

**Minutes of the
83rd Quarterly Meeting
of the
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**August 7, 2002
St. Louis, Missouri**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by UMRBA Chair Kevin Szcodronski.
The following State Representatives and Federal Liaison Representatives were present:

Don Vonnahme	Illinois Representative (IL DNR)
Gary Clark	Illinois Alternate (IL DNR)
John Hey	Iowa Representative (IA DOT)
Kevin Szcodronski	Iowa Representative (IA DNR)
Steve Morse	Minnesota Alternate (MN DNR)
Mike Wells	Missouri Alternate (MO DNR)
Terry Moe	Wisconsin Alternate (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)
Albert Schulz	Federal Emergency Management Agency (Region 7)
Gary Wooten	Natural Resources Conservation Service (Midwest Region)
Bob Goodwin	Maritime Administration
LCDR Jill Druskis	U.S. Coast Guard

Others in attendance:

Mark Heywood	Minnesota DNR
Amy Denz	Minnesota DNR
John Chick	Illinois Natural History Survey
Scott Stuewe	Illinois DNR
Gary Christoff	Missouri DOC
Rich Worthington	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (HQ)
Greg Ruff	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVD)
Tom Novak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVP)
Teresa Kincaid	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Janet Hodges	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Jerry Skalak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Chuck Theiling	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVR)
Deb Foley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)

Jim Kuehnle	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Dave Leake	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (MVS)
Dan Stinnett	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Twin Cities Field Office)
Rick Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Rock Island Field Office)
Joyce Collins	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Region 3)
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/UMRCC
Mike Slifer	U.S. Geological Survey, Missouri District
Mike McDonald	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ORD
David Bolgrien	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ORD/Duluth
Mark Beorkrem	Mississippi River Basin Alliance
Wayne Freeman	Great Rivers Habitat Alliance
Catherine McCalvin	The Nature Conservancy
Mark Muller	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Allen Hance	Northeast Midwest Institute
Chris Brescia	MARC 2000
Lynn Muench	American Waterways Operators
Tom Edwards	River Rescue
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

Meeting Minutes

Terry Moe moved and Don Vonnahme seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2002 meeting as drafted. The motion was approved by consensus.

Executive Director's Report

Holly Stoerker reported that the FY 2003 appropriations process was underway in Congress, with the House and Senate both restoring the \$2.1 million cut proposed by the Administration for the USGS streamgaging program. With regard to Corps appropriations, the Senate Committee has increased funding for both the UMR Navigation Study and EMP, above levels recommended in the President's budget. However, the Senate's EMP allocation of \$15 million is still well below the FY 2002 level of \$20 million and the House committee has reportedly included only \$12.2 million for the EMP.

Stoerker distributed copies of a July 19 letter sent by USGS Director Charles Groat, in response to the UMRBA's April 18 letter regarding proposed changes to USGS business practices. Leslie Holland-Bartels explained that, although USGS overhead charges are decreasing, the agency will be pursuing full cost recovery, including charging facility costs. Although the LTRMP will not likely see any changes in FY 03, over the next three years, the program will be charged rental costs.

Stoerker reported that USGS recently raised concerns with staff of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee regarding the cost-sharing provisions in H.R. 3480, the Upper Mississippi River Basin Conservation Act. In particular, USGS has suggested that the requirement for 25 percent nonfederal cost sharing be replaced with a provision that would

fund the UMR nutrient and sediment monitoring program partially through the Co-Op program and partially through the Hydrologic Networks and Analysis budget. The effect of such a change would be that 1/3 of the funding would need to be matched 50/50 and the other 2/3 would be entirely federal. Given these proposed last minute changes, the bill has been pulled from the Senate unanimous consent calendar, making it unlikely that the bill will see Senate action this session.

Barb Naramore reported that EPA Region 5 will be providing funding support for the early warning monitoring scoping effort. UMRBA has assembled a 21-member scoping group with a balance among geographic areas, public and private interests, and technical expertise. Naramore distributed copies of the list of members. The first meeting of the group will be via conference call on August 21.

Corps of Engineers' Proposed Changes to Disaster Procedures

Jim Kuehnle, of the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers, described the changes proposed for the Corps' disaster procedures. The proposed rule changes were published in the February 26 *Federal Register* and final rules are expected to be published in October. Proposed changes to the cost share for P.L. 84-99 levees will not be pursued. However, the remaining changes include 2 new rules and 9 changes that would simply codify existing Corps policy. With regard to rehabilitation assistance for new nonfederal levees, the nonfederal share will be 25 percent. In addition, a levee owner's manual, with standards for levee maintenance, is being developed by the Omaha District and will be provided to active levee districts during scheduled levee inspection. Other changes relate to assistance for Native American tribes, ice jam blasting, definition of "active" flood control works, inspection guidelines, rehabilitation of hurricane and beach protection projects, nonstructural alternatives to rehabilitation, water for livestock, and cooperative agreements.

In response to a question from Terry Moe regarding authorized and non-authorized levees following the 1993 flood, Kuehnle explained that P.L. 84-99 is only directed to projects considered "active," including those with legally formed levees group meeting levee standards. Don Vonnahme further explained that the rehabilitation issue in 1993 was not related to authorized and non-authorized levees, but rather federal and nonfederal levees. Al Schulz commented that following the 1993 flood, a one-time exemption was offered, allowing the Corps to rehabilitate non-qualifying levees, under the condition that those levees agree to meet federal standards in the future.

Comprehensive Flood Damage Reduction Plan

Jerry Skalak provided an overview of the current status of the UMR Comprehensive Plan (UMRCP), noting that the draft Project Management Plan (PMP) was distributed for review and comment last week. Skalak emphasized the authorizing language, which indicates that the plan be developed "in the interest of systemic flood damage reduction," but provides opportunities to address other issues. Skalak indicated that the planning effort is estimated to cost \$4.84 million and will be carried out over three years. It has been termed an "enhanced Reconnaissance Study" signifying that it include a greater level of detail than a typical Recon study that is capped at \$100,000, but will be less than a typical feasibility study. The UMRCP will include three levels of component projects: those recommended for immediate action

authorization in a Chief's report, those authorized subject to approval by the Secretary of the Army and Congressional resolutions, and those requiring a feasibility report. The study will evaluate a No Action alternative, which will include a flood routing plan under existing conditions, as well as three to five additional alternatives offering various levels of protection and including various combinations of structural and nonstructural measures.

Skalak also reviewed the various coordination and collaboration teams being established for the study and the plan formulation schedule, culminating with submittal of the Report to Congress in December 2004. He also described the types of analyses and outputs related to economics, environmental considerations, hydrology and hydraulics, and recreation and real estate.

In response to Skalak's question regarding how the states would like to participate on the Collaboration Team for the UMRCP, it was recommended that he coordinate closely with the state flood plain managers, particularly those already involved in the Flow Frequency Study Task Force. Skalak commented that group might be a bit narrow in scope, given the broad range of issues that are to be addressed in the UMRCP. Don Vonnahme said that Gary Clark would be Illinois' representative and bring in additional state personnel as necessary. Bob Goodwin questioned how recreational interests and inland ports would be involved in the study and indicated that the Maritime Administration would also like to participate. Gary Wooten said that NRCS would like to be involved and Bill Franz expressed EPA's interest as well. Kevin Szcodronski suggested that Skalak include UMRBA staff, UMRCC staff, and Bob Clevestine of the Fish and Wildlife Service on the Collaboration Team. Jon Duyvejonck questioned how the UMRCP will balance environmental and flood damage reduction benefits and what the study products will be. Steve Cobb explained that the UMRCP will be modeled after the Everglades plan, where the plan was submitted to Congress for its approval as a "framework," with some of the component projects identified for authorization, some for authorization pending a Congressional resolution, and some requiring a feasibility study. Al Schulz cautioned that the UMRCP not solely address levees and traditional flood control, but that it also look at the National Flood Insurance Program and involve environmental groups. Joyce Collins asked why the study will not extend south of Thebes, noting that area has great potential for environmental restoration. Skalak explained that the southern reach of the UMR is difficult to model because of the effects of the Ohio River and that it was being addressed as part of the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) program.

UMRCC Report on Habitat Restoration Measures and Costs

Jon Duyvejonck provided an overview of the UMRCC report describing habitat restoration measures and costs for the UMRS. He explained that the report is based on the Habitat Needs Assessment and the UMRCC report *A River that Works and a Working River*. The Corps, Fish and Wildlife Service, state agencies, and other organizations contributed information to the report. Jeff Janvrin of Wisconsin DNR developed the cost estimates. Duyvejonck emphasized that the report includes measures beyond those related to navigation effects, that efficiencies of implementation were not considered in developing costs, and that the report does not address how the measures should be implemented. He explained that current investments in restoration will not achieve sustainability, which will require three steps: halt ongoing degradation, implement measures to achieve a desired ecosystem condition, and institute a habitat

maintenance program. Duyvejonck also reviewed the cost estimates for various measures that were originally quantified in the HNA, as well as measures that the HNA did not quantify.

Steve Cobb commented that the UMRCC report will be helpful in the Navigation feasibility study. However, he questioned the cost estimate of \$41.8 million annually for 27,000 acres of secondary channel restoration, commenting that the figure seemed extraordinarily high. Steve Morse observed that the potential for the states to cost share is greater for floodplain land acquisition and connectivity measures than for channel measures, such as those typically undertaken as EMP projects.

Leslie Holland-Bartels asked whether there will be an opportunity to submit comments on the UMRCC report. Duyvejonck said that UMRCC considers the report to be final. He noted that it is not a plan, but a frame of reference for costs. Szcodronski said that questions or suggestions regarding the calculations would be helpful.

Chris Brescia said that MARC 2000 believes it will be important to refine the cost estimates and identify overlapping needs. He noted that it is important that the costs be accurate and that a consensus be developed regarding the appropriate level of restoration investment. He thus urged the federal agencies to work with UMRCC to refine the numbers. Terry Moe commented that Wisconsin intends to work through NECC, not the UMRCC, to develop that consensus. Kevin Szcodronski noted that the most important message to be derived from the report is that the ecosystem is in decline, there is insufficient investment in restoration, and a sustained commitment and investment are needed.

Great Rivers EMAP Initiative

Mike McDonald, Director of EPA's Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP), described the purpose and use of the program. The goal of EMAP is to develop the scientific basis for consistent, cost-effective measurement of the condition of the nation's aquatic ecosystems. Key elements include statistical design, biological indicators, and partnerships with states and other federal agencies. McDonald explained the value of the EMAP design using probability surveys, rather than traditional targeted monitoring. In particular, state stream assessments of use support are more accurate using probability sampling. Current EMAP efforts include a National Coastal Assessment, a Western Pilot, and STAR grants for university-based research. In FY 03, EMAP will be expanded to include work on large rivers including the Upper Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The President's FY 03 budget includes \$5 million for this GREAT Rivers EMAP (EMAP-GRE).

Dave Bolgrien described the EMAP-GRE as a research program to establish techniques for assessing the environmental condition of large rivers, using a probabilistic survey design. He emphasized that it is not a monitoring program and is not intended to replace targeted sampling programs. An example of an EMAP outcome would be the percentage (+ or -) of habitat X that is in condition Y. Bolgrien further explained the EMAP approach by describing its application to Lake Oahe and other reaches of the upper Missouri River. According to Bolgrien, the Administration is recommending \$4.7 million annually over ten years for the EMAP-GRE. FY 03 activities include goal setting, habitat selection, indicator development, and creation of GIS infrastructure in support of sample design. FY 04 will be the first field season.

In response to questions, Leslie Holland-Bartels explained that the LTRMP does stratified random sampling within selected trend pools, which are representative of the river's geomorphic reaches. In contrast, EMAP is systemic. She commented that there is potential for synergy between the two programs and that EMAP could benefit from LTRMP data. Then, hopefully, EMAP could be used to test LTRMP models. Bolgrien also commented that EMAP could be useful to individual states in assessing their waterbodies for 305(b) reports and 303(d) listings.

National Water Commission Legislation

Don Vonnahme said he would like UMRBA, the Great Lakes Commission, and other interstate organizations to monitor H.R. 3561, legislation establishing a National Water Commission. The bill was introduced in December 2001 and hearings were held in May 2002. Vonnahme noted that the last time such a Commission was established, under the Nixon Administration, its recommendations were never implemented. He expressed concern that the legislation calls for a 17-member Commission, only two of which would represent state or tribal interests. Given the complex sovereignty issues involved in water policy, Vonnahme said this would be inadequate. He suggested that, if the legislation moves forward, UMRBA lobby for a Midwest representative to be appointed to the Commission.

Fish and Wildlife Service Staff

Charlie Wooley reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service has hired Tim Yager, formerly with the Corps' St. Paul District, to be its new ecosystem coordinator for the Headwaters and Upper Mississippi River. Don Holtman has been selected to replace Jim Fisher as the Upper Mississippi River Refuge Manager. Holtman currently manages 17 refuges in Minnesota and has 22 years of experience with the Service.

UMRBA Dues

Kevin Szcodronski reminded UMRBA representatives that dues amounts must be set for FY 2004 and 2005. Dues have been \$48,000 per state since FY 2000. Don Vonnahme moved and Terry Moe seconded a motion establishing annual dues for FY 2004 and FY 2005 at \$48,000 per state. The motion passed unanimously.

FEMA Update

Al Schulz announced that FEMA is negotiating with the Corps to begin some floodplain mapping studies in FY 02. Approximately \$1 million will be provided for six counties in Region 7, four of which are in the Quad Cities area.

Al Schulz announced that he will be retiring from FEMA in early November. Holly Stoerker thanked Schulz for his years of service and, in particular, for renewing FEMA's interest in participating in the UMRBA.

Future Meetings

The future meeting schedule for the combined GLC, UMRBA, and EMP-CC meetings includes November 19-21, 2002 in the Twin Cities and February 25-27, 2003 in Rock Island, Illinois. It was agreed that the spring meetings will be held May 13-15, 2003 in St. Louis.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.