

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

**May 23, 2007  
Quarterly Meeting**

**Holiday Inn  
Rock Island, Illinois**

Charlie Wooley of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m. on May 23, 2007. Other EMP-CC representatives present were Terry Smith (USACE), Mike Jawson (USGS), Martin Konrad (IA DNR), Tim Schlagenhaft (MN DNR), Janet Sternburg (MO DOC), Gretchen Benjamin (WI DNR), and Bill Franz (USEPA). A list of attendees follows these minutes.

**Minutes from the February 22, 2007 Meeting**

Martin Konrad moved and Janet Sternburg seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the February 22, 2007 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

**Program Management**

*Update on P-2 Accounting/Project Management Changes*

Marv Hubbell briefly summarized recent Corps-wide changes in accounting and project management systems. These changes will have the unintended consequence of eliminating MVR's outside contracting credit for LTRMP funds it passes through USGS to the field stations. Gary Loss explained that these contracting credits are important for MVR, which must meet a district-wide goal of contracting out 30 percent of all engineering and professional services. Moreover, only certain projects and programs have any capacity to contract out, thus reducing the potential pool of contributors to meeting the goal. The EMP currently contracts out very little of its engineering and professional services work.

After considerable deliberation within MVR, it is virtually certain that there will be no changes in FY 08 to the established practice for funding the state field stations — i.e., MVR will continue to pass this funding to the states thru USGS. This means that MVR will be forgoing contracting credit for these funds, and Loss explained that there is a slight chance this decision for FY 08 will need to be revisited if MVR has an unexpectedly difficult time meeting its district-wide 30 percent goal. Hubbell noted that the challenge of meeting this district goal is expected to abate somewhat after FY 08, as MVR adapts to Corps-wide changes in the accounting and program management systems.

Janet Sternburg expressed concern with the potential impacts of modifying the funding transfer practices for the LTRMP, noting that it could be quite disruptive to the partnership. She expressed her appreciation for MVR's considerable efforts to maintain the transfer of field station funds through USGS.

### *Other Key Updates/Questions*

Angie Freyermuth reported that work is underway with the Dubuque Museum on the EMP display. Current efforts include finalizing the funding transfer and developing the design. The new display is expected to open sometime in FY 08.

Justine Barati announced that she is available to assist in supporting individual Congressional visits and group events at HREPs this summer. She expressed the opinion that individual visits, tailored to the needs and interests of a particular Member of Congress, are generally more effective than larger, group events. Barati reminded EMP-CC members that the Corps must be careful not to engage in lobbying efforts. Martin Konrad said he likes the idea of reaching out to individual members, as well as Governors. Mike Jawson said USGS will also be hosting Congressional visits at UMESC in the coming months. Hubbell said USACE will coordinate with USGS and others to ensure consistent messages across the partners' various outreach efforts.

### **Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects**

#### *Update on Data Utilization Pilot*

Marv Hubbell reported that Jason Rohweder and Barry Johnson from UMESC have visited all three districts to discuss ways of enhancing the habitat program's use of existing LTRMP data. Rohweder, with support as necessary from other UMESC staff, is now working on one project in each district. Progress will be somewhat limited this year, due to delays associated with the continuing resolution funding, but Hubbell said he is quite pleased with the effort so far.

#### *USACE/USEPA Meeting*

Hubbell reported that EPA and Corps staff held a meeting to discuss linkages between the Clean Water Act and ecosystem restoration on the Upper Mississippi River. Bill Franz explained that the purpose of the meeting was primarily educational, with EPA and Corps staff having the opportunity to learn about one another's work. Franz said staff from the two agencies agreed to coordinate their efforts more closely in the future. For example, EPA staff will review and comment on HREP fact sheets from a water quality perspective. According to Hubbell and Franz, staff from the two agencies will also participate in two UMRBA-sponsored workshops, tentatively scheduled for this fall, to explore related issues among a broader set of participants. Those workshops remain contingent on the receipt of funding support from EPA.

#### *EMP's Ability to Address Ecosystem Restoration Needs*

Tim Schlagenhaft presented his perspectives on the EMP's current ability to address ecosystem restoration needs on the river, highlighting two areas where he views the current program as deficient — i.e., limitations on pool scale water level management and land acquisition for floodplain restoration. Noting that he had expressed concern with these limitations previously, Schlagenhaft explained that he has held off on the matter because the NESP authority was pending and potentially offered another avenue to pursue such projects. However, with the ongoing NESP delays and the clear need for water level management and floodplain restoration projects, Schlagenhaft said he is no longer content to await the outcome of the NESP authorization process.

Schlagenhaft briefly described the potential benefits from both floodplain restoration and water level management, and highlighted the partners' previously expressed willingness to review and address EMP needs and limitations. In particular, he noted the 1997 Report to Congress recommendation calling for the partners to "identify factors that may be limiting program innovation and review and

revise any potentially constraining policies and guidance.” Schlagenhaft emphasized that he would envision water level management and floodplain restoration projects going through the same prioritization process as other HREPs, and suggested that acquisition funding could be capped at perhaps 20 percent of total HREP funds annually. He then posed the following two questions to the Corps of Engineers:

1. Can we use EMP funding for dredging, monitoring, and research to implement and evaluate pool-scale draw downs?
2. Can we use EMP funding to cost share acquisition and restoration of floodplain lands that are not immediately tied to construction?

Anticipating that neither of these questions would be answered with an unqualified “yes,” Schlagenhaft then asked the Corps to elaborate on the following:

1. Do Corps policies or EMP authorizing language prevent us from utilizing HREP funding for conducting water level draw downs and from purchasing lands or easements for floodplain restoration that are not directly related to a construction project?
2. If authorization or policies prevent us from including these activities, what actions would be necessary to incur change?

He said he was not seeking an immediate answer from the Corps at today’s meeting, and instead asked the Corp to provide a written explanation of legislative and policy constraints in these areas for discussion at the August EMP-CC meeting.

Terry Smith said large, pool scale drawdown projects are probably best pursued under the pending NESP authority, emphasizing that they would take considerably longer under the EMP. Regarding land acquisition for floodplain restoration, Smith said the Corps looks holistically at ecosystem needs in a given area, but does not attempt to address all problems alone. Instead, it relies on other partners to work cooperatively toward common goals. Smith said part of the problem with purchasing land in advance of an identified project is that you don’t know if it is the optimal project.

Hubbell noted that the 1999 Water Resources Development Act authorized credit for lands and eligible expenses incurred prior to execution of the project cooperation agreement (PCA). However, the nexus between the lands acquired and a construction element has not been fully explored in the context of a particular HREP proposal.

Rich Worthington explained that the Corps strives for a consistent approach in implementing its aquatic ecosystem restoration mission nationwide. The Corps collaborates with others in seeking comprehensive solutions to important ecosystem problems, but the Corps’ own niche in meeting these broader goals is aquatic restoration. As such, Worthington said that land acquisition as a sole project objective is not consistent with the Corps’ aquatic restoration mission. Schlagenhaft noted that NESP calls for 35,000 acres of floodplain restoration in the first increment of ecosystem restoration. Worthington said these projects will involve both acquisition and some kind of hydraulic manipulation to restore habitat.

Janet Sternburg noted that the Schenimann Chute project has been in limbo for several years, shifting alternately between NESP and the EMP. She expressed appreciation to Schlagenhaft for his effort in bringing these issues to the table, emphasizing that sound projects should not be placed on hold indefinitely pending NESP authorization. Sternburg also said these are exactly the kinds of issues the EMP-CC should be addressing in its meetings. She suggested shifting the format of meetings to place

less emphasis on updates and devote more time to substantive discussions. Marv Hubbell and Barb Naramore said they would be happy to work with partners on such changes.

Holly Stoerker suggested that the Corps' written response to Schlagenhaft's questions include a summary of past policy statements concerning land acquisition, with an indication of how these policies are interpreted currently by the Corps. Stoerker also cautioned that it is hard to know how the NESP land acquisition authority would be implemented until the post-authorization implementation guidance is issued. She said it is quite possible NESP will include land acquisition restrictions and requirements similar to those under the EMP.

#### *HREP Planning and Sequencing*

Hubbell reported that the EMP Program Planning Team (PPT) held its first meeting earlier this morning. The PPT discussed the original charges to the various groups [i.e., District Ecological Teams (DETs), System Ecological Team (SET), PPT, and USACE], as well as the SET's anticipated recommendations. Those recommendations are process-related, rather than project-specific, and include things such as establishing habitat-based restoration objectives by geomorphic reach, modifying the SET's role to engage more as a technical/scientific partner in developing objectives and planning HREPs, and enhancing the consistency and content of HREP fact sheets from the three DETs. Hubbell reported that PPT members expressed initial support for many of the anticipated SET recommendations. The SET's written report will be available for the EMP-CC's consideration at its August meeting. This report will include specific recommended changes to the HREP Planning and Sequencing document that the EMP-CC endorsed in November 2003.

Hubbell also explained that MVS needs to initiate planning on new HREPs. As a result, planning will commence on two of the 18 projects considered, but not acted upon, by the SET. These are Pool 24 Islands and Rip Rap Landing. The PPT did not voice any objections to this approach.

#### **Long Term Resource Monitoring Program**

##### *LTRMP Updates*

Mike Jawson briefly summarized the LTRMP's FY 07 second quarter highlights, including numerous presentations at the Mississippi River Research Consortium meeting, a completion report on longitudinal patterns of aquatic vegetation in the three upper trend pools, various types of GIS and bathymetry support to partners, and posting of vegetation and water quality data on the internet. Jawson also reviewed the list of delayed products as of the second quarter.

##### *FY 08 APE Process*

Jawson reported that the FY 08 Additional Program Element (APE) process is underway, using the five focus areas endorsed in February 2007:

1. Connectivity and its effect on rates of biological processes.
2. Landscape/habitat patterns — relation to the abundance and diversity of biota.
3. Aquatic vegetation — influence on biotic and abiotic components.
4. Establishing baseline goals for the major resources monitored by the LTRMP.
5. Native mussels — population size, species diversity, and age.

In a slight process modification from last year, researchers have been asked as a first step to submit letters of interest, which USGS is using to identify common threads and foster collaboration among

researchers. According to Jawson, the call for letters of intent is scheduled for late May, with those letters due in mid-July. USGS, USACE, and the A-Team will then invite full proposals from among those letters in late July. Jawson explained that, with the additional letter of interest step, final selection of FY 08 APEs will not be made until FY 08 is underway. However, given the pattern of delayed appropriations that has been typical in recent years, he said this is not expected to introduce any additional delay in actually implementing projects.

### *Status and Trends Report*

The final draft of the Status and Trends Report is scheduled to be submitted for editorial review on June 15, with printed copies anticipated to be distributed by September 25. According to Jawson, Chapter 1 is being extensively rewritten in response to review comments. Other changes in the report are more minor.

Tim Schlagenhaft asked that the August EMP-CC agenda include time for more detailed discussion about the Status and Trends Report. Specifically, he said he wants to understand what comments UMESC received and how those were addressed. In addition, Schlagenhaft said he would like to discuss partner expectations and objectives for the next Status and Trends Report while this report is still fresh in everyone's minds. As an example, he said Minnesota would like to see the next report use both LTRMP and other data in assessing status and trends. Marv Hubbell said he would certainly be open to broadening the data sources used for the next report, while explaining that the Corps specifically directed that the current report concentrate on what can be learned from LTRMP data. Jawson agreed that it would be very helpful to talk early on about what people want in the next report.

### *Other*

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Barry Johnson and Jeff DeZellar said they would be happy to discuss the design of the upcoming Pool 6 mussel survey. But the work will be getting underway shortly, so there is limited opportunity to alter the planned approach. Fischer said there is concern within Wisconsin DNR that the study, as currently designed, will not answer some of the DNR staff's specific management questions.

Hubbell reported that USACE is proposing to treat the restored increment of water quality and fish monitoring as an administrative APE in FY 08 and 09. A written description of this proposed approach was circulated on May 18. Under this approach, the EMP-CC, rather than the A-Team, would be the review and concurrence body, as it will be with all administrative APEs. The restored monitoring increment will be subject to the standard requirement for both technical and administrative APEs — i.e., one-year products, acceptable progress with any previous related work, feasibility without adding permanent staff, etc. However, as an administrative APE, it will not be guided by the focusing questions used to frame the technical APEs, nor will it need to respond to a broad solicitation process, as do the technical APEs. In response to a question from Martin Konrad, Hubbell said his plan would be for the EMP-CC to consider the proposed administrative APEs at its November meeting. EMP-CC members expressed their satisfaction with this proposed approach.

### *A-Team Report*

Janet Sternburg distributed a written A-Team report. She said she is pleased with the A-Team's efforts to shift its focus toward more scientific and technical discussions, with less emphasis on administrative matters, noting that the team's April meeting included several excellent presentations and discussions. The A-Team is also satisfied that all high- and medium-ranked FY 07 APEs have been selected for funding.

Sternburg assumed a two-year term as A-Team chair at the April meeting. She encouraged EMP-CC members and others to contact her with any questions or issues they want to bring to the A-Team's attention.

### **LTRMP Strategic Planning**

Marv Hubbell reported that the LTRMP Strategic Planning Team held its first meeting April 30 to May 2. He noted that the 2004 restructuring process was rushed and constrained, leaving many program partners unsatisfied. In contrast, Hubbell stressed the partner agencies' commitment to following a sound process that permits broad and complete consideration of the LTRMP's future in crafting a strategic plan for FY 10-14. He expressed special appreciation to Minnesota DNR for committing the skills of two excellent facilitators to the approximately 18-month process. Hubbell said his appreciation also extends to all of the partner agencies and individual Planning Team members for making strong commitments to the process.

Hubbell said that the Planning Team has agreed to use a Program Logic Model in its efforts. This will allow the group to consider outcomes (roughly equivalent to goals), outputs (products needed to achieve those outcomes), and inputs (staff and other resources needed to produce the outputs) for the LTRMP in FY 10-14. As is described in its meeting summary, the Planning Team spent time at its first meeting doing unconstrained brainstorming about outcomes, outputs, and inputs. These are just preliminary ideas, and undoubtedly include both omissions as well as many things it is not feasible to accomplish under the LTRMP.

Hubbell explained that the Planning Team members have agreed to function as a unit for the duration of the process. There will not be substitutes for particular meetings, and members are responsible for communicating back to their state or federal agency throughout the planning effort. Barb Naramore will serve as the point of contact (POC) for federal agencies not participating on the Planning Team, as well as for nongovernmental stakeholder groups. As the first manifestation of this approach, the Planning Team POCs will solicit partner and stakeholder perspectives on LTRMP outcomes, outputs, and inputs prior to the team's second meeting, which is scheduled for July 16-18.

Hubbell noted that the Planning Team explicitly considered the challenge of developing the LTRMP strategic plan in the absence of clearly articulated goals and objectives for the EMP as a whole and the HREP component. While a framework of EMP and HREP goals would clearly be helpful, the team concluded that it could and would proceed without them. Hubbell said he would like to explore the question of a broader EMP goal-setting exercise with the EMP-CC at its August meeting. The Planning Team will also report back on its progress at the EMP-CC's August meeting.

Other members of the LTRMP Strategic Planning Team offered a variety of perspectives, including the following major points:

- The process is off to a good start, and participants are generally pleased with the transparent approach and progress so far. Planning Team members are coming to the process with open minds and a commitment to collegiality.
- It is important to look broadly first at desired outcomes and outputs, without assuming continuation of the status quo or anything in particular about available resources. The reality of various constraints will come into play soon enough.
- This LTRMP strategic planning effort will be useful, regardless of what happens with the pending NESF authorization.
- The services of the Minnesota DNR facilitator were a tremendous help at the first meeting.

- The Fish and Wildlife Service was pleased to be invited to provide Planning Team members from both Ecological Services and Refuges. However, Jon Duyvejonck from the Rock Island Field Office will be the Service's sole representative on the team.

### **Other Business**

Mike Jawson asked to vary the order of the NECC/ECC and EMP-CC meetings occasionally in the quarterly sequence, in recognition of the fact that there are some participants in each group who would prefer to meet on the day following the UMRBA.

Barb Naramore outlined the following schedule for upcoming quarterly meetings:

- **August 2007—La Crosse, Wisconsin**
  - UMRBA—August 21
  - NECC/ECC—August 22
  - **EMP-CC—August 23**
- **November 2007—Twin Cities, Minnesota**
  - UMRBA—November 13
  - NECC/ECC—November 14
  - UMRBA Water Quality Executive Committee—November 14 (concurrent with NECC/ECC)
  - **EMP-CC—November 15**
- **February 2008—St. Louis, Missouri**
  - UMRBA—February 20
  - **EMP-CC—February 21**
  - NECC/ECC—February 22

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 p.m.

**EMP-CC Attendance List  
May 23, 2007**

**EMP-CC Members**

Terry Smith	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Charlie Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Mike Jawson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Martin Konrad	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Tim Schlagenhaft	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Janet Sternburg	Missouri Department of Conservation
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**Others in Attendance**

Rich Worthington	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, HQ
Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Tom Novak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jeff DeZellar	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Gary Loss	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Chuck Spitzack	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
Hank DeHaan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Angie Freyermuth	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Chuck Theiling	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Sandra Brewer	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Don Hultman	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Sharonne Baylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Gary Wege	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, TCFO
Rick Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO
Dick Steinbach	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain & IL River Refuges
Karen Westphall	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain Complex
Joyce Collins	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marion ES Sub-Office
Linda Leake	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jennie Sauer	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Ken Lubinski	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Matt O'Hara	Illinois Natural History Survey
Mike Griffin	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Dave Bierman	Iowa Department of Natural Resources, LTRMP Field Station
Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Catherine McCalvin	The Nature Conservancy
Brad Walker	Prairie Rivers Network (IL)
Tom Boland	MACTEC, St. Louis
Cynthia Drew	University of Miami
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association