

**Minutes of the  
106<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting  
of the  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**May 20, 2008  
St. Paul, Minnesota**

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by UMRBA Chair Martin Konrad. The following were present:

UMRBA Representatives and Alternates:

Gary Clark	Illinois (DNR)
Rick Mollahan	Illinois (DNR)
Martin Konrad	Iowa (DNR)
Neil Volmer	Iowa (DOT)
Laurie Martinson	Minnesota (DNR)
Rebecca Wooden	Minnesota (DNR)
Dick Lambert	Minnesota (DOT)
Mike Wells	Missouri (DNR)
Dru Buntin	Missouri (DNR)
Todd Ambs	Wisconsin (DNR)
Gretchen Benjamin	Wisconsin (DNR)

Federal Liaisons:

Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 5)
Mike Jawson	U.S. Geological Survey (UMESC)
Charles Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)
Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVD)
Terry Smith	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVD)

Others in attendance:

Tim Schlagenhaft	Minnesota (DNR)
Steve Lee	Minnesota (PCA)
Jonathan Peterson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Kevin Bluhm	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Jon Christenson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Adam Rasmussen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Jeff DeZellar	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Chuck Spitzack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Michael Tarpey	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Marv Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Gary R. Clark	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Colonel Robert Sinkler	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Rich Astrack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)

Linda Leake	U.S. Geological Survey
Rick Frietsche	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gary Wege	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Scott Yess	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/ UMRCC
Paul Rohde	Waterways Council, Inc.
Heather Schoonover	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Dan McGuiness	Audubon
Gary Loss	CDM
Vince Shay	The Nature Conservancy
Doug Blodgett	The Nature Conservancy
Gabrielle Horner	The Nature Conservancy
Dan Larson	River Resource Alliance
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Kirsten Mickelsen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

### **Meeting Minutes**

Laurie Martinson moved and Todd Ambs seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2008 meeting as drafted. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Holly Stoerker highlighted the following items from her written report included in the agenda packet:

- On March 5-6, UMRBA staff, Board members, and Water Quality Executive Committee members talked with members of Congress and the Administration about funding and program development of EMP and NESP, including the relationship between the two programs. They also promoted funding for UMRBA's interstate water quality activities. UMRBA staff submitted earmark request forms to 11 Congressional members for UMRBA water quality funding.
- On April 16-17, UMRBA held the first of two "Ecosystem Restoration and the Clean Water Act" workshops. Participants identified potential ways to connect ecosystem restoration and water quality protection efforts; a summary of those ideas was distributed. The second workshop will be on June 11-12 in Dubuque, Iowa. The ideas generated in the first workshop will be discussed in further detail and case studies on Chesapeake Bay, Everglades and Lake Pepin will be presented.
- The U.S. EPA has posted an opening for a 2-year Environmental Protection Specialist position with the UMRBA under an Intergovernmental Personnel Agreement (IPA). The posting will close on May 23. The UMRBA will review the candidate list and participate in the interviewing process. The position will primarily work on the UMR Designated Uses Project and will also generally support the work of the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force.
- The LTRMP Strategic Planning Team has released a draft plan for FY 10-14 and requests comments be submitted to the appropriate point of contact by June 16, 2008. The team hopes to have a final draft to present at the EMP-CC's August 2008 meeting for endorsement. An operational plan will be created after the strategic plan is finalized, serving to link the strategic plan's outcomes and outputs to the LTRMP annual work plans.
- The Interstate Council on Water Policy is working with the Corps on a proposal to conduct a national assessment of states' water planning processes. Regional meetings are proposed for states to share their planning needs. UMR will likely be included in the Northeast region meeting in June 2009.

Holly Stoerker announced that this is her 106<sup>th</sup> and last UMRBA quarterly meeting. She expressed her appreciation for those she has worked with over the years and the progress that has been made on the river, as well as her hopes that people will continue to work in a respectful, collaborative way. Martin Konrad announced Stoerker's retirement party will be held in La Crosse, Wisconsin the week of the August quarterly meeting. More details are forthcoming.

### **Remarks from Brigadier General Walsh**

Brigadier General Michael Walsh described his vision for the Mississippi River as one river system. But he emphasized that there are different complexities along the river and thus different goals and missions. He said he is in the process of trying to understand and analyze what it is that we know, think, and do not know about the river.

General Walsh and Colonel Robert Sinkler presented an award to Dan McGuinness for forty years of service as a conservationist on the Upper Mississippi River.

### **Inland Waterway User Fees**

Paul Rohde of the Waterways Council reported on the history and current status of the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) and the Administration's proposal to shift from a gas tax to a lock-use fee. The trust fund was enacted in 1977 and established a \$0.10 per gallon fuel tax, which is now \$0.20 per gallon. The tax costs each vessel approximately \$8,000-16,000 per fill up. The IWTF pays for 50 percent of the total costs for new construction and major rehabilitation on the inland navigation system. The Administration is proposing the lockage fees in reaction to the decreasing trust fund balance, which is currently at \$139 million. Rhode commented that spending the trust fund money is preferable to accumulating a large fund balance while leaving navigation needs unmet.

*Administration's proposal* — The Administration announced on April 4 that it is proposing to transition from the fuel tax to a user fee. The fee would be imposed starting on October 1, 2008 at \$50 per barge, per lockage, at the larger locks (i.e., 600 feet in length and above). It would increase by \$10 each year until it reaches \$80 in 2012. At the same time, the fuel tax will be reduced to \$0.10 per gallon in October 2008, to \$0.05 in October 2009, and would end in October 2010. Forty segments would be added to the existing 27 taxed segments. This expansion would include the Black and Minnesota Rivers. However, most of the additional river segments are in Louisiana and Texas.

*Waterways Council's perspective* – The Administration's proposal has several fundamental problems, according to Rhode:

1. There are important details left unaddressed, such as the collection mechanism.
2. There is no consideration of the market impact, which could move traffic off of the river.
3. National policy should be encouraging water transportation.
4. The policy is inequitable in that commercial operators are the only source of revenue, but are not the only beneficiaries of the navigation system.
5. It would create a disproportionate burden on waterways with locks — e.g., taxes would increase by 195 percent on trips to UMR.

According to Rhode, the Corps' project delivery system is ineffective and needs to be addressed (e.g., the Olmstead project took 25 years to complete). Delays in project construction have led to substantial lost benefits, and the current timetable from initiation of construction to completion is 18-25 years. This compares with four to eight years following WRDA 86. Existing systems should be improved, rather than creating a new model. Rhode called for predictable, consistent, and adequate funding; increased

commitment to operation and maintenance and system reliability; and a reduction in the non-federal cost share on navigation projects from 50 to 25 percent.

Todd Ambs asked what the likelihood is of the lockage fee proposal moving forward and getting Congressional approval. Rohde responded that the proposal came quickly and has Congressional opposition, but said the discussion will continue. Dru Buntin asked about Congressional reaction to industry's proposal to reduce the non-federal cost share on inland navigation projects from 50 to 25 percent. Rohde said that the Congressional response to this idea is still to be determined.

### **Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP)**

*Program Update* — Chuck Spitzack reported that the Reevaluation Report was submitted to Corps headquarters in March and was approved to go to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA CW) in April. The District Commanders and their senior staff were briefed in April and a meeting is planned with MVD staff. Spitzack thanked the UMRBA, EMP-CC and NECC/ ECC for re-energizing the Institutional Arrangements process. The Corps launched a UMRS Communication Team in April, and more information will be presented at the August meeting. The team plans on coordinating with partner agencies and lower river districts. Holly Stoerker asked when the Corps will hear back from the ASA on the reevaluation report, and Terry Smith said he did not know because there has been no feedback yet.

Ongoing and future activities include:

- First Increment Plan and FY 09 plan scenarios (out for comment soon)
- Communication plan (July)
- Proposal for the River Advisory Panel (out for comment in July/August)
- Revised Program Management Plan (August)
- System-wide goals for ecosystem, human use, and navigation
- Learning and communication principles
- Reach planning — a pilot ecosystem objectives workshop will be held next week
- First Implementation Report (Program Management Plan and report outline to discuss in August; report due June 09)

Martin Konrad asked if there is a schedule for reach planning efforts. Spitzack replied that there is not, but Corps staff will work on developing one. Spitzack noted that NESP funding constraints limit the amount of reach planning that can be accomplished in FY 08. Gretchen Benjamin asked how the communication plan is going to work. Spitzack said that the Communication Team will be working on inter-district and inter-program communication and that a draft plan will hopefully be done in July. Benjamin said it is good to have internal communication and coordination and acknowledged that funding constraints are tough. But she urged that more money be invested for public outreach, especially at this early stage of the program. Spitzack agreed that it is important, and that the budget is lean. He stressed that the Corps must balance public outreach with other things that need to be done, but said funding for public outreach has been kept relatively high, in comparison to other program components. Benjamin expressed interest in working with Corps on public outreach. Colonel Sinkler said he appreciates this offer.

*WRDA Implementation Guidance* — Terry Smith said that implementation guidance is needed for NESP because the WRDA authorization is ambiguous on some points, leaving issues to be addressed by the Corps as the implementing agency. He explained that the guidance is an internal directive to Corps staff, and is not written for a broad general audience. Smith reported that the guidance has been

approved in Corps headquarters and will hopefully be finalized and sent to the ASA in a month. Once finalized, the guidance can be modified over time as needed.

Smith explained that the partners' comments on the draft guidance related primarily to five main issues: 1) various limitations on delegated authorities, 2) adaptive management, 3) Project Implementation Reports, 4) comparable progress, and 5) condemnation.

Smith reviewed the Corps' response to UMRBA comments in particular:

- Language concerning dam point control was clarified. As suggested in the UMRBA's comments, dam point will augment, rather than supplant, hinge point control for purposes of enhanced water level management.
- Delegation of authority for various report and plan approvals will be evaluated later as experience from implementation is gained.
- The intent of the language in regards to condemnation is to work with a willing seller at fair market value. Condemnation will not be used under the NESP restoration program to take title or real estate interests from unwilling sellers. Instead, it will be a carefully limited tool employed only to address certain title and valuation issues, with the landowner's consent.
- The Corps agrees that collaboration on project priorities should occur.
- Cost sharing for the feasibility phase of restoration projects is the Corps standard; EMP was under an older approach. This will be worked on and addressed as we go forward
- Monitoring and adaptive management will be exempted from the one and three percent caps, respectively, relative to total costs for CAP projects. The guidance has been revised in accordance with the comments.
- Consultation and funding agreements with the Department of the Interior and states are not limited to \$100,000. But agreements above this amount must be approved by the Division, rather than District, Engineer. An effort will be made to change the cap on District-level approval to \$200,000.
- The Corps concurs with UMRBA's observations that the WRDA-mandated Advisory Panel need not be limited to the narrow functions specified in the legislation and may include individuals who are involved in NESP implementation activities. ASA Woodley is retaining the position of the Advisory Panel Chair at this time.
- The definition of comparable progress is still unclear and will be developed in collaboration with partners.

Comments from other partners will be discussed at the NECC-ECC meeting.

Martin Konrad expressed appreciation to the Corps for its response to UMRBA's comments, but asked if there would be an opportunity to work together on some of the remaining issues. Smith said the guidance needs to be finalized in order to have it in place should NESP receive an FY 09 appropriation. However, he said the remaining issues can be addressed as the Corps and its partners gain implementation experience with NESP. Holly Stoerker asked Smith to thank Rich Worthington for his work on the implementation guidance and presence at UMRBA meetings.

*Institutional Arrangements* — Barb Naramore outlined the development of the Institutional Arrangements (IA) focus group, which was created in response to concerns expressed by the UMRBA Board and state EMP-CC members at the February quarterly meetings. These state concerns included lack of a consensus problem statement among the partnership and the evolving number of IA proposals. Members of the IA Focus Group include four Corps staff and one representative each from the FWS, USGS, EPA, Waterways Council, TNC, Wisconsin DNR, Missouri DOC, and UMRBA.

After meeting in person and via conference call, the IA Focus Group developed a written report dated May 12, 2008. According to Naramore, the group's fundamental conclusions outlined in that report include:

1. Much of our existing institutional arrangements structure functions well.
2. We will need a new structure to meet NESP's legislative and practical requirements.
3. It is important to have NGOs engaged.
4. It is preferable for the NESP IA structure to be exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Major recommendations contained in the report include:

1. Form a NESP River Advisory Panel (RAP).
2. The RAP should meet the requirements of WRDA 07.
3. The RAP's membership should follow the WRDA 07 provisions.
4. The RAP's scope should be limited — i.e., don't pursue a River Council at this time, but be open to evolution as needs and circumstances change.
5. No changes to the EMP-CC are recommended now.

The Focus Group's proposed purpose statement for RAP is "to provide the partnership consultation and guidance necessary to successfully implement the ecosystem restoration component of NESP."

Naramore described the RAP's scope of activities as including:

1. WRDA-mandated implementation reports at four-year intervals
2. Adaptive management approach to implementation of the restoration authority
3. Modification of navigation system operations to address cumulative impacts and improve ecological integrity (no adverse impacts)
4. System mitigation for environmental and cultural resource impacts resulting from navigation improvements
5. Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act activities associated with navigation improvements and ecosystem improvements
6. Integration/coordination with EMP and other restoration-related programs
7. Coordination/communication with RAP working groups
8. Outreach/communication with public, stakeholders, and decision-makers

The proposed timeline for RAP development includes the following:

- May 08 — Focus group reports back to partnership
- June 08 — USACE prepares draft proposal for RAP, in collaboration with partners
- July-August 08 — partners review and comment on a draft proposal, including discussion at August meetings
- September-October 08 — USACE internal coordination regarding the proposal
- November 08 — requests for assignment of RAP members
- February 09 — first RAP meeting

Rebecca Wooden asked whether ASA Woodley will appoint the RAP members, and if it will be done by name or position. She noted that such appointment processes can be lengthy. Naramore said that, while the focus group recognizes this challenge, ASA Woodley has indicated he will retain the appointment authority. Spitzack agreed that there needs to be more thought given to this issue. Mike Wells asked who the RAP will be advising. Naramore responded that the EMP-CC is probably the best analogy for how the IA Focus Group envisions the RAP working, given the level of tasks assigned to the group. However, the ASA's direct personal involvement may suggest a somewhat higher profile, particularly to the extent that he is focused on the Advisory Panel's WRDA mandates rather than the more detailed aspects of partnership implementation of NESP. Colonel Sinkler added that a lot of this will need to be played out. Benjamin pointed out that each agency or state can shape the membership somewhat. Naramore suggested that one possible approach, if the Assistant Secretary remains personally engaged, would be to have higher level appointments to an RAP that might meet annually, with a lower level working group that would meet more frequently and address the more detailed needs of partnership implementation at the system scale. Wells said there may be parallels between this panel and a Missouri River panel, on which ASA Woodley is heavily involved. Wooden asked if the focus group will continue, or if the larger IA Project Delivery Team (PDT) will be revived. Naramore said Corps staff have suggested that the focus group may be valuable as a sounding board as the Corps develops its RAP proposal. Gary Wege asked what happens when the NECC-ECC has its last meeting, and Spitzack replied that ECC could become an ad-hoc support group for navigation decisions.

### **Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan**

Rich Astrack presented the results of the Final Report and Recommendations for the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan that was authorized in WRDA 1999, in the interest of systemic flood damage reduction. The plan covers three UMR reaches and one Illinois River reach, builds on other studies, and utilizes flow frequency models. Objectives of the plan include minimizing threats to health and safety and reducing flood damages and costs. A series of alternatives was developed as a part of plan formulation. Option A was dismissed because it had an unacceptable level of induced damages. National Economic Development (NED) and Regional Economic Development (RED) analyses were completed on alternatives B, D, G, F, E, H, J and M. Some alternatives were not evaluated because they were a combination of the previously listed alternatives. According to Astrack, none of the alternatives are economically feasible based on NED guidelines. However, a Risk Informed Decision Framework (RIDF) was also used as to compare the alternatives. The Corp's concluded that Plan H is the best performing alternative, with plans M and D close behind. Terry Smith emphasized that RIDF is a new process and an important means of analyzing all of the options and assessing what is important to the range of interests. Martin Konrad asked if the representatives on the Collaboration Team were well-balanced. Astrack replied that there was good participation from federal agencies, with the exception of FEMA; NGOs; and Iowa, Illinois and Missouri.

Astrack outlined six major conclusions drawn from the study as follows (conclusions two, three, and four were carried forward from the previous version of the report):

1. The protection provided by existing levees against 95+ percent of average annual flood damages may not be good enough for stakeholders. Those using the RIDF analysis prefer a high level of risk reduction. Although a systemic plan can be developed, the benefit-cost ratio is less than one; however, regional benefits can be very significant.
2. The existing flood damage reduction systems need to be evaluated to determine the feasibility of reconstruction. Levees protecting agricultural areas average over 65 years old.
3. Critical transportation infrastructure should be analyzed systemically, using RIDF and examining all four evaluation accounts. A preliminary examination of one crossing location showed that protection measures may be justified on the Net Economic Development (NED) account.

4. Systemic hydrologic analysis shows,
  - Levees on reaches 1, 2, and 4 can be systemically raised without inducing more than a one-foot increase in the 100-year flood profile.
  - Levee setbacks, realignments, and removal of bridge obstructions have only a very localized reduction of water surface profiles.
  - Any levee raises to levees immediately above the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, or south of St. Louis on the Mississippi River, would increase flood heights more than one foot. The existing levee alignment in these areas will not allow significant flood risk reduction improvements.
5. Four emergency action scenarios were evaluated to determine the impacts of temporary levee raises of up to three feet on the system. Among the conclusions concerning emergency action:
  - There was no induced rise on Reaches 1 and 2 for any of the emergency action scenarios evaluated.
  - There was no induced rise on Reaches 3 and 4 when emergency levee increases were confined to urban and industrial areas.
  - Induced damages can be a concern at some locations on Reaches 3 and 4 when flood fighting efforts are extended systemically to agricultural levees.
6. Follow-on studies are recommended as follows:
  - i. cost-shared feasibility phase reconstruction analysis on individual flood risk management systems,
  - ii. systemic analysis of critical transportation infrastructure,
  - iii. UMRS hydrologic modeling should be maintained and updated,
  - iv. develop a methodology to clearly convey flood risk on the UMRS,
  - v. close data gaps in a number of areas, and
  - vi. perform watershed analysis on individual tributaries as interest and funding permit.

On behalf of the Corps team involved in the Comprehensive Plan, Astrack thanked Holly Stoerker for her great contributions to the planning effort.

#### **EMP and NESP: Congressional Outlook on Funding**

Gabe Horner from The Nature Conservancy thanked Holly Stoerker for bringing several parties together to advocate for NESP funding. Horner described The Nature Conservancy's (TNC's) support for EMP and NESP funding, and TNC's message that "now is the time for America's river" and NESP is the tool. A fact sheet describing this message and NESP program information was created and distributed to members of Congress and the Administration in partnership with UMRBA, Audubon, Waterways Council, and River Resource Alliance. While feedback from appropriations staff was generally supportive, they were reluctant to support NESP in addition to EMP and called for a transition plan. In response to a request from the coalition of NESP supporters, Corps staff provided information on habitat projects that should be completed under the EMP.

Horner also noted that TNC has hired a lobbyist to work on Upper Mississippi River issues and is planning some river events designed to engage elected officials and increase public awareness.

Paul Rhode described Waterways Council, Inc. (WCI) initiatives in Washington D.C. In late February, WCI made about 150 visits on the Hill, with NESP funding as a primary focus. Individual WCI member organizations are also doing additional visits. Last summer, WCI had several successful river events and editorial board meetings, and is planning to do similar events this summer. Rhode noted that the multi-group collaborative is also working on a joint letter in support of NESP and EMP from UMR



Senators, with possible leadership from Senator Klobuchar. He observed that the reluctance of some Representative and Senators to support earmarks will be a challenge for NESP, which the appropriations committees have categorized as an earmark even though it is a multi-state program, not a site-specific project. Rhode also announced that WCI recently presented an award to Representative Oberstar.

Dan McGuinness from Audubon distributed a handout describing Audubon's 2008 Federal Legislative Priorities for Mississippi River Restoration. Audubon is interested in successful NESP and EMP implementation because the Mississippi River provides critical bird habitat and is part of Audubon's Headwaters to Gulf campaign. Audubon is also part of a 35-member collaborative for the entire Mississippi River. On April 3-4, McGuinness and April Gromnicki visited with Congressional members, including members from other key states such as South Dakota. The two main messages received from Congressional members were 1) they were surprised that navigation and ecosystem interests were aligned and working together, which they seemed relieved to hear, and 2) they were concerned about supporting an earmark. Although the earmark issue will be challenging, McGuinness stressed the importance of maintaining the coalition. McGuinness is retiring in two weeks and passed out information for Gromnicki, Audubon's Director of Ecosystem Restoration, who will be the interim contact.

Dan Larson described the River Resource Alliance's efforts to build grassroots support to improve the decaying infrastructure on the Mississippi in Minnesota and Wisconsin. This began as a two-year project and has evolved into an ongoing organization. The Alliance has been very successful at integrating ecosystem concerns into navigation issues and building a strong, capable coalition.

Holly Stoerker commented on the UMRBA's recent Congressional visits. Although there will likely be a Continuing Resolution to provide FY 09 funding, it is important to continue advocating so a strong foundation for the future is established. Earmarks are an issue for all Corps projects, not just NESP; and it will be particularly hard to get individual members to formally submit requests for earmarks. The Appropriations subcommittee staff was clearly concerned about including NESP as a "new start" without a phase out plan for EMP. Stoerker acknowledged that the Corps should not and cannot have a "plan" that commits the agency to a transition from EMP to NESP at this time, but said information from Corps staff was very helpful in articulating one possible approach to phasing out the EMP over the next three to four years. The UMRBA and its NGO partners were then able to share this option with appropriations subcommittee staff, in response to their questions about the transition from EMP to NESP.

Gary Wege asked how we should spend the small amount of NESP funding we do have in the interim and whether it is the appropriate time to do more outreach for the program by developing a symbol or trademark. Stoerker pointed out that we should be careful when doing outreach because there is a limit to how much and what kind of public outreach can be done under NESP. She pointed out that NGOs are better positioned to do outreach than state or federal agencies. Wege said that we could learn from the Everglades outreach strategies. Colonel Sinkler said that because the Administration has not taken a position on NESP yet, the Corps cannot use money to promote the program. Rhode emphasized the need to keep working with Congress and doing educational activities.

Vince Shay of TNC announced that Catherine McCalvin has left TNC's Mississippi River program and he is accepting applications for her position.

Rohde presented a plaque to Dan McGuinness in recognition of his collaborative efforts.

### **UMR Spill Response Update**

Steve Lee, Emergency Response Team Manager with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), presented a summary of recent Mississippi River-related responses in Minnesota, beginning

with the emergency response to the Interstate 35-W bridge collapse in August 2007 and addressing two other, more recent incidents.

- *I35-W Bridge Collapse* — The I-35W bridge over the Mississippi River north of downtown Minneapolis was 1900 feet long and 65 feet tall, with 300 to 400 feet of the span above the river. It also had the second highest traffic level among Minnesota bridges. The first responders on the scene encountered a situation of unimaginable chaos. Ultimately, the fire response was the largest ever in Minnesota and was very successful due to intensive incident command training. Several civilians did heroic work to save the lives of children on a school bus and other people in danger. The water rescue was extensive and there were no serious injuries to responders.

The appearance of surface oil sheens downstream from the collapse site raised concerns that a fuel tanker truck may have been on the bridge, and a Wakota CAER response equipment cache was moved into position. However, it was ultimately determined that there had not been a tanker involved and there was no large scale fuel release. The bridge did collapse on a rail car adjacent to the river, but this did not result in a spill or other significant release. Air monitoring was established to detect any possible airborne environmental or health hazards. U.S. EPA, in partnership with the MPCA and the Minnesota Department of Health, set up neighborhood monitoring air stations due to concerns about asbestos, lead, heavy metals and plastics. Water sampling was also conducted to assess impacts to the river. However, no significant problems were found via air or water monitoring.

- *Rail Car Release of Ethylene Glycol* — In February 2008, on a rail bridge over the Mississippi River between Hastings, Minnesota and Prescott, Wisconsin, a four inch hole was found in a tank car carrying ethylene glycol. When the train was stopped, with the engine just short of Prescott, the car collapsed and released its entire load down an embankment and into the Mississippi River. The release eroded the bank supporting the bridge and the product broke through ice into the Mississippi River. Traces of chemicals were found the next day, but the full extent of the environmental impact of the spill was difficult to assess. Challenges to the recovery were winter weather, the chemical being miscible with water, the rapid flow of water in the river, and the sudden release of the hazardous material from the tanker. Impacts to mussels are now being examined under a Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) process. Notifications to Wisconsin and Iowa regarding the release were made in accordance with the UMR Spill Response Plan.
- *Gasoline Tanker Spill* — In January 2008, a gasoline tanker rollover occurred on the Interstate 94/394 interchange in downtown Minneapolis. The tanker rolled onto its valves and spilled gasoline into the storm sewer system. The gasoline eventually exited the storm sewer into the Mississippi River at the site of the I-35W bridge construction site. Booms were deployed at this outfall and most of the material was collected. The storm sewer system was also flushed to push out any remaining product. Downriver sampling identified small amounts of gasoline present after the spill, but none after the system was flushed. There was a fish kill at the first flush, but this may have been associated with the ethanol component of the fuel and not from the gasoline per se (which was largely contained via booming).

*Spill Notification Drill and Spill Response Training* — Dave Hokanson of the UMRBA described the scenarios, participants, objectives and outcomes/observations from a March 2008 UMR Spill Plan notification drill. This drill incorporated a scenario involving a spill near Brownsville, Minnesota into the Mississippi River. Hokanson highlighted the involvement of local, state, and federal agencies in the drill, as well as strong participation by the private sector rail company. Hokanson also commented on the recently completed spill response training held on Arsenal Island in Rock Island, Illinois. He thanked the Corps of Engineers for the use of its facility and observed that activities such as this training and notification drill highlight the role of the UMR Hazardous Spill Coordination Group in bringing together multiple agencies to enhance response capacity on the UMR.

### **Administrative Issues**

Holly Stoerker discussed the proposed FY 09 budget for UMRBA, which reflects a deficit of \$18,000. Mike Wells offered a motion to approve the proposed budget, with one change to the Other Services line item, increasing it to \$6,100 from \$4,100. Todd Ambs seconded the motion, which was then approved unanimously.

The following dates and locations were identified for future meetings:

August 5-7, 2008	La Crosse, Wisconsin
November 18-20, 2008	Quad Cities, Illinois-Iowa
February 17-19, 2009	St. Louis, Missouri

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.