

**Minutes of the  
Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program  
Coordinating Committee**

**February 26, 2020  
Quarterly Meeting**

**Virtual Meeting**

Brian Chewning of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. on February 26, 2019. Chewning said the meeting was being held virtually due to forecasted inclement weather and expressed appreciation to the Coordinating Committee for their flexibility in arrangements. UMRR Coordinating Committee representatives present on the virtual meeting were Sabrina Chandler (USFWS), Mark Gaikowski (USGS), Randy Schultz (IA DNR), Dave Glover (IL DNR), Megan Moore (MN DNR), Matt Vitello (MO DoC), Jim Fischer (WI DNR), and Ken Westlake (USEPA). A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

**Minutes of the October 30, 2019 Meeting**

Megan Moore moved and Matt Vitello seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the October 30, 2019 UMRR Coordinating Committee meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

**Regional Management and Partnership Collaboration**

Marshall Plumley said the St. Paul District participated in the 2020 Da Vinci Fest on January 25, 2020 that was attended by 2,500 people. District staff highlighted UMRR's successful restoration of Pool 8 Islands as well as other aspects of the program. Plumley noted that the Rock Island District is working to provide local museums with updated UMRR materials. The Missouri History Museum updated some exhibits and materials related to the program.

Plumley said he provided an overview of UMRR at a meeting of the Friends of Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge. He also attended the January 14-16, 2020 UMRR LTRM Science Meeting at UMESC and said it brought passionate and knowledgeable folks together to discuss future science efforts for the program.

*FY 2020 Budget Outlook*

Plumley reported that the FY 20 appropriations measure was enacted on December 20, 2019 for the entire federal government. It included \$33.17 million for UMRR, which was the level included in the President's FY 20 budget and House and Senate FY 20 appropriations measures. UMRR has obligated \$9 million of its FY 20 funds to-date.

Plumley outlined UMRR's FY 20 internal allocations are as follows:

- Regional Administration and Program Efforts – \$1,250,000
- Regional Science and Monitoring – \$10,500,000
  - Long term resource monitoring – \$5,000,000
  - Regional science in support of restoration – \$3,800,000
  - Regional science staff support – \$200,000
  - Habitat project evaluations – \$1,125,000
  - HNA II/regional project sequencing – \$375,000

- Habitat Restoration – \$21,420,000
  - Rock Island District – \$7,280,000
  - St. Louis District – \$6,940,000
  - St. Paul District – \$7,100,000
  - Model certification – \$100,000

[Note: The allocation of HREP funds among the three districts reflects repayment for transfers in recent years.]

Plumley recalled that, due to challenges awarding Bass Ponds in 2019, the program re-allocated funds between program elements. Plumley said dollars would be restored this year to hopefully award Bass Ponds. Plumley noted that the construction contract for Crains Island was awarded and represents a significant construction project. Other significant contracts expected to be awarded this year include McGregor Lake and Bass Ponds.

Plumley reported that, on February 10, 2020, the President’s FY 21 budget was released and includes \$33.17 million for UMRR. He said program execution in FY 21 will be similar to FY 20, though regional science and monitoring would receive \$100,000 less due to completion of HNA-II and the HREP selection process. Plumley said the program will soon initiate development of the next report to Congress.

Plumley acknowledged the many partners involved in making UMRR successful and said their hard work is reflected in the program receiving full funding over the last five years.

*UMRR Ten-Year Plan*

Plumley said updates to UMRR’s 10-year outlook since the October 30, 2019 UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting reflect delays to project construction and planning as a result of prolonged high water conditions. Plumley noted that almost all projects in construction were delayed in some way due to multiple flood events in 2019. The document also incorporates anticipated progress related to HREPs in progress, monitoring, adaptive management, and science activities given assumptions based on recent funding trends. Future updates will include HREPs identified in the recent selection process, pending UMRR Coordinating Committee endorsement. Plumley said the program hopes to achieve 65,000 additional acres restored over the next decade.

In response to a question from Mike Klinger, Plumley said the targeted feasibility for newly identified HREPs is FY 21-25. Brian Chewing said MVD is working with UMRR and other programs to determine scope and scale of impacts from high water and suggested impacts to completed projects be acknowledged in the upcoming report to Congress.

Plumley said Dennis Hamilton is scheduled to retire in spring 2020. Plumley, Kirsten Wallace, and Jim Fischer expressed appreciation for his leadership, contributions to UMRR, and advocacy within the Corps on behalf of the program.

Hamilton said it was very rewarding to be involved with the partnership. He noted the program has a bright future as the group continues to adjust and move forward, always looking for new ways to do things and improve how to restore the river. Hamilton added that the program has grown tremendously over time and not only changed the trajectory of the environment on the UMR but also the trajectory of ecosystem restoration globally.

### *Statements of UMRS Significance*

Plumley outlined UMRR Coordinating Committee's past conversations around development of statements of UMRS significance. He said that, in November 2019, the UMRR Coordinating Committee identified an approach to developing statements of UMRS significance beginning with a broad picture of the significance of the UMRS and then honing in on areas that UMRR can affect. Plumley said he had provided a draft set of statements organized in categories of public, technical, and institutional significance. The Coordinating Committee discussed reframing the text in the categories of partnership, natural resources, culture, recreational, navigation, and other economic benefits. Plumley said partners provided feedback about what is significant about the UMRS from their agency mission or perspective and suggested more clearly articulating the linkage between navigation and ecosystem degradation that the program is trying to address. Plumley reviewed a condensed version of the statements:

*"The UMRS is significant because it provides simultaneous value historically, culturally, ecologically, and economically. It is historically significant because of its prominence in our country's development, its use by Native Americans and European settlers. It is culturally significant as it is part of our American identity; woven into American song lyrics and literature. It is ecologically significant as it supports a complex web of life supported by the diverse and varied habitats. It is economically significant as it provides jobs through commercial navigation, commercial fisheries, and a robust tourism industry; it also provides power supply and drinking water to some communities."*

Plumley said the UMRR Coordinating Committee is scheduled to convene a March 24, 2020 conference call regarding further development of statements of significance. On the call, Committee members will review the revised draft statements organized in the following categories: partnership, natural resources, culture, recreational, navigation, and other economic benefits.

### *Report to Congress*

Plumley said the program will soon initiate development of the next report to Congress in calendar year 2020. He recalled that Jim Fischer mentioned 2020 represents the halfway point in the 2015-2020 UMRR Strategic Plan and it would be good to review the program's progress to date. Plumley said a review of the strategic plan and development of the statements of significance conducted over the next six to ten months would help identify important aspects to feature in the 2022 report to Congress. The report will also likely describe efforts over the recent six years related to HNA-II, desired future condition, third edition of the LTRM status and trends report, LTRM resource monitoring, HREPs, and any recommendations to Congress about the program.

Gretchen Benjamin said the Mississippi River is a north-south oriented river and may provide much needed relief to species threatened by climate change. She added that, over past three decades, UMRR has restored many areas that serve as refuges and spaces for species to thrive. Plumley agreed and said that concept ties in well with the statements of significance.

### *UMRR Lower Illinois River Communication Pilot Project*

Andrew Stephenson reported the Lower Illinois River communications pilot *ad hoc* team has shared resources via email, but has not met since the October 30, 2019 meeting. In response to a question from Stephenson, Plumley said Angie Freyermuth's position will not be backfilled, but other regional planning office staff may be available to assist in this effort. Stephenson said the pilot communication project had

a lot of support and provides a good example of how UMRR can put its 2015-2025 Strategic Plan into action.

### *ProjectWise*

Plumley said the Corps' ProjectWise software can be used to facilitate collaboration on document development across program partners. Plumley said he can provide a username and secure password that are required to access the program through a web-interface and assured no software installation is required. ProjectWise allows for storage of static documents. Plumley suggested the Coordinating Committee identify a project to use as a pilot test of the ProjectWise software in the coming months.

In response to a question from Kara Mitvalsky, Plumley said a pilot case would help identify any issues that need to be overcome for other partners. In response to a question from Stephenson, Plumley said the ProjectWise web-interface allows for storage of static documents and for collaboration and track changes in documents being developed. In response to a question from Chewing, Plumley said next steps for implementing a pilot test case would be to identify a project, which could be done in April, 2020. Julie Millhollin said ProjectWise is typically used for work with architectural and engineering contractors, but permissions can be made available to anyone. Jim Fischer expressed appreciation for the potential solution and suggested work on the statements of significance be considered as well as an HREP project as they would include folks from a variety of agencies and most aspects of the partnership.

### *External Communications*

UMRR partners reported on the following communication and outreach activities since the October 30, 2020 UMRR Coordinating Committee meeting:

- Megan Moore reported that, on November 11, 2019, Rob Burdis of MN DNR presented to Lake City's City Council about field station and LTRM research collected over the last 30 years. She said MN DNR staff will also present February 27, 2020 at the Lake City public library about the impact of UMRR in the area and locally. Moore said she presented on climate change and impacts to biota using LTRM data at the October 29, 2019 UMRBA Board's quarterly meeting and at East De Pere High School and UW-Eau Claire.
- Sabrina Chandler said pull-up banners and business cards featuring UMRR were displayed at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge visitor center and the visitor center in Fountain City. Chandler said the banners have been very useful for outreach events and expressed appreciation to Karen Hagerty for providing them. Chandler said she has had numerous conversations with Senator Chuck Grassley's office to discuss existing and potential new HREPs.

### **UMRR Showcase Presentations**

#### *Functional changes in the UMRS fish community over the last 30 years*

Brian Ickes provided a summary of functional changes in the UMRS fish community over the last 30 years. Descriptions of community ecology before 2003 consisted of empirical observation only, whereas community ecology work from 2003 to 2018 considered faunistic (individual species) community patterns, their environmental associations, the role of invasives on faunistic-defined communities. Current research efforts applied a functional community approach by assigning guild classes (habitat, feeding, reproductive) to each species based on their life history to investigate if function community expressions are changing over time. Three models of functional community response to changes in the system were tested: homeostasis (slight random variation but stays in the same over time), rheostasis (years 1-3 in homeostasis and then the community shifts from shock in year 4 and years 5-9 are back to homeostasis), and non-random trajectory. Analysis of LTRM day electrofishing data from 1993-2014

showed clear and strong non-random trajectory in the functional responses of each of the three guilds (habitat, feeding, and reproductive) in all study reaches over time with the two exceptions of habitat and reproductive guilds in the Open River reach. Trajectories of change vary in direction and strength across reaches with functional dynamics converging in some reaches and diverging in others at various rates. Ickes said these results suggest the possibility of a resilience crisis in the future.

Megan Moore expressed appreciation for the research and said it provides a great avenue to understand these trajectories.

In response to a question from Lauren Salvato, Ickes said he and others are trying to get a better grasp of how Asian carp may be influencing current trajectories now and would if they become more prolific. He said water clarity and vegetation are the suspected drivers of change now, but noted quicker changes were observed in the open river and La Grange where carp are most abundant. He said next steps are to characterize the nature of the change and model what's driving the change.

In response to a question from Doug Blodgett, Ickes said observational data doesn't allow for identifying a shift until it occurs. Rather, you can know things are functionally changing over time and if they have reached tipping points, but you have to look at the literature to find the tipping points. In response to another question from Blodgett, Ickes said the data shows things are still moving and have not stabilized, but that state changes attributable to Asian carp would be investigated should that science proposal receive funding.

#### *UMRR HREP Story Map Initiative*

Michael Dougherty provided an overview of the new UMRR HREP Story Map Initiative that includes creation of an interactive webpage. The interactive map is a change from the past static map and now allows for viewing projects at various spatial scales and with various data layers, including historic maps, to explore relationships to other HREPs or environmental features. Additional features can be incorporated into the interface, such as the LTRM spatial data query tool or refuge boundaries available through ArcGIS online. Completed and active projects are included and can be searched for by district and project information is accessible through the interface. Project pages will include project details, features, key attributes, and photos. Dougherty said an early review of the interface from Jeff Janvrin received praise for the ability to identify project boundaries data in real time. This information will be valuable to PDTs as well as the public and represents a shift in data management that may be considered for other program elements.

Jeff Houser commended the functionality of the interactive webpage and noted the value of the slider-graphic function developed by Kevin Hanson for the story maps. Dougherty said historic photos are not available for all projects but that a standard framework for project pages was a compromise for long-term familiarity with the tool and flexibility based on available project information.

Dougherty requested 8-10 photos of each project be submitted for project pages and noted they were planning drone footage of HREPs in the future. Bre Popkin suggested an interactive kiosk could be installed at the Dubuque River Museum. In response to a question from Mark Ellis, Dougherty said there are no constraints on data usage as data has been cleaned, financials are not included, and restoration features attributes are not of concern. In response to a question from Mark Gaikowski, Dougherty said post-project monitoring data is not available through the interface at this time. Jennie Sauer and Jim Fischer said it would be valuable to have a spatial data viewer or query available the interface. Sabrina Chandler acknowledged the value of the tool and said the refuge boundaries shapefile could be provided. Chandler also said DOI recently issued a stand-down for drone use on DOI lands that prohibits any drone use even if previously permitted, which represents a significant change to operations. In response,

Dougherty said the Corps has a rigorous clearance process for drone use, but that not work would be conducted on refuges until DOI policy changes.

## **Habitat Restoration**

### *District Reports*

Brian Markert said MVS had IPR for Oakwood Bottoms TSP with division and anticipates completion of the feasibility report in September 2020. The project management plan for Yorkinut slough has been completed and a planning charette will be held in the next few months to start feasibility. Other projects in planning include Rip Rap Landing and West Alton Islands. A design contract was awarded for Phase 1 Crains Island, which is the first HREP on the open river. Phase II Crains Island plans and specs design is in progress. Other design priorities include Piasa and Eagles Nest and Harlow Island. A contract award for plans and specs for Piasa and Eagles is anticipated this fiscal year and work continues on a plans and specs package for award in the fourth quarter of this year, depending on available funds. Markert said Oak Hill Contractors LLC was awarded their first Corps contract for construction of Phase 1 Crains Island. Clarence Cannon Refuge has multiple contractors on site to complete work delayed by flooding in 2019. Reforestation work continues at Ted Shanks. Markert expressed appreciation to all partners and stakeholders who supported the development of the new HREP fact sheets.

Julie Millhollin said MVR's planning priorities include Steamboat Island, Lower Pool 13, and Green Island. The Lower Pool 13 PDT held an open house and is discussing water level management in feasibility. A kick-off meeting for Green Island was held December 3, 2019. Millhollin said design work for Keithsburg Division Stage II is at 35 percent and work continues on all project features. High water continued to delay progress on Pool 12 Overwintering Stage 2, Huron Island Stages II and III, and Keithsburg Division Stage I. Construction was completed on Pool 12 Overwintering Stage 3 and it will be closed out. A vegetation review with ERDC is planned for spring to determine survival. Contractors were pulled off Beaver Island due to winter and ice, but plan to dredge again as conditions allow.

Angela Deen said that Tom Novak is retiring February 28, 2020 and that she would be serving as MVP's District Program Manager. Deen reported that MVP kicked off planning for Reno Bottoms in 2019 and plans to have a TSP for Lower Pool 10 by fall 2020. Design priorities for the district include McGregor Lake and Bass Ponds. Deen said channel maintenance funds will be used to move sand from McMillan channel to the top of McGregor Lake. Plans and specs are nearly finished for Bass Ponds and include a stop log structure for water level management. A construction contract for Conway Lake was awarded in 2018, but the contractor deferred starting until this spring. MVP plans to award construction contracts for Bass Ponds in May 2020 and McGregor Lake in July-August 2020. Draft evaluation reports were completed for Ambrough Slough and Trempealeau and submitted to partners for review. A team was assembled to discuss repairs to Harpers Slough Island W-2 and a letter report may be completed. Harpers Slough HREP was completed in 2017, but suffered two years of consecutive high water resulting in a 2000-foot breach on the island.

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Deen said the Conway Lake contractor had two years to complete the work but may need a modification to the contract if high water continues. In response to a question from Stephenson, Deen explained a letter report is a smaller version of a feasibility report. In response to a question from Ken Westlake, Deen said surveys at Island W-2 were completed in January 2020 to determine the extent of material moved and that early internal discussions about repairs included extending rock and reinforcing the island to avoid future damage. In response to a question from Chewning, Deen said MVP hopes to advertise Bass Ponds in two weeks.

Plumley thanked Tom Novak and noted his involvement in the program has spanned nearly three decades, including serving as the St. Paul District program manager.

### *HREP Selection Process*

Bre Popkin overviewed the PPT's guidance to the river teams for selecting new HREPs:

- Develop 3 to 5 projects of varying size and complexity.
- Limit fact sheets to 4 pages (excluding maps), pointing to references such as technical reports, other project fact sheets, white papers, journal articles, etc.
- Consult with federal, state, and nonprofit organization sponsors. Nonprofit or local organization participation will be facilitated through a "champion" voting member on the river team.
- Develop decision support tools as needed and, upon request, use decision logs and record discussions.
- Use decision logs and record discussions throughout the process to ensure transparency, adequate understanding and buy-in, and to inform future project selection efforts.
- Invite candidate cost-sharing non-profit organizations to consider submitting an HREP proposal.
- Use a structured decision-making exercise to describe whether and how projects will maintain or improve for each respective HNA-II indicator.

Popkin described the FWIC and RRCT's process for selecting new HREPs from June 2019 to November 2019. Roles in the process included FWIC members, agency POCs, fact sheet champions to assist non-traditional sponsors, and the RRCT Exec who endorsed fact sheets. The FWIC convened a two-day, in-person workshop that included a review of the guidance documents, an overview of the HNA II indicators and UMR ecological resilience conceptual models, and a brief discussion to begin thinking about screening criteria. The group completed a structured mapping exercise that included identifying known resources, unique features, areas to maintain or improve, and potential areas to target and grouping that information into potential projects with associated problems, opportunities, and constraints identified. Agency sponsors and fact sheet leads were identified to further develop eight draft fact sheets. Popkin said the FWIC compared final fact sheets using a matrix that include both ecological (HNA-II) and non-ecological components as well as a paired-comparison exercise. The FWIC recommended eight projects to the RRCT in three tiers:

Tier 1: FWIC recommends project implementation in the near term.

Tier 2: FWIC recommends project implementation during through FY 2025.

Tier 3: These project fact sheets should remain in the queue and be provided to RRCT, but should continue to be further developed/refined, revisiting scaling to include additional pools (i.e. forestry), where warranted, and re-submitted during next fact sheet selection process (2025) or when fact sheet merits further action.

After review, the RRCT recommended six of the eight projects across three tiers be considered by the UMRR Coordinating Committee for endorsement.

Kat McCain explained the RRAT and RRAT-Exec's process for selecting new HREPs from June 2019 to January 2020. The RRAT held an informational webinar in June 2019 to overview the guidance provided by the PPT. It then held a face-to-face meeting in August 2019 to generate project ideas. The in-person meeting included a virtual trip down the river to identify potential future project locations and revisit existing project ideas including those developed under other programs such as Regulating Works, NESP, and BiOp. After initial screening based, seven of the 24 initial project ideas were selected for further development. McCain said the RRAT-Exec used a matrix to further evaluate projects based on how well they address HNA-II indicators and other non-ecological criteria. The RRAT-Exec recommended six of the seven fact sheets be considered by the UMRR Coordinating Committee for endorsement.

Stephen Winter described the FWWG and RRF’s process for selecting new HREPs from April 2019 to February 2020. The FWWG held two in-person discussions on April 4, 2019 and June 17, 2019 to review the PPT’s guidance documents and strategize for identifying new fact sheets. FWWG members were asked to submit project ideas from June to August 2019, resulting in 66 potential fact sheets. Screening of projects impact on HNA-II indicators and other factors winnowed the list to five. Winter said the Pool 8 Poolwide Forestry fact sheet replaced a fact sheet focusing on Trempealeau NWR due to concerns over an existing, non-functioning HREP at Trempealeau needing to be resolved first. USFWS and WI DNR are developing an issue paper and letter to MVP regarding the existing Trempealeau HREP and impacts to future HREPs. Winter said the FWWG submitted a prioritized list of four fact sheets to the RRF for endorsement and noted a fifth fact sheet would be developed and submitted prior to the May 20, 2020 quarterly meeting of the UMRR Coordinating Committee.

In response to a question from Megan Moore, Sabrina Chandler said the existing HREP at Trempealeau NWR has never been fully utilized as intended and that a letter detailing the issues would be submitted to the UMRR Coordinating Committee when it was finalized. In response to a question from Gretchen Benjamin, Marshall Plumley said the City of Davenport proposal is not moving forward at this time because of cost-share issues associated with PPAs and that the QBAREA Board is aware of what’s required of sponsors to move forward on projects. Mike Klinger expressed appreciation to Popkin for working with QBAREA throughout the process and that QBAREA is willing to proceed with the current PPA requirements. Rome Frericks thanked Plumley and Dave Glover for their guidance through the process and in developing the fact sheet. Klinger added that QBAREA is excited to see this project move forward and alleviate sediment concerns in the area.

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Plumley said project sponsorship is mostly related to who owns the land and that, for projects on Corps owned land managed by another agency, O&M is the responsibility of the land manager. Jim Fischer suggested including those who collaborated in a fact sheet’s development in addition to the sponsoring agency to demonstrate that fact sheets are the result of partnership effort. Chandler agreed that other collaborators could be identified on fact sheets, but noted the need for clarity in who the project sponsor is as that comes with cost implications.

Plumley explained that this HREP selection process was intended to develop projects for implementation in FY 21-25 to show UMRR’s momentum when fully funded. Plumley expressed appreciation for the hard work from all the partners in identifying quality projects in a tight timeline. He said that, throughout the process, we collaborated in new ways as a partnership with new sponsors, moved toward more fully integrating all program staff, and used the HNA-II to inform project development. He noted that the projects presented represent a diversity of restoration techniques, scale, scope & cost, and sponsorship.

Matt Vitello motioned and Megan Moore seconded for the UMRR Coordinating Committee to endorse the 16 fact sheets recommended by the executive-level District-based river teams, as follows:

| <u>RRCT</u>                     | <u>RRAT-exec</u>          | <u>RRF</u>  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| - Multi-Pool Habitat Protection | - East Cape               | - Lower Pool 4 – Big Lake, Robinson Lake, and Tank Pond |
| - Lower Pool 11                 | - Gilbert Lake Division   | - Bank Stabilization and Natural Levee                  |
| - Upper Pool 13                 | - Gilead Slough           | - Lower Pool 5 and Weaver Bottoms                       |
| - Geneva and Hershey Islands    | - Slim Island Division    | - Black River Bottoms Forest Restoration                |
| - Quincy Bay                    | - Spunky Bottoms          |   |
| - Pool 18 Forestry              | - Sterling Island Complex |   |

The UMRR Coordinating Committee unanimously endorsed the fact sheets for submittal to MVD for review and approval.



Plumley said river team chairs will document their respective teams' HREP selection processes and provide them to the Program Planning Team along with insights on what did or did not go well throughout the process and any suggested improvements to the HREP selection process guidance documents. The PPT will meet to discuss possible modifications to the guidance documents. The resulting guidance documents will be codified as the UMRR Coordinating Committee reviews and updates the 2013 Joint Charter of UMRR's consultative bodies later this year. [Note: The PPT will meet virtually May 6-7, 2020 to review guidance documents.]

## **Long Term Resource Monitoring and Science**

### *FY 2020 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report*

Jeff Houser said accomplishments of the second quarter of FY 20 include publication of the following:

- Completion report, “Developing methods of estimating submersed aquatic vegetation biomass in the Upper Mississippi River to expand capabilities within the UMRR program and improve the utility of the long-term vegetation data.”
- Manuscripts:
  - “Decadal trends and ecological shifts in backwater lakes of a large floodplain river: Upper Mississippi River.”
  - “Invasive silver carp is empirically linked to declines of native sport fish in the Upper Mississippi River System.”
  - “Status, trends, and population demographics of selected sportfish species in the La Grange Reach of the Illinois River.”

### *2020 UMRR Science Meeting*

Houser reported the 2020 UMRR Science Meeting was held January 14-16, 2020 in La Crosse. The format was similar to the 2018 science meeting, and focused on assessing current information needs for the understanding, management, and restoration of the UMRS and developing proposals for research using 2020 funds. Approximately 90 people attended the meeting. Attendees self-selected into working groups:

#### **Working Group**

WG1: Hydrologic and geomorphic changes

WG2: Side channels

WG3: Aquatic vegetation and wildlife

WG4: UMRS fish community dynamics

WG5: Water quality and eutrophication

WG6: Floodplain ecology

#### **Working Group Lead(s)**

Jim Rogala (UMESC), Jon Hendrickson (USACE), Molly Van Appledorn (UMESC)

Molly Sobotka (MDC)

Danelle Larson (UMESC)

Brian Ickes (UMESC)

KathiJo Jankowski (UMESC)

Nathan De Jager (UMESC)

Working groups at the meeting considered what the river will look like in 50-100 years and the distribution and abundance of habitat and biota as well as the restoration and management implications. The meeting facilitated more direct interaction between restoration practitioners, natural resource managers, and research scientists and fostered a collaborative approach around development of larger proposals. Houser said resultant proposals will be ranked by the A-Team, USGS, and the Corps in

April 2020 and then presented to the UMRR Coordinating Committee at the May 20, 2020 quarterly meeting. Houser expressed appreciation to Jennie Sauer, Karen Hagerty, Carol Lowenberg, the working group leads and attendees. Houser summarized the results of a post-meeting survey indicating people liked the structure and organization of the meeting, time spent in small groups, having a clear goal, opportunities for collaboration and interaction among agencies and fields of expertise, meeting new people and making new connections, and the overall positive energy and enthusiasm at the meeting. Houser said respondents also provided suggestions for improving future science meetings.

Andrew Stephenson expressed appreciation to Houser for arranging the meeting and the opportunity to have face-to-face conversations about the science proposals. Karen Hagerty agreed and said the effort involved in planning and coordination was evident and the meeting was a benefit to everyone involved in the program.

#### *Status and Trends 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*

Houser said the LTRM Status and Trends Report chapter authors are scheduled to meet in early April 2020 to discuss initial results and finalize details on formatting and layout. Writing and analysis will be completed during FY 20. Findings will be included in the 2022 report to Congress.

#### *USACE LTRM Report*

Hagerty said UMRR's FY 20 LTRM allocation under full funding includes \$6.3 million (\$5.0 million for base monitoring and \$1.3 million for analysis). An additional \$2.5 million is available for science in support of restoration and management. Hagerty said these funds will cover monitoring during the Illinois Waterway closure, development of wind fetch products, moving LTRM spatial data to web mapping services, continuing ecohydrology work for two years, and reintroducing chloride monitoring for three years (2020-2023) to allow comparisons to historic data and establish change over time. Hagerty said funding available for science proposals totals \$1.9 million. Proposals are due March 20, 2020 and will be considered by the UMRR Coordinating Committee at the May 20, 2020 quarterly meeting.

#### *A-Team Report*

Nick Schlessler reported that the A-Team met in-person in conjunction with the January 14-16, 2020 UMRR science meeting. It began planning a process for ranking the proposals that come out of the Science Meeting. Schlessler said the A-Team is planning a conference call for the week of April 6, 2020 to ask questions to project PI(s) ahead of ranking proposals. The A-Team is scheduled to meet on April 22, 2020 to rank proposals.

#### **Other Business**

Megan Moore expressed concern that the LTRM discussions have been compressed in recent meetings and proposed extending the meeting timeframe to allow for adequate discussion over each of the important elements of the program. Sabrina Chandler agreed and recalled past discussions noting that periodically the HREP and LTRM agenda items are exchanged to ensure one element is not compressed regularly. Plumley and Chewing also agreed, noting the importance of all program elements.

Plumley said Jim Rogala is retiring in March 2020. Plumley expressed appreciation for his contributions to UMRR since the program's inception. Houser said Rogala's contributions were often behind the scenes but that his leadership, creativity, and institutional knowledge are invaluable and thanked him for his work ensuring the program's success over the years.

Upcoming quarterly meetings are as follows:

- **May 2020 – [Note: These meetings will be held remotely due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.]**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting – May 19
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – May 20**
- **August 2020 – La Crosse**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting – August 11
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – August 12**
- **October 2020 – St. Paul**
  - UMRBA quarterly meeting – October 27
  - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – October 28**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

## UMRR Coordinating Committee Virtual Attendance List

February 26, 2020

### UMRR Coordinating Committee Members

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Brian Chewning   | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD              |
| Sabrina Chandler | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges    |
| Mark Gaikowski   | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC                  |
| Dave Glover      | Illinois Department of Natural Resources       |
| Randy Schultz    | Iowa Department of Natural Resources           |
| Megan Moore      | Minnesota Department of Natural Resources      |
| Matt Vitello     | Missouri Department of Conservation            |
| Jim Fischer      | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources      |
| Ken Westlake     | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 |

### Others In Attendance

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Thatch Shephard      | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD           |
| LeeAnn Riggs         | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD           |
| Angela Deen          | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP           |
| Col. Steve Sattinger | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Marshall Plumley     | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Andy Barnes          | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Dennis Hamilton      | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Kim Thomas           | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Karen Hagerty        | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Jodi Creswell        | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Bre Popkin           | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Erica Stephens       | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Kara Mitvalsky       | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Julie Millhollin     | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Jesse Ray            | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Michael Dougherty    | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Kayleigh Thomas      | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Heather Schroeder    | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Keri Diedrich        | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR           |
| Brian Markert        | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS           |
| Brandon Schneider    | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS           |
| Jasen Brown          | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS           |
| Greg Kohler          | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS           |
| Kat McCain           | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS           |
| Brian Johnson        | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS           |
| Chuck Theiling       | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ERDC          |
| Kraig McPeck         | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO        |
| Sara Schmuecker      | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO        |
| Tyler Porter         | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO        |
| Matt Mangan          | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO        |
| Stephen Winter       | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges |
| Jeff Houser          | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC               |
| Jennie Sauer         | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC               |
| Brian Ickes          | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC               |
| Kristen Bouska       | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC               |
| Jayne Strange        | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC               |
| Amy Shields          | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency        |

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|-------------------|---|
| Nick Schlessler   | Minnesota Department of Natural Resources               |
| Gretchen Benjamin | The Nature Conservancy                                  |
| Doug Blodgett     | The Nature Conservancy                                  |
| Mike Klinger      | Quincy Bay Area Restoration and Enhancement Association |
| Rome Frericks     | Quincy Bay Area Restoration and Enhancement Association |
| Jill Crafton      | Izaak Walton League                                     |
| Angela Love       | Wood  |
| Kirsten Wallace   | Upper Mississippi River Basin Association               |
| Andrew Stephenson | Upper Mississippi River Basin Association               |
| Mark Ellis        | Upper Mississippi River Basin Association               |
| Lauren Salvato    | Upper Mississippi River Basin Association               |