

**Minutes of the
90th Quarterly Meeting
of the
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**May 19, 2004
St. Paul, Minnesota**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by UMRBA Chair Gary Clark. The following were present:

UMRBA Representatives and Alternates:

Gary Clark	Illinois Representative (IL DNR)
Harold Hommes	Iowa Representative (IA Dept of Agriculture)
Diane Ford-Shivvers	Iowa Acting Representative (IA DNR)
Mark Holsten	Minnesota Representative (MN DNR)
Dick Lambert	Minnesota Alternate (MN DOT)
Mike Wells	Missouri Alternate (MO DNR)
Todd Ambs	Wisconsin Representative (WI DNR)

Federal Liaisons:

Charles Barton	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVD)
Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 5)
Leslie Holland-Bartels	U.S. Geological Survey (UMESC)
Charlie Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)

Others in attendance:

Scott Stuewe	Illinois DNR
Janet Sternburg	Missouri DOC
Amy Denz	Minnesota DNR
Rebecca Wooden	Minnesota DNR
Marvin Hora	Minnesota PCA
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin DNR
Rich Worthington	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (HQ)
Greg Ruff	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVD)
Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Jeff Stamper	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Rich Astrack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Gary Loss	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Roger Perk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Scott Whitney	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)

Ken Barr	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Marvin Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)
Rick Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (RIFO)
Sharonne Baylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Upper Miss Refuge)
Steve Johnson	National Park Service (MNRAA)
Catherine McCalvin	The Nature Conservancy
Mark Beorkrem	Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Mark Martell	Audubon Minnesota
Brad Redlin	Izaak Walton League
Gretchen Bonfert	McKnight Foundation
Mark Ackelson	Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Dan Larson	River Resources Alliance
Chris Brescia	MARC 2000
Doug Albin	MN Corn Growers Association
David Ward	MN Corn Growers Association
Gayle Bergstrom	MN Corn Growers Association
Warren Formo	MN Corn Growers Association
Chris Radatz	MN Farm Bureau
Roger Dale	MN Soybean Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

Meeting Minutes

Gretchen Benjamin moved and Diane Ford-Shivvers seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the February 25, 2004 UMRBA meeting and joint meeting with the Missouri River Basin Association. The motion was approved by consensus.

Executive Director's Report

Holly Stoerker reported that, in March, UMRBA submitted Congressional testimony on the President's proposed FY 05 budgets for seven federal agencies. She thanked the UMRBA federal liaison members for the budget summaries and insights they provided at the UMRBA's February meeting.

Stoerker reported that the Corps of Engineers is seeking input from the States on a variety of issues associated with development of the Comprehensive Plan for flood damage reduction. Those issues relate to how the emergency action scenarios are evaluated and implemented, how the alternative plans incorporate ecosystem restoration opportunities, and how state regulations regarding mitigation of stage increases are treated in the formulation and evaluation of the plans. Given that not all States attend Collaboration Team meetings for the Comprehensive Plan, Stoerker has suggested that State input on these issues be sought using the floodplain managers' conference calls that UMRBA convenes. That group's next call is scheduled for May 25.

Stoerker reported that she met with Ben Grumbles, EPA Assistant Administrator for Water, on May 6 in Washington, D.C. Also attending were Deputy Assistant Administrator Diane

Regas and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Geoff Grubbs. They expressed interest in the work of the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force, but made no commitments regarding future funding or support from EPA. Stoerker noted that the letters of support from Minnesota and Iowa were very helpful. She encouraged the other states to send similar letters.

Stoerker said that she had been invited to attend a workshop on May 10-11 that USGS convened to discuss its draft science strategy related to sediment and nutrients in the basin. Workshop attendees were primarily representatives of federal agencies. Stoerker invited USGS to use the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force or a regular quarterly meeting of the UMRBA to solicit input from the States.

Stoerker announced that UMRBA received the 2003-2004 Huck Finn Award from the Wakota CAER group, in recognition of UMRBA's contributions to spills mapping and response strategies and for "ongoing support in unifying the river way organizations."

Barb Naramore reported that there were two unannounced drills of the UMR Spills Plan notification protocol, which was originally developed 13 years ago. The results were mixed and thus, the Spills Group members will be seeking to educate staff within their agencies to familiarize them with the protocol. The Spills Group has also determined that a number of relatively minor changes should be made to the Plan and that a 2-page emergency action should be developed and broadly distributed to field staff and industry. In addition, the Wisconsin Spills Group member has recommended that the MOA implementing the Plan be re-signed, because many of the signatories from 1997, when the MOA was last signed, no longer hold those positions.

Naramore also reported that UMRBA has helped plan two recent Net Environmental Benefits Analysis (NEBA) Workshops for Pool 7 and Pool 19. NEBA is a formal process for evaluating the implications of spill response strategies for various species and habitats. Given the time commitments required for these workshops, it may not be possible to replicate them precisely, but there will be an effort to determine how the process and the insights gained may be applied elsewhere.

Navigation Study Overview

Denny Lundberg presented an overview of the organization and contents of the draft Navigation Feasibility Study report that the Corps released for public review on April 29. The preferred integrated plan includes a \$5.3 billion framework over 50 years for ecosystem restoration (Alternative D*). It would be implemented adaptively, with checkpoints requiring future reports to Congress. The preferred plan for navigation efficiency reflects a combination of Alternatives 4 and 6, costing \$2.4 billion. It includes mooring facilities, switch boats, and new 1200 locks at Lock and Dam 20-25, Peoria, and La Grange. Mitigation totaling \$200 million would be spread over 30 years, with measures in place prior to traffic increases. It would also be implemented adaptively, with a number of key decision points and Congressional oversight.

In response to questions regarding preliminary engineering and design (PED), Lundberg said that the question of which 3 lock sites would be done first is still being evaluated. He

explained that it takes 3 years for PED due to the physical modeling requirements and the lead-time needed to get contracts in place.

Ken Barr provided an overview of the ecosystem restoration plan. The initial 15-year \$1.462 billion plan includes authorization of \$250 million for 4 specific fish passage projects and changes to dam point control at 2 sites. In addition, it includes a programmatic authority of \$935 million for projects under \$25 million. Project implementation reports would require approval by the Chief of Engineers. However, it may be possible to have this authority delegated down to the Division level. The plan also includes authorization for restoration of 35,000 acres of floodplain at a total cost of \$277 million. Floodplain restoration projects would be cost shared 65-35 and would be opportunity-based.

Barr explained that the ecosystem restoration plan also includes \$272 million for adaptive management. Approximately half of that amount would be devoted to pre-and post-project monitoring, with the other half for non-site-specific efforts, such as system modeling, bathymetry, and the work of the Science Panel.

In response to a question regarding the relationship of the fish passage projects to concerns about the spread of invasive species, Barr explained that the fish passage at Lock and Dam 4 will be scheduled for the end of the 15 year period, at which time there should be more information regarding invasive species and experience with fish passage at other dams.

Barr also presented a state-by-state breakdown of cost estimates for the 15-year ecosystem restoration plan, showing each state's share based on the recommended cost sharing formula in the plan. Barr noted that most of the costs would be associated with floodplain restoration projects. In addition, Barr explained that the estimated annual O&M costs would be:

Minnesota	\$40,000
Wisconsin	\$40,000
Iowa	\$170,000
Illinois	\$590,000
Missouri	\$170,000
Fish and Wildlife Service	\$300,000

With regard to institutional arrangements, Barr explained that the Corps does not believe that the authorizing legislation needs to address this issue. However, discussions need to take place within the region about how to adapt and develop appropriate organizations to guide implementation of the plan.

Denny Lundberg described the public meeting schedule and format. Between June 7 and June 17, there will be 7 public meetings at locations along the river and one meeting in Washington, D.C. An afternoon open house will be held to answer questions and the evening session will be devoted to taking statements. Stakeholders are encouraged to attend the open house session, but will not be invited to set up displays, as was done at the last series of public meetings.

Gretchen Benjamin asked why the 15-year recommended plan includes 69 percent of the total navigation improvements costs, but only 28 percent of the total ecosystem costs. Lundberg

explained that technical aspects of the analysis were used to identify implementation costs, rather than matching dollar-for-dollar. Benjamin also questioned whether there would be sunk costs if the navigation improvements were to be halted after the evaluation report checkpoint. Lundberg said there would be some sunk costs, but some of the investments, such as guidewalls, would have ongoing value. Mitigation would also need to be adjusted if the navigation improvements were stopped or deferred.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act & Navigation Study

Rick Nelson described Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) activities related to the Navigation Study. By way of background, he explained that the FWCA of 1958 requires equal consideration for wildlife conservation along with other federal water development purposes, mandates consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and state conservation agencies, and requires full consideration of recommendations from the Service in any report to Congress. The FWCA report that the Service issued on the Navigation Study in 2002 identified five major concerns:

- No equal consideration for fish and wildlife
- No long-term plan for fish and wildlife
- No assessment of O&M effects
- No comprehensive mitigation plan
- Traffic mitigation needed more work

However, the 2004 FWCA report reflects the new study approach and highlights the following areas of general agreement between the Service and the Corps:

- Dual purpose authority and equal consideration
- Long term plan for ecosystem restoration
- Cost sharing Option C
- Traffic and site specific mitigation are acceptable
- Adaptive management is needed
- Institutional arrangements should be revisited

In its 2004 FWCA report, the Service indicates it has the following differences of opinion with the Corps:

- Ecosystem restoration is really a mitigation obligation
- Recommends Alternative E
- 15-year plan is not preferred, but is acceptable within the context of a strong 50-year commitment
- Since restoration is a federal mitigation obligation, there should be no cost sharing
- Institutional arrangements need attention
- No blanket acceptance of projects on refuge lands, but will review on a case-by-case basis

State Comments on Navigation Study

Gary Clark said that Illinois agencies will be meeting next week to discuss Illinois' statement for the upcoming public meetings. Mike Wells indicated that Missouri would also likely have a statement. Todd Ambs said that Wisconsin has concerns with recommending a 15-year plan, rather than a 50-year plan, and with the Corps' recommendation for Alternative D* rather than Alternative E.

Gary Clark explained that the state UMRBA members met yesterday to discuss a variety of issues related to the Navigation Study. In general, there is a recognition that institutional arrangements is a significant issue and an assumption that UMRBA will continue to play a role in those discussions. The States assume that GLC will not continue, but that the EMP-CC will continue to exist until the partners are ready for a transition. Denny Lundberg suggested that the GLC meet in August and re-evaluate its future at that time.

Diane Ford-Shivvers said that the States need to become more active in the Navigation Study process, now that the feasibility report is nearing completion and the focus is shifting to authorization issues. Harold Hommes commented that, although State agencies have been providing comments, it is time for the Governors to go on record. Mike Wells offered the following motion, which was seconded by Diane Ford-Shivvers:

UMRBA staff is directed to draft a statement, for consideration by the five Governors, as a joint Governors' statement, expressing the Governors' mutual and general support for the preferred plan in the Corps of Engineers' April 29 draft feasibility report and EIS for the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study. That draft statement shall be provided to UMRBA representatives for review by May 27, with a goal of securing the Governors' endorsement by June 30.

Mark Holsten observed that the ecosystem restoration component of the plan appears to be more problematic for the States than the navigation portion of the plan. Gary Clark said that although the 50-year vision for restoration is the ultimate goal, an initial 15-year increment seems to be a reasonable compromise, given the fiscal environment. Gretchen Benjamin described the 15-year increment as a "ramp-up" period, demonstrating the needs and capabilities.

The motion passed unanimously.

Water Resources Development Act

Holly Stoerker observed that the process of authorizing the Navigation Study draft preferred plan and the process for completing the feasibility report are actually on parallel tracks, rather than the more typical sequential process. In particular, Congress is considering including Upper Mississippi River authorizations in the 2004 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) currently under consideration. Stoerker reported that UMRBA had submitted testimony to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee for its March 31 WRDA hearing. In addition, on March 23, UMRBA staff participated in House and Senate briefings on the Navigation Study, sponsored by the Northeast-Midwest Institute and the Nature

Conservancy. Stoerker said that the purpose of having WRDA as a topic of discussion at this UMRBA meeting is to hear what strategies various groups are pursuing with regard to authorization of the Upper Mississippi plan in WRDA '04.

Rich Worthington explained that the Administration did not offer a WRDA '04. This does not necessarily mean the Administration opposes passage of WRDA, but it does make it more difficult. As a matter of policy, the Administration does not support contingent authorizations or authorizations based on draft reports. Therefore, the Administration will not support authorization of the Upper Mississippi River plan in WRDA '04.

Worthington said that the House WRDA bill passed last fall is a low-cost policy bill and does not include provisions related to the Upper Mississippi River plan. The Senate is also working on a bill. Challenges to getting a WRDA bill out this year include lack of time and the high cost. In particular, the Senate is being asked to include the Upper Mississippi authorization, in addition to Coastal Louisiana and Indian River Lagoon, all of which are very expensive projects.

Chris Brescia described MARC 2000's two-fold strategy. The first is "Rally the Basin," an effort to build support for the 15-year plan within the basin and among the 5-state Congressional delegation. Brescia expressed disappointment that the Governors have not been more vocal and active proponents. He observed that no members of Congress support the full 50-year plan. Brescia said that MARC 2000 is also working to support passage of a WRDA bill in 2004, including authorization of the 15-year Upper Mississippi plan. He commented that cost is a big issue. The Senate Committee has over \$18 billion of project requests, but is targeting the WRDA authorization at \$8-10 billion.

Catherine McCalvin described the efforts of the Nature Conservancy (TNC), explaining that TNC is focusing its efforts on the ecosystem restoration plan and is neutral with regard to the navigation improvements. TNC sponsored a Congressional briefing on March 23, joined with MARC 2000 to sponsor a river tour and fly-over for Committee staff, and has been answering numerous questions from Congressional staff regarding floodplain restoration and water level management. TNC supports Alternative E, but if Alternative D were ultimately selected, TNC would recommend adding additional floodplain restoration. McCalvin also explained that institutional arrangements are a priority issue for TNC. She distributed a summary of TNC's proposal for a River Council, river reach management teams, science committee, and adaptive management process. Finally, McCalvin encouraged the States to lobby more actively for the Upper Mississippi River plan.

Mark Beorkrem said that the Mississippi River Basin Alliance and other environmental groups are pushing for a 50-year ecosystem restoration authorization, believing that a 15-year program is just a down payment. He also said they support small-scale and nonstructural navigation improvements, but believe that large-scale measures should not be undertaken without additional study. They are also pushing for Corps reform, mitigation reform, and independent review. Beorkrem said he has met with the Administration to explain cost sharing options and the relationship between mitigation and ecosystem restoration.

Mark Martell explained that Audubon's primary concern is loss of habitat and the need for ecosystem restoration. In particular, Audubon supports Alternative E. In Audubon's

presentation to the National Research Council, Dan McGuiness emphasized the need for a science-based plan, a science-based process, and a long-term commitment to river restoration. Martell also outlined a series of recommendations for WRDA '04, including \$135 million per year for EMP, linking EMP funding to navigation system O&M, indexing EMP to inflation, making restoration of natural river processes a priority, developing system and pool plans, establishing a partnership with USDA for floodplain restoration, water quality monitoring in sub-basins, and restoration of the Lower Mississippi River.

Steve Johnson Recognition

Gary Clark presented Steve Johnson with a UMRBA certificate of appreciation and T-shirt. Johnson, who recently left Minnesota DNR to take a position with the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, started his involvement with UMRBA in 1987 and was appointed as one of Minnesota's UMRBA alternates in 1991.

Gary Loss presented Johnson with a Corps of Engineers Commander's Coin.

Blufflands Alliance

Mark Ackelson explained that the blufflands along the 400 miles of river between the Twin Cities and the Quad Cities are ecologically unique and have the highest density of archeological sites in the U.S. The region is also the fourth fastest growing region in the country, as measured by sprawl. Inappropriate land use includes overgrazing, clear-cutting of forests, and dumping in sink holes.

Ackelson explained that the Blufflands Alliance was formed in 1993 to address these issues by actively conserving land. The Alliance is comprised of 6 individual private organizations that work with private landowners, demonstrate sustainable management options, advise developers, and provide education and training. The Alliance is working in 35 targeted areas, totaling 600,000 acres. The focus is primarily on protecting large blocks of land through permanent conservation easements. To date, 16,000 acres have been permanently protected and the Alliance is working on another 10,000 acres.

Ackelson also described plans for a Mississippi River Trail running the full length of the river. The Alliance is working to build Congressional support for the trail, including securing \$2 million from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and \$100 million for 22 projects from the Transportation Equity Act surface transportation funding.

EMP Report to Congress

Roger Perk explained that, when the EMP was reauthorized in 1999, provisions were included that require a Report to Congress (RTC) every 6 years. The RTC that the partners are currently preparing focuses on the following issues:

- NGOs as non-federal sponsors
- Cost sharing on federal lands
- Operation and maintenance of HREPs

- Rehabilitation of HREPs
- Land acquisition
- HREP planning and prioritization
- Coordination between LTRMP and other programs

Recommendations include:

- Continue the EMP
- Allow NGOs to serve as non-federal sponsors
- Ensure that the Fish and Wildlife Service has sufficient resources for O&M of HREPs on refuges
- Have USGS and EPA jointly convene an interagency science planning process
- Further delegate approval authority for HREPs to Division and Districts

In response to a question, Perk commented that 6 years may be too frequent for such reports. Preparing the report is a rather long process, although there may be opportunities to streamline the process. In particular Perk suggested that issues to be addressed in the report be identified on an annual basis.

Charlie Wooley recommended that a roll-out strategy for the RTC be developed that would help publicize the EMP and draw attention to its accomplishments. Todd Ambs expressed support for such a strategy and suggested that EMP projects in each state be highlighted.

Marvin Hubbell explained that the Corps is seeking letters of support from each of the EMP partner agencies for inclusion in the RTC. Originally the Corps had asked for the letters by May 28. The deadline has been extended to June 30, with a goal of getting the final document to the printer in early July.

Barb Naramore explained that UMRBA had provided a letter of support for the 1997 RTC and staff is assuming that UMRBA will provide a letter for the 2004 RTC as well. Naramore distributed a summary of the main points that staff is suggesting be included in the letter:

- Endorse the RTC and describe the States' involvement in its development
- Highlight the partnership effort
- Emphasize the importance of the EMP to balanced management and describe the relationship of the EMP and the Navigation Study
- Support the RTC conclusions and recommendations
- Reiterate the States' support for the RTC process

Todd Ambs suggested that the letter also highlight the EMP's return on investment and the need for higher annual funding.

Pool Plans for Pools 1 - 10

Tim Yager and Randy Urich provided an overview of the Pool Plans in the St. Paul District of the Corps of Engineers. The Pool Plans are maps and descriptions of what river managers and the public have defined as necessary to reverse the loss of habitat diversity and achieve desired future conditions. The plans draw heavily upon previous efforts, such as the UMRCC Report, and are approved by the River Resources Forum. Proposed actions include maintaining existing habitat, water level management, island protection and restoration, increasing depth diversity in backwaters, optimizing river connectivity and flows, managing forests and prairies, and working cooperatively with private property owners. Public meetings were held on the plans in September 2001.

Gretchen Benjamin said that the cost of implementing the St. Paul District Pool Plans is approximately \$2 billion over 50 years, including \$1.2 billion for construction and \$400 million for planning. Benjamin noted that these cost estimates demonstrate why the Navigation Study ecosystem restoration plan should be based on Alternative E, rather than Alternative D.

UMRBA Travel Reimbursement Policy

Gary Clark explained that UMRBA has a policy governing reimbursement of UMRBA State representatives for travel. Currently that policy limits reimbursement to \$4000/year for States that pay their dues in full the preceding year. At the Association members' request, UMRBA staff drafted an alternative policy that would limit reimbursement to \$3000, prorated based on the proportion of dues paid. (See attached)

Diane Ford-Shivvers moved approval of the draft policy and Mike Wells seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

UMRBA Personnel Manual

Gary Clark explained that revising UMRBA staff salary ranges to reflect comparable State of Minnesota salary ranges will require amending the UMRBA Personnel Manual. Diane Ford Shivvers offered the following motion, which was then seconded by Gretchen Benjamin:

Amend the UMRBA Manual of Personnel Practices and Procedures as follows:

- Change the salary ranges to the following:
 - Executive Secretary 34,000 - 46,000
 - Associate Director 48,000 - 70,000
 - Executive Director 57,000 - 80,000
- Change the title of Executive Secretary to Administrative Assistant
- Indicate that UMRBA salary ranges are comparable to Minnesota State government salary ranges

The motion passed unanimously.

UMRBA FY 2005 Budget

Holly Stoerker offered a proposed UMRBA budget for FY 2005 that reflects \$377,900 in revenues and \$395,826 in expenses, yielding a projected deficit of \$17,926. Stoerker explained that UMRBA has had deficit budgets in prior years, although FY 2004 will be a surplus year. UMRBA's income is decreasing as a result of both decreasing revenue from EPA cooperative agreements and grants and diminishing investment income. These decreases are putting a strain on the organization because expenses are not declining commensurately.

Mike Wells moved and Gretchen Benjamin seconded a motion to approve the FY 2005 budget as proposed by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

Gary Clark said that UMRBA State representatives and alternates intend to have a strategic planning session in connection with the next quarterly UMRBA meeting. Fiscal issues, as well as issues related to the future mission of the organization will be discussed. Clark invited input from UMRBA's federal liaison members.

Announcements

Gretchen Benjamin announced that the U.S. Forest Service is starting a UMR Forestry Partnership to coordinate forestry management within the watershed. A UMR coordinator for the effort is located in the Wisconsin DNR's La Crosse office.

The future quarterly meeting schedule for the combined GLC, UMRBA, and EMP-CC meetings includes August 10-12, 2004 in the Quad Cities and November 16-18, 2004 in St. Louis. It was agreed that the winter meetings will be held February 22-24, 2005 in La Crosse, or in the Twin Cities if hotel accommodations are not available for those dates in La Crosse.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

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**UMRBA Policy
Regarding
State Travel Reimbursement**

(Approved May 19, 2004)

Purpose: To facilitate member states' participation in UMRBA meetings.

Per-State Cap: At its February Annual meeting each year, the UMRBA shall identify the maximum allowable annual travel reimbursement cost per state. UMRBA staff will use this cap as the basis for development of the budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1 of that year.

State Allocations: The maximum amount that a member state may actually receive for travel reimbursement in any given fiscal year shall be in the same proportion to the per-state cap as that state's payment of UMRBA dues was to the full dues assessment in the previous year. (Example: If a state paid ½ of its dues in fiscal year X, it will be eligible for ½ of the per state cap in fiscal year X+1.)

Eligible Expenses: Funds may be used to reimburse travel costs incurred by state agency staff for attendance at UMRBA meetings and meetings of Committees and Task Forces created by UMRBA.* Each state's Governor-appointed UMRBA representative shall identify, in writing, in advance, the individuals eligible to claim travel reimbursement expenses from UMRBA.

Reimbursement: The UMRBA Executive Director is authorized to make payment to state representatives or their employer agency in accordance with the above policies. Reimbursement requests submitted to UMRBA shall be in accordance with the expense allowances and guidelines governing travel by employees of the state agency for which the individual seeking reimbursement works.

Meeting Planning: To minimize travel costs associated with UMRBA meetings, efforts will be made to:

- select meeting locations that are easily accessible
- rotate meeting locations in order to minimize the inconvenience and cost for any one state
- select the least expensive hotel with appropriate meeting accommodations

Financial Reporting: UMRBA staff shall notify all Governor-appointed UMRBA representatives of the balances in their state's travel reimbursement account as part of the Executive Director's quarterly report. Upon request, UMRBA staff will provide more frequent financial reports, including accounting of all reimbursement payments.

* Currently, those committees include the UMRBA Spills Group and UMRBA Water Quality Task Force.