NESP's program managers in March for review. Shortly thereafter, the final draft will be distributed to NECC for review and consideration at its May 19, 2010 quarterly meeting. NECC members scheduled a web-based meeting for April 9, 2010 to discuss the draft report.

Public Outreach

Kevin Bluhm announced that the *One Mississippi*'s 2010 winter newsletter was well-received. He thanked those who contributed to, and commented on, the newsletter. Bluhm said Corps staff are currently drafting the spring issue. He acknowledged that maintaining the frequency and quality of these newsletters will be challenging. Bluhm asked partners to contact him (kevin.w.bluhm@usace.army.mil) to add any interested stakeholders to the newsletter distribution list.

Implementation Strategies

Chuck Spitzack said, in order for NESP to realize success, it must have strong, effective relationships with its partners; a steady, adequate funding stream; efficient and effective contracting; and a fluid planning process for ecosystem restoration projects. Spitzack described NESP's current, two-phase best value implementation strategy. Part 1 includes small-scale navigation projects, new locks at L&Ds 22 and 25 (as one project) and LaGrange, and moderate funding for ecosystem restoration. Part 2 includes continued switchboat operation, new locks at L&Ds 24, 21, and 20 (as one project) and Peoria, and moderate funding for ecosystem restoration. Parts 1 and 2 are estimated at $2.1 billion each. Spitzack said NESP managers are still directing project delivery teams (PDTs) to plan in terms of the best value implementation scenario, despite the current uncertainty of future funding.

Spitzack reported that, on December 15, 2009, the Inland Waterways Users Board (IWUB) endorsed the Inland Marine Transportation System (IMTS) Capital Investment Strategy Team's recommendations for resolving the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) imbalance and establishing a 20-year capital investment plan for construction and major rehab projects. The Capital Investment Strategy Team includes representatives from both the Corps and the navigation industry. MVD's representative is Steve Jones.

Spitzack said the Team's inland navigation priorities, under the current rate of investment of about $170 million per year, would not include a new start for NESP in at least 20 years. However, at an annual investment of about $380 million, the Team is proposing to initiate new locks at L&D 25 in 2011, LaGrange in 2017, L&D 22 in 2022, and L&D 24 in 2024. Spitzack explained that the Team is not proposing major rehab for LaGrange and L&Ds 24 and 25, since they are being recommended as new construction projects. However, Spitzack said that, if construction of these locks is significantly delayed, they won't receive the repairs necessary to address serious safety issues in a timely manner.

Spitzack highlighted some of the Team's recommendations to resolve the IWTF's imbalance, including:

- Maintain the 50/50 cost share for lock construction and major rehabilitation projects with an estimated total cost of $100 million or greater.
- Shift to 100 percent federal funding for dam construction and major rehabilitation projects costing less than $100 million.
- Increase the fuel tax by 30 to 45 percent.
- Establish a cost-share cap on projects, such that non-federal sponsors would not have to cost share escalated costs past a certain point.

Brad Walker expressed concern that the cost share recommendations would place an inequitable financial share on the public. He asked if the cost share recommendations would have the net effect increasing the federal portion of funding for the navigation construction program from 50 percent to 70 percent, thus increasing the burden on taxpayers. Spitzack said this appears to be a reasonable estimate of the change, based on the IMTS Team's figures. Walker also asked if the Corps has implemented any major rehabilitation projects with costs over $100 million within the last 20 years. Whitney said he does not know of any such projects, at least in the recent past. Don Arnosti observed that a detailed explanation of the Team's recommendations would be very helpful for partners to understand their benefits. Barb Naramore noted that under the WRDA 86 cost share compromise, major rehabilitation was not subject to cost sharing. Rather, rehabilitation projects were funded out of the O&M account at 100 percent federal cost. It was an Executive, not Congressional, action in the early 1990s that shifted larger scale (i.e., "major") rehabilitation projects to the CG account and subjected them to cost sharing. Thus, Naramore observed, the Team's recommendation to exempt rehabilitation projects under $100 million from cost sharing would simply partially reinstate the situation that existed prior to the unilateral Executive action from the early 1990s.

Spitzack said the Team's recommendations also include several project delivery process improvements and would increase the IWUB's involvement throughout project development. The Team estimates that these improvements could result in $585 million to $2.1 billion in savings; avoidance of $2.8 billion in benefits foregone; increased efficiency and reliability of the system; and enhanced environmental, societal, safety, and energy benefits. Spitzack said the Team plans to release a formal report detailing its recommendations this spring. Congressional action would be required to implement the recommended changes. In response to a question from Gretchen Benjamin, Spitzack said the Team has indicated that its formal report will account for the small scale navigation projects authorized under NESP.

Spitzack reported that Corps staff have revised NESP's implementation strategy to align more closely with the IMTS Capital Investment Strategy Team's proposed project schedule. He explained that the revised strategy divides NESP's implementation into the following three phases:

- Phase 1: construction of small-scale navigation projects, comparable progress on ecosystem restoration, and a L&D 22 guidewall, supported by modest appropriations (estimated total cost of $90 million, with annual costs increasing from $15 million in year 1 to $50 million in year 3).
- Phase 2: construction of one lock, continue small-scale navigation, and comparable progress on ecosystem restoration, requiring increased funding for the lock and other projects (estimated total cost of $780 million, with roughly $150,000-$170,000 annual expenditures). [Spitzack noted that the Corps will consult with partners regarding the priority first lock for construction.]
- Phase 3: systemic approach to constructing the remaining locks, continue small-scale navigation, and comparable progress on ecosystem restoration, requiring significantly higher funding levels (estimated total cost of $3.3 billion, with increased annual appropriations ranging from about $102 million to $585 million).

Spitzack said, alternatively, ecosystem restoration projects could be front-loaded, if initial funding is low, to accelerate the ecological benefits. Mike Jawson agreed, noting that that approach might attract more support from environmental and conservation groups. Dan McGuiness expressed support for this approach. In response to a question from McGuiness, Spitzack said NESP's total authorized funding levels are $1.8 billion for the ecosystem restoration component and $2.4 billion for the navigation component. Brad Walker asked if the IMTS Team identified a benefit-cost ratio threshold for capital projects. Spitzack said he anticipates that the Team will address considerations such as that in its formal report.

Jim Fischer asked what assumptions the IMTS Team made about traffic levels in estimating future revenue into the IWTF. Spitzack said traffic estimate assumptions will also likely be included in the Team's formal report. Benjamin said she understands that the Team calculated its recommendation to increase the fuel tax by 30-45 percent based either on last year's or the last five year's traffic rates, which were relatively low by historical standards.

Adaptive Management

Ken Barr reported that, on August 31, 2009, the ASA(CW) issued Implementation Guidance for Section 2039 of WRDA 2007, which requires the inclusion of project monitoring and adaptive management plans in feasibility studies. Barr explained that, for all ecosystem and mitigation projects, the Corps must develop a monitoring plan that addresses monitoring purpose(s), units of measure and how they relate to the project's desired outcomes, intended data application(s), process and timeframe, information management and sharing, and estimated costs. The Guidance also provides specific direction for implementing project monitoring, including developing the monitoring purpose(s) and a conceptual model; defining data needs and collection; identifying monitoring parameters, sampling designs, and triggers for implementing adaptive management; determining analytic needs; estimating costs; and modifying the monitoring and adaptive management plans, as needed. Barr noted that adaptive management plans must include specific cost estimates and various possible management adjustments. Plans with high associated costs or with management adjustments outside of the project proposal would like trigger a project reevaluation. Barr mentioned that, in addition, the ASA(CW) has also issued Implementation Guidance for WRDA 2007 Section 2063(a)'s mitigation provisions, which Corps staff will distribute to partners shortly.

Chuck Theiling asked if the Guidance's requirement to reevaluate projects with high cost adaptive management plans will essentially eliminate high risk ecosystem restoration projects. Barr said that is not the intention, but rather that high risk projects may need to provide further justification. Barr reported that he is participating on USACE's national adaptive management team, which also includes members involved with other major restoration programs across the country. Barr said the team serves as a valuable forum for information exchange, and plans to release a technical guide this summer.

Barry Johnson asked if monitoring plans will address both site-specific and systemic effects. Mark Cornish said the L&D 22 fish passage monitoring plan will examine both fish passage at the dam and overall improvement to fish populations. In response to a question from Johnson, Barr said NESP will attempt to examine systemic impacts of fish passage as multiple projects are completed.

Project Highlight: Barge Fleeting Plan

Project Update

Dorie Bollman overviewed the System Barge Fleeting Plan, which is designed to assist in identifying future fleeting locations that have relatively low environmental effects. Bollman listed the Plan's objectives, as follows:

- identify areas with current fleeting activities and areas of ecological value;
- identify requirements and practices to avoid or minimize environmental impacts of fleeting activities;
- create tools helpful to the navigation industry, government regulators, and land managers;
- engage partners and stakeholders in the Plan's development; and
- facilitate communication and collaboration between partners to promote sustainable fleeting activities.

Bollman said the Plan includes a detailed report of ecosystem, regulatory, and real estate considerations; a compilation and summary of existing fleeting studies and future recommendations; and an atlas of existing fleeting operations and natural resources maps. The maps will be served via GIS, and can be updated as needed. She said the Corps initiated work on the Plan in 2005, and anticipates completing mapping and database efforts this fiscal year and finalizing the draft Plan in FY 11. Bollman said the project team includes representatives from the navigation industry, NGOs, the five states' transportation and natural resource agencies, USFWS, US Coast Guard, Maritime Administration, Agriculture Marketing Service, and NRCS.

Natural Resource Inventory

Jon Duyvejonck said the USFWS, with support from USGS, completed a systemic National Resource Inventory in 2000, building from the 1984 Inventory and with information provided by federal and state partners. The Inventory was initiated to support the Navigation Feasibility Study. Duyvejonck said the Inventory identified about 20 resource types and 7 habitats, with approximately 7,400 entries for the UMR and 1,200 for the Illinois River. The Inventory is currently not available to the public because it contains sensitive resource information, such as specific locations of threatened and endangered species and critical habitat areas.

Duyvejonck explained that the Corps is using the Inventory to highlight resources of concern for the Fleeting Plan. He said partners could also use the Inventory to assist in spill response efforts, permit review, habitat project plans, public outreach, and other various activities. Duyvejonck said a possible next step is to update the database to support habitat project planning.

In response to a question from Don Arnosti, Duyvejonck said the 2000 Natural Resource Inventory covers the entire UMRS. Arnosti asked if the data is accessible to the public. Duyvejonck said the Service and the Corps hope to make the Inventory accessible electronically through the Decision Support System, but need to first determine how the sensitive information would be displayed/protected. Ken Barr emphasized the importance of sharing information regarding sensitive ecological areas with project planners and designers to better protect those areas. Janet Sternburg agreed, and suggested that partners seek advice from federal and state cultural resource/heritage staff on the best ways to share such information. Barb Naramore said UMRBA has worked extensively on the issue of appropriate buffering for such data in its spill response mapping efforts and would be happy to share its experience with those working on the inventory. Sternburg and Jim Fischer also offered to help partners determine how best to share sensitive resource information. Sternburg emphasized that the Inventory should not be a substitute for contacting resource managers with specific questions. Naramore noted that UMRBA's spills maps include extensive reminders to that extent, with embedded contact information for each resource listed.

Partner Reports

Gretchen Benjamin said she will be meeting with Congressional members next week.

Rick Mollahan reported that Illinois is facing a significant budget deficit.

Janet Sternburg reported on leadership changes at Missouri DoC and said the department is reorganizing its fisheries staff. A new Big Rivers Fisheries Specialist position will be filled shortly.

Jim Fischer said Wisconsin DNR still has about 10-30 percent staff vacancies, although some of the federally funded positions will be filled. He anticipates the department will release a final draft permit for the L&D 3 lower embankment project shortly. Fischer said the Wisconsin Assembly failed to

override the Governor's veto of a bill that would have given DNR's citizen board the authority to appoint the Department's secretary. The authority to appoint the DNR secretary will thus remain with the Governor.

Bernie Hoyer reported that Iowa DNR is anticipating a 25 percent reduction in its general revenue appropriations from the state. Cuts will be most severe to programs that rely heavily on this funding source, including parks, forestry, geology, and water monitoring programs. The Iowa DNR is offering retirement incentives in an effort to reduce staff.

Gary Meden said, although a WRDA this year is unlikely, USACE will remain ready should Congress move forward with a bill.

Scott Whitney said the Corps is finalizing its levee repair work under the P.L. 84-99 program following the 2008 floods, with most levees having been restored to their pre-flood level of protection. The Corps' efforts included about 30 projects, with a total estimated cost of approximately $88 million. Whitney said there has been considerable interest in options for reducing future costs, such as elevating pump stations. Lessons learned are being shared with the P.L. 84-99 program.

Elizabeth Ivy announced that Bob Peterson, Deputy Chief of the District Support Team, will be retiring in March.

Jon Duyvejonck reported the sad news that Sam Hamilton, Director of the USFWS, died suddenly last week.

Bob Goodwin announced that David Matsuda was named as the new Deputy Maritime Administrator. Last week, the USDOT awarded $1.5 billion in ARRA-funded grants, including $6 million to construct a public harbor on the Mississippi River in the Tri-City Regional Port District, Illinois.

Administrative Items

The upcoming meetings are as follows:

- **April 9, 2010 — Web-Based Meeting re the Science Panel's Draft Water Level Management Report**
- **May 2010 — St. Paul**
  - UMRBA — May 18
  - **NECC — May 19**
  - **Joint EMP-CC/NECC — afternoon of May 19**
  - EMP-CC — May 20
- **August 10, 2010* — Web-Based Meeting**
- **November 2010 — Quad Cities**
  - UMRBA — November 16
  - **NECC — November 17**
  - **Joint EMP-CC/NECC — afternoon of November 17 (if needed)**
  - EMP-CC — November 18

* The August UMRBA and EMP-CC quarterly meetings will be held in La Crosse on the 3rd and 4th, respectively.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

NECC Attendance List
February 25, 2010

NECC Members

Ken Barr	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Kevin Foerster	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Mike Jawson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Butch Atwood	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Bernie Hoyer	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Tim Schlagenhaft	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Janet Sternburg	Missouri Department of Conservation
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5

Others in Attendance

Elizabeth Ivy	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Jeff DeZellar	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Kevin Bluhm	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Gary Meden	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Roger Perk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Chuck Spitzack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Scott Whitney	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Mark Cornish	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Chuck Theiling	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
T. Leo Keller	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
Steve Rumple	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
Todd Strole	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS/The Nature Conservancy
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO
Scott Yess	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMRCC
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Bob Goodwin	U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration
Rick Mollahan	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Robert Stout	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Don Arnosti	Audubon
Doug Noel	AMEC
Dan McGuiness	Dan McGuiness and Associates/Audubon
Brad Walker	Izaak Walton League
Tom Boland	MACTEC
Vince Shay	The Nature Conservancy
Gretchen Benjamin	The Nature Conservancy
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Kirsten Mickelsen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association