

**Minutes of the  
86th Quarterly Meeting  
of the  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**May 14, 2003  
St. Louis, Missouri**

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by UMRBA Chair Mike Wells. The following State Representatives and Alternates and Federal Liaison Representatives were present:

Gary Clark	Illinois Alternate (IL DNR)
John Hey	Iowa Representative (IA DOT)
Kevin Szcodronski	Iowa Representative (IADNR)
Steve Johnson	Minnesota Alternate (MN DNR)
Mike Wells	Missouri Alternate (MO DNR)
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin (WI DNR)
Steve Cobb	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVD)
Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 5)
Larry Shepard	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 7)
Leslie Holland-Bartels	U.S. Geological Survey (UMESC)
Charlie Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)
Rich Leonard	Federal Emergency Management Agency (Region 7)
Gary Wooten	U.S. Department of Agriculture (NRCS)

Others in attendance:

Scott Stuewe	Illinois DNR
Gary Christoff	Missouri DOC
Janet Sternburg	Missouri DOC
Rich Worthington	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (HQ)
Gary Loss	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Roger Perk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Jerry Skalak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Marv Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Dan Foltz	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Rich Astrack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Dave Leake	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (UMRCC)
Dick Hegle	Upper Mississippi Basin Stakeholder Network
Chris Brescia	MARC 2000

Angela Anderson  
Mark Beorkrem  
Barb Naramore  
Holly Stoerker

Mississippi River Basin Alliance  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

## **Meeting Minutes**

Kevin Szcodronski moved and Gary Clark seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2003 meeting as drafted. The motion was approved by consensus.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Holly Stoerker thanked the UMRBA federal liaison members for their help in providing the information necessary for the UMRBA to prepare testimony on the agencies' FY 2004 proposed budgets. Following its February meeting, UMRBA submitted testimony to five House and Senate appropriations subcommittees, on seven federal agency budgets, including the Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS, EPA, FEMA (now Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security), Department of Agriculture, and Coast Guard.

Stoerker reported that the February 2004 UMRBA meeting will be held in conjunction with the Missouri River Basin Association (MRBA). She encouraged the federal liaison members to expand the budget presentations that they typically provide at the February meeting to include information relevant to both basins. In response to questions, Stoerker noted that the February 2004 joint meeting will likely still be a total of three days, with some meetings associated with the two organizations held concurrently. Kevin Szcodronski and Mike Wells expressed a preference for the joint meeting to be held in St. Louis.

Stoerker reported that the Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee (FWIC) had requested UMRBA's support for public meetings on FWIC's Environmental Pool Plans. In particular, FWIC would like UMRBA to assist in the distribution of the public notices. Kevin Szcodronski offered a motion to endorse FWIC's public outreach efforts, with the understanding that the UMRBA's endorsement does not extend to the pool plans themselves. Gretchen Benjamin seconded the motion and asked that UMRBA staff review the public notice before it is distributed to ensure that it appropriately describes UMRBA's involvement. Gary Clark explained that the UMRBA's caution about endorsing the plans is simply based on the fact that not all UMRBA members have participated in the development of the plans, nor had an opportunity to review them yet.

## **Flow Frequency Study**

Jerry Skalak presented an overview of the results of the Flow Frequency Study, using material from the PowerPoint presentation developed for use at the public open houses being held May 6-28. Skalak noted that attendance has been light at the three open houses held to date.

Skalak described the purposes of the study, which include updating the flow-frequency relationships and water surface profiles on the Upper Mississippi, Lower Missouri, and Illinois

Rivers. Skalak also explained the hydrologic and hydraulic modeling assumptions and technical processes, noting that over 6000 floodplain cross sections, at roughly half-mile intervals, were developed to support the modeling effort. The new 100-year flood profiles resulting from the study reflect changes of a few feet, with differing amounts of change in each district:

St Paul District	-1 to 0 feet
Rock Island District	-1 to +2 feet
St. Louis District	-1.5 to +1 feet

Skalak noted that the changes were greater on the Missouri River, in part because the river is more regulated and in part because the Missouri River had older flood profiles.

Skalak explained that the products of the study will have a variety of uses, including determining the elevation of floods, production of flood insurance rate maps, and planning for flood damage reduction and habitat restoration measures. He also reviewed the responses that have been prepared for a list of “Frequently Asked Questions.” In particular, he explained that levees will not automatically lose their eligibility under P.L. 84-99 as a result of the new flood profiles. The Corps will need to conduct reviews of each levee and that process may take two to three years.

Chris Brescia noted that the Flow Frequency Study had been criticized by two academics. Skalak explained that the criticisms were primarily related to the volume calculations and were based on the assumption that flows would be greater as a result of changes in land use. Skalak said the Corps will be working to address the technical debates and had already prepared a rebuttal to one of the critics.

Rich Leonard reviewed the PowerPoint presentation he is using at the public open houses to explain how FEMA will use the data from the Flow Frequency Study. In particular, the data will be used to upgrade National Flood Insurance map products. Toward that end, FEMA is providing funding for the Corps to do floodway computations, using the results of the Flow Frequency Study. The work will begin this summer and take approximately one year to complete for the Upper Mississippi River. Similar work has not been funded or scheduled for the Illinois or Missouri Rivers. FEMA will not be updating the flood maps for the entire study area at once. Rather, maps will be updated county-by-county, based on FEMA’s mapping priorities. Those nationwide priorities will focus on areas of high growth, a history of repetitive loss, and a high NFIP policy base.

Leonard also described the “Points of Interagency Agreement” that have been developed to guide the floodway computation work. The agreement covers a variety of issues, including how situations where states on opposite banks have different allowable increases will be addressed and how existing levees will be reflected in the computations. In particular, Leonard noted that the floodway boundary will be placed at the landside toe of existing levees. Mark Beorkrem commented that placing the floodway boundary at the riverside toe of the levee would seem more appropriate. Leonard and Stoerker said they would seek clarification of this point.

## **UMR Comprehensive Plan**

Rich Astrack provided an update on the status of the UMR Comprehensive Plan, explaining that the 3-year, \$5 million planning effort is designed to result in a comprehensive plan for flood damage reduction and associated environmental features. A number of alternative plans will be developed by combining specific measures under different “philosophies.” A “flood routing plan” is among the philosophies that will be addressed. Astrack suggested that the flood routing plan be renamed “emergency action plan,” to more clearly convey its purpose.

As an example of the complexity of plan formulation, Astrack described the types of questions that will need to be answered with regard to a single alternative, such as a 500-year systemic level of protection. In particular, does that mean confined or no-net-rise? Are all levees raised? Are existing unprotected urban areas protected? Will levees higher than 500-year be degraded?

Chris Brescia asked whether the UMR Comprehensive Plan will be consistent with the MR&T project on the lower river. Rich Worthington explained that the two systems are very different and there may not be a relationship. Steve Cobb noted that the Corps will consider impacts of the UMR plan on the design flood for the lower river, but that the lower river would not likely be affected unless there were major changes made on the upper river.

Holly Stoerker explained that the states have had a continuing interest in having a flood routing plan developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan. As a result of the discussion at the April 2003 meeting of the Collaboration Team, it appeared that the Corps might drop consideration of such a plan. Therefore, UMRBA staff helped to coordinate development of a draft position statement reemphasizing the states’ concerns, as first expressed in UMRBA’s comments on the PMP for the Comprehensive Plan. Stoerker explained that the draft position statement is offered today for UMRBA approval.

Rich Worthington questioned whether development of a flood routing plan is possible, given that it would involve identifying areas, in advance of a flood, where floodfighting would not be pursued. Gary Clark noted that enormous resources were devoted to dangerous flood fighting during the 1993 flood and that it is important to establish priorities. The flood routing plan evaluated as part of the Comprehensive Plan could be used to make more informed choices during major floods. He also explained that the Corps has already made assumptions about floodfighting with regard to some levee improvements. Rich Astrack cautioned that evaluation of a flood routing plan will be technically demanding and the Corps does not know if it can actually be done.

Gary Clark said he would not object to changing the name of the flood routing alternative to “Emergency Action Plan, as suggested by Rich Astrack. Such a plan had previously been called an Emergency Flood Response Plan, but the term was changed to Flood Routing Plan in the PMP. Gary Clark moved, and Kevin Szcodronski seconded a motion to approve the draft “UMRBA Position Regarding Development of a Flood Routing Plan,” with a change of terminology from “flood routing plan” to “emergency action plan.” The motion passed unanimously.

## **Advanced Hydrologic and Predictive Services**

Jeff Zogg of the National Weather Service (NWS) described his agency's forecasting services, particularly the Advanced Hydrologic and Predictive Services (AHPS). Following the 1997 flood, NWS started providing long-range probabilistic forecasts to enable agencies and the public to better prepare for natural disasters, including floods. Zogg explained the difference between the old hydrologic modeling approach that used a "lumped" model and the new method that uses a "distributed" model. The AHPS now provides a standard 5-day forecast, as well as longer term forecasts and flash flooding forecasts. Inputs include river gauge data, snow cover/snow melt data, precipitation estimates and forecasts, climate predictions, reservoir releases, and weather observations. Zogg also reviewed the AHPS web features and information resources. Gary Clark and Kevin Szcodronski commented that AHPS is a valuable tool.

## **State Comments on post-SWANCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**

Each UMRBA representative briefly described the comments submitted by their state or agency in response to the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) issued jointly by EPA and the Corps on January 15, 2003. The ANPRM seeks comment on the scope of waters subject to the Clean Water Act, particularly in light of the U.S. Supreme Court's 2001 decision in *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (SWANCC).

*Minnesota* — Steve Johnson noted that Minnesota DNR, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and Pollution Control Agency decided to submit joint comments. Governor Pawlenty also submitted a separate letter.

*Iowa* — Kevin Szcodronski explained that Iowa's primary concern is prairie pot holes, which would be considered "isolated" wetlands under new proposed definitions. They are however hydrologically linked and may become degraded if excluded from regulation.

*Wisconsin* — Gretchen Benjamin explained that Wisconsin continues to regulate isolated wetlands, even after the SWANCC decision. However, the state believes that there should also be federal protection for such wetlands.

*Illinois* — Gary Clark said Illinois does not see a need for rule changes that go beyond the SWANCC decision. The state is looking at legislation to fill the regulatory gap left by SWANCC.

*Missouri* — Mike Wells characterized Missouri's comments as being similar to those of other states. Consistency of definitions is important, particularly since Missouri has five different Corps districts. Currently, Missouri has no state wetlands regulatory program and it is unlikely that DNR would seek such state legislation.

In response to questions, Bill Franz said that EPA has not yet decided how to proceed with the rulemaking process. However, the agency would probably like to have clarifying federal legislation enacted. Steve Cobb said the Corps would also like to have clarification of the definition of waters of the United States.

## **Water Quality Coordination Project**

Holly Stoerker reported that the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force is considering executing an interstate, interagency agreement expressing the states' and EPA's commitment to using a consistent minimum set of assessment reaches on the Upper Mississippi River. In particular, they would all use the same 13 geomorphically-based reaches employed by UMRCC in that organization's recent water quality assessment. Stoerker explained that there is little similarity among the reaches currently used by the states. For example Minnesota uses 31 reaches and Wisconsin uses 3 reaches. Both Iowa and Illinois use 14 reaches, while Missouri uses 2 reaches.

Stoerker explained that the details of how the agreement will be executed are still under consideration. In particular, there is some interest in having only the states sign the agreement and then forward it to EPA as a proposal. Gretchen Benjamin said she understood that there may be some question as to whether the agreement needs to be signed by agency heads, given that the agreement relates to a rather technical issue. Stoerker explained that part of the rationale for securing the signatures of agency heads is to garner management level support and commitment to the interstate coordination effort more broadly. Larry Shepard commented that the water quality coordination activities being facilitated by UMRBA are extremely important. Any steps forward, regardless of how minor they may seem, will be critical to the future of the overall work. He noted that keeping upper level management involved will be important because not all the issues ahead will be as easy as achieving agreement on assessment reaches.

Holly Stoerker also reported that the current EPA grant that supports the work of the Task Force will end in September. At that time, a final report will be published describing the differences among the states' 305(b) assessments, 303(d) lists, monitoring efforts, and standards. UMRBA staff has prepared a grant pre-proposal for continuing coordination work in FY 2004 and 2005. Future work efforts would involve 1) interstate consultations prior to submittal of 2004 Clean Water reports to EPA, 2) workshops on UMR water quality standards, and 3) maintenance of a UMR water quality web site. Stoerker explained that the Task Force is still reviewing the preproposal. Steve Johnson moved and Gretchen Benjamin seconded a motion authorizing UMRBA staff to submit the pre-proposal to EPA. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Corps of Engineers Reorganization**

Steve Cobb reported that as part of what is called the 2012 Initiative, a team has been studying potential changes to the Corps Headquarters and Division organizational structures and functions. General Flowers distributed a report a few weeks ago, which proposed some fairly significant changes, including "powering up" more to Headquarters and less to Divisions. However, the report is undergoing further review and a functional area analysis will be undertaken. MVD will be taking the lead for the analysis of military programs. The Pacific Ocean Division will be doing the civil works analysis. Although the implementation schedule remains unclear, the Divisions' reports are due in mid-summer, with an eye toward implementing any changes that are recommended by October 1.

In response to a question from Charlie Wooley, Cobb said he did not anticipate that Congressional approval would be required for any changes, given that the changes would likely pertain to internal workload management. Holly Stoerker noted that the EMP Report to Congress may recommend that more approval authority for habitat projects be delegated to the District and Division levels. She asked if such a recommendation would be consistent with the direction of the Corps 2012 Initiative. Cobb noted that there are a variety of efforts within the Corps to delegate more authority to the Divisions, but it is not clear how they relate to the 2012 Initiative.

### **Lewis and Clark Commemoration**

Jim Denny of Missouri DNR gave a presentation on the history of the Lewis and Clark expedition and the events planned to commemorate its bicentennial in 2004. Of the 14 or 15 national signature events, 4 will be in the state of Missouri, where the expedition began. The Missouri events will commemorate the Louisiana territory transfer, the expedition's departure from Camp River Du Bois in May 2004, and the return of Lewis and Clark to St. Louis in 2006. Missouri will place approximately 100 interpretive signs along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, with 14 between Cairo and St. Louis. Denny also described the variety of historical reenactments, celebration events, and river clean-ups and restorations planned to coincide with the bicentennial.

### **Upper Mississippi Basin Stakeholders Network**

Dick Hegle introduced himself as the new Outreach Coordinator for the Upper Mississippi Basin Stakeholder Network. The UMBSN was created two years ago by St. Mary's University of Minnesota, with funding from the McKnight Foundation. It serves as a communication tool and information exchange for a wide range of stakeholders. The focus is primarily on issues related to sediment and nutrients. USBSN hosts a web site and will be renewing publication of the *Mississippi Monitor* newspaper in June 2003. Hegle also briefly described St. Mary's graduate program in resource analysis, explaining that the mapping and GIS services are being commercialized.

### **USGS Data**

Leslie Holland-Bartels reported that the USGS website has new high resolution color ortho-imagery available on its web site. Urban areas such as St. Louis and Chicago are at a one-foot resolution.

### **Fidelity Bond and Banking Authorization**

Holly Stoerker explained that the UMRBA must find a new insurer for its employee fidelity bond, because its current insurer has decided to discontinue issuing such bonds. In the process of seeking new coverage, the UMRBA will also need to confirm its security procedures with the bank. Stoerker referred UMRBA representatives to three staff recommendations in Attachment G of the agenda package.

In accordance with staff's first recommendation, Kevin Sczodronski moved and Gretchen Benjamin seconded a motion approving the Certificate of Corporate Authority resolution

provided by Wells Fargo Bank, authorizing Holly Stoerker to direct all activities related to the UMRBA's investment accounts and authorizing Marjorie Daniels to execute money market fund transfers. The motion passed unanimously.

In accordance with staff's second recommendation, Kevin Sczodronski moved and Gary Clark seconded a motion authorizing Holly Stoerker to file an updated Customer Information Record with Wells Fargo Bank, including payment and delivery instructions limiting deposits and charges to established UMRBA bank accounts. The motion passed unanimously.

Kevin Sczodronski moved and Gretchen Benjamin seconded a motion authorizing Holly Stoerker to secure a \$500,000 fidelity bond for the UMRBA. Gary Clark explained the decision to keep the coverage at \$500,000, even though it is higher than many similar organizations and staff had recommended reducing it to \$100,000. He said the incremental cost of coverage over \$100,000 is relatively small and having coverage of \$500,00 would fully protect UMRBA's assets. The motion passed unanimously.

### **UMRBA 2004 Budget**

Holly Stoerker offered a proposed UMRBA budget for 2004 that reflects \$482,700 in revenues and \$445,600 in expenses, yielding a projected surplus of \$37,100. Steve Johnson moved and Gretchen Benjamin seconded a motion to approve the budget as proposed by staff. Kevin Sczodronski requested that the amount identified as Iowa's dues be increased from \$17,000 to \$30,000. The request was accepted as a friendly amendment to the original motion, which was then passed unanimously.

### **Future Meeting Schedule**

The future meeting schedule for the combined GLC, UMRBA, and EMP-CC meetings includes August 5-7, 2003 in the Twin Cities and November 18-20, 2003 in La Crosse. The dates for the February 2004 meeting will be finalized after consultation with the Missouri River Basin Association. However, the target dates are February 24-26, 2004.

### **Other Business**

Kevin Sczodronski announced that he has taken a new position as Iowa DNR's State Parks Director. During the transition, he will temporarily continue to serve as one of Iowa's representatives to UMRBA.

Steve Johnson said that the question of Minnesota's representation to UMRBA should be resolved by August. Gretchen Benjamin noted that Wisconsin's UMRBA representative should also be named soon.

Gary Clark reported that Don Vonnahme retired from Illinois DNR, but will be returning on a 75-day "hire back." Clark has been appointed Acting Director of the Water Resources Division, but Vonnahme will remain as the UMRBA representative through the end of the calendar year.



Charlie Wooley announced that Mayor Daley and the Fish and Wildlife Service are holding a meeting in Chicago over the next 2 days to discuss exotic species in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin, including Asian carp. Experts on fish passage and blocking techniques will address technical issues.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.