

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

**August 17, 2005
Quarterly Meeting**

**Radisson Quad City Plaza Hotel
Davenport, Iowa**

Charles Barton of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. on August 17, 2005. Other EMP-CC representatives present were Charlie Wooley (USFWS), Mike McGhee (IA DNR), Tim Schlagenhaft (MN DNR), Janet Sternburg (MO DOC), Gretchen Benjamin (WI DNR), and Bill Franz (USEPA). A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

Announcements

Charles Barton announced that Greg Ruff has been promoted and will no longer be assigned to the EMP. He introduced Susan Smith, who will be responsible for EMP issues at MVD.

Minutes of the May 2005 Meeting

Gretchen Benjamin moved and Janet Sternburg seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the May 26, 2005 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Program Management

FY05

Roger Perk reported that the EMP Report to Congress was sent to the Assistant Secretary's office on June 5, 2005. It is not yet known when it will be transmitted to OMB or Congress. Perk also said it appears likely that Congress will pass a Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) this session. Both the House and Senate WRDAs include a provision that would amend the EMP to allow NGOs to serve as non-Federal cost share partners for HREPs.

Roger Perk reported that as of June 30, 2005, the EMP had expended 63 percent of available funds. He noted that this is a typical expenditure rate for the third quarter during the construction season. With regard to FY 05 HREP funding, Perk reported that MVP was allocated \$2.916 million, MVR was allocated \$3.409 million, and MVS was allocated \$3.906 million. However, funding can be moved among the Districts as the need arises.

Don Powell reported that planning work on Capoli Slough and Harpers Slough is continuing. The DPR on Harpers Slough is out for review. Design is complete on Long Meadow Lake,

Pool Slough, and Pool 8 Islands (Phase III Stage 1 and 2). These projects will be ready to go to construction in FY 06. According to Powell, most of MVP's HREP funding in FY 05 has been devoted to construction of the Spring Lake Islands project, which is 75 percent complete. Although there has been no construction work on Ambrough Slough this season, contract payments were made in FY 05.

Roger Perk reported that MVR has decided to discontinue planning work on the Smith Creek project because of a lack of benefits. The project has been deferred. Design work on Lake Odessa is complete and the project should be ready for construction in FY 06. Construction on Pool 11 Islands Stage 2 is approximately 60-70 percent complete and should be finished in the fall.

Mike Thompson reported that MVS has five projects in the planning phase. The draft EIS and FONSI for Pool 25/26 should be available next month and the Wilkerson Island DPR will be forwarded to MVD in September. However, the Ted Shanks project may slip into fall and further planning on Schenimann Chute is on hold because that project may be shifted to NESP.

Thompson said MVS is working on the O&M manual for the Stump Lake project. He also reported that there were minor construction deficiencies on the Swan Lake project, so MVS has been working on filling in the low spots. Final payment was made on Calhoun Point Phase I and some funds from other districts were expended on Calhoun Point Phase II. Thompson noted that most of the HREP evaluation funding in MVS has been devoted to bioresponse monitoring at Swan Lake.

Roger Perk reported that the HREP Workshop would begin at 1:00 p.m., following conclusion of the EMP-CC meeting. The Workshop is scheduled to continue through August 19. Ninety-three people have registered in advance. The Workshop will include discussion of the draft Design Handbook and the HREP database, as well as presentations from EMP project managers and contractors on lessons learned.

Roger Perk reported that the System Ecological Team (SET) met on August 11 and is working with the NESP Science Panel to refine ecological criteria. The group is also reviewing Don Powell's spreadsheet and is expected to have its report completed by the end of FY 05. In response to a question from Janet Sternburg, Perk explained that the SET member who could not participate has not yet been replaced. Therefore, the SET currently includes four members: John Barko (ERTC), Mike Griffin (IA DNR), Jim Garvey (SIU), and Carl Korschgen (USGS).

FY 06

Roger Perk reported that the House has approved an FY 06 energy and water appropriations bill that includes \$33.5 million for EMP. In contrast, the Senate bill includes \$20 million for EMP. Perk explained that the lower amount is currently being used for planning purposes, although additional funds could certainly be used, if Congress appropriates a higher amount.

The following HREP work is anticipated for MVP in FY 06:

| ST. PAUL DISTRICT (MVP) | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| FY06 HREP Potential Work Plan | |
| MANAGEMENT | |
| PLANNING | |
| ▪ Capoli Slough | ▪ Lake Winneshiek |
| ▪ Conway Lake | ▪ McGregor Lake |
| ▪ Harpers Slough | |
| DESIGN | |
| ▪ Harpers Slough | ▪ Pool 8 Isl. Phase III Stg 2 |
| CONSTRUCTION | |
| ▪ Spring Lake | ▪ Pool Slough |
| ▪ Pool 8 Isl., Ph III, Stg 1 | ▪ Pool 8 Isl. Phase III Stg 2* |
| ▪ Long Meadow Lake | |
| EVALUATION | |
| ▪ FWS | ▪ Biological Monitoring |
| ▪ Performance Evaluations | |
| ▪ Baseline Monitoring | *Award Only |

Don Powell explained that work on Capoli and Harpers Slough is a continuation of planning work initiated in FY 05. McGregor Lake is an addition. Construction on Spring Lake will be largely completed in FY 05, but approximately \$1 million in contractor bills will need to be paid in FY 06. Pool 8 Islands (Phase III, Stage 1), Long Meadow Lake, and Pool Slough will all require relatively small amounts of construction funding in FY 06. Pool 8 Islands (Phase III, Stage 2) will be ready for the award of a construction contract in FY 06.

The following HREP work is anticipated for MVR in FY 06:

| ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT (MVR) | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| FY06 HREP Potential Work Plan | |
| MANAGEMENT | |
| PLANNING | |
| ▪ Rice Lake | |
| ▪ Pool 12 Overwintering | ▪ New Start(s) (1 or 2) |
| DESIGN | |
| ▪ Lake Odessa Stg 2 | ▪ Pool 12 Overwintering |
| ▪ Rice Lake | ▪ Fox Island |
| CONSTRUCTION | |
| ▪ Lake Odessa Stage 2 | ▪ Pool 12 Overwintering * |
| ▪ Lake Odessa Stage 1 | |
| EVALUATION | |
| ▪ Baseline Monitoring | |
| ▪ Bioresponse Monitoring | |
| ▪ Performance Evaluations | |
| ▪ FWS | *Award Only |

Roger Perk explained that Lake Odessa Stage 2 construction costs are estimated to be \$3.5 million in FY 06. Lake Odessa Stage 1 construction costs are estimated to be \$1.5 million in FY 06. A construction contract for the Pool 12 Overwintering project could also be awarded in FY 06, but a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is needed for that project.

The following HREP work is anticipated for MVS in FY 06:

| ST. LOUIS DISTRICT (MVS) | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| FY06 HREP Potential Work Plan | |
| MANAGEMENT PLANNING | |
| •Pool 25/26 •Wilkerson Island •Ted Shanks | •Kaskaskia Oxbow •Godar Refuge |
| DESIGN | |
| •Pool 25 & 26 •Swan Lake | |
| CONSTRUCTION | |
| • Calhoun Point Phase II | • Batchtown Phase III |
| EVALUATION | |
| •Baseline Monitoring •Bioresponse Monitoring •Performance Evaluations | •FWS |

Mike Thompson explained that planning and design of the Pool 25/26 project will likely be completed in FY 06 and it may be possible to proceed to construction. Most of the FY 06 construction funding in MVS will be devoted to Calhoun Point Phase II. The Batchtown Phase III project will also be ready for construction in FY 06, but construction funding is not likely.

Tim Schlagenhaft requested that consideration be given to providing FY 06 EMP funds for advance supplemental dredging in Pool 5. He explained that such dredging would be necessary for the 2 ½ foot drawdown planned for next summer in that pool. State partners will pay the cost of the recreational dredging. However, it has been determined that advance supplemental dredging cannot be done with O&M funds, although it may be possible to pursue funding as part of NESF. Schlagenhaft asked that EMP funding be considered as a potential means of accomplishing the supplemental dredging. Roger Perk commented that EMP does not typically undertake operational projects, although the possibility could be explored. Don Powell said that, since the dredging would be done in the main channel, there is some question about whether it would be cost-shared. Powell also noted that the River Resources Forum had not yet elevated this issue for consideration because the Forum has not decided to support the project or determined what its priority should be.

Public Involvement and Program Advocacy

Gretchen Benjamin reported that Wisconsin state legislators had been out to see EMP projects as part of their interest in the Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan. She also noted that the October issue of the “Wisconsin Natural Resource Magazine” will have an extensive article on EMP.

Roles and Expectations for EMP-CC and A-Team

Marvin Hubbell explained that there were few comments on the “Roles and Expectations” issue paper prepared for review at the May 2005 EMP-CC meeting. However, a number of questions about it were raised following the May meeting. In particular, the A-Team had a brief

discussion during its July conference call about use of the term “guidance” in describing the EMP-CC’s responsibilities (i.e. “...provide guidance to the A-Team regarding the EMP-CC’s LTRMP perspectives and priorities.”) Gretchen Benjamin commented that there should be two-way communication between the EMP-CC and A-Team and that the EMP-CC often relies on the A-Team for technical advice and input. Tim Schlagenhaft concurred, noting that the EMP-CC also expects the A-Team to bring problems and policy issues to the attention of the EMP-CC. No changes to the wording of the Roles and Expectations document were deemed necessary. However, it was also agreed that two-way communication should be improved by using the A-Team report agenda item at each EMP-CC meeting to, not only hear the A-Team’s views, but also to request items for the A-Team’s future consideration.

Marvin Hubbell said that another question that has been raised is whether the A-Team should advise the USGS and Corps as an independent body or whether A-Team recommendations should go through the EMP-CC. Hubbell noted that both approaches have been used over the years. Janet Sternburg said she prefers the flexibility of pursuing either course, depending on the nature of the issue at hand. Presumably, input regarding technical and science issues can be addressed directly to the managing agencies. Input regarding the technical implications of policy matters should be shared with the EMP-CC. Gretchen Benjamin said that further clarification is not needed unless there is really some uncertainty about the process. It was agreed that no changes to the Roles and Expectations document are necessary.

Hubbell noted that there is also a question regarding official A-Team membership. Currently, membership consists of the same agencies that are represented on the EMP-CC. However, the Corps and USGS frequently do not weigh in on the decisions, because they would, in essence be giving advice to themselves. Tim Schlagenhaft asked if uncertainty about A-Team membership has actually been causing problems. Pat Heglund said that A-Team meetings are often attended by field station staff, as well as A-Team members. When votes are taken, it’s often not clear who is actually speaking for the states. Gretchen Benjamin explained that the Wisconsin A-Team member is supposed to take into account the views of a variety of Wisconsin agency personnel, including field station staff.

It was agreed that each state should have a single representative on the A-Team that speaks for the state. If it’s not clear who that individual is, the state should clarify its official membership. In addition, the USGS should maintain a list of official A-Team members. The Roles and Expectations document will be revised to reflect this understanding.

It was further agreed that Janet Sternburg and Marvin Hubbell will contact A-Team Chair Rob Maher to discuss these communication and membership issues and share the EMP-CC’s perspectives. In addition, all EMP-CC members should contact their agency’s A-Team representative to describe the results of the EMP-CC discussion related to the roles of the A-Team.

EMP Strategic Planning

Marvin Hubbell explained that the original intent of preparing an EMP Strategic Plan was to position the program to be viable over the next five years. However, it has been difficult to actually put a plan in writing. At its past few meetings, the EMP-CC has discussed what issues should be addressed in the Strategic Plan. According to Hubbell, this has resulted in a list of

issues that need strategic attention, but has not actually led to development of a strategic plan. In addition, Hubbell noted that circumstances have continued to evolve and the value of developing an actual strategic plan seems to have diminished. As an example, integration and coordination between EMP and NESP was identified as a critical strategic goal by many of the partners; and the UMRBA has already established a process for addressing this issue over the coming year.

Hubbell suggested that the EMP-CC focus its discussion at this meeting on the matrix that summarizes the partners' scoring input on the top strategic planning issues from the August meeting. In particular, Hubbell asked that EMP-CC members 1) provide him with feedback on whether their input was correctly interpreted and reflected in the matrix and 2) agree on the top priority issues and how they should be addressed.

Tim Schlagenhaft said that it did not appear that the Corps had accurately incorporated Minnesota DNR's input into the matrix. Sharonne Baylor said that the Fish and Wildlife priorities identified on the matrix did not appear correct either. However, she noted that changing them would not likely affect the final consolidated ranking.

Tim Schlagenhaft commented that NESP's emerging emphasis on adaptive management will require that critical monitoring needs be identified for ecosystem restoration. He said that the question of future monitoring needs relates to nearly all the priority planning issues that are shaded on the matrix.

Gretchen Benjamin commented that spending time on strategic planning for EMP is not the best use of EMP-CC members' time. Instead the focus should be on ensuring that a good monitoring program comes out of EMP, to be integrated into or support NESP. Janet Sternburg agreed, saying that the LTRMP is critical to the success of NESP.

Charlie Wooley said the Fish and Wildlife Service's top priority for EMP strategic planning is to enhance the evaluation of HREPs to better understand their effectiveness.

Marvin Hubbell asked how many strategic issues the EMP-CC would like to focus on, even if development of a Strategic Plan is not the ultimate goal. Janet Sternburg said that a single issue should be selected and suggested that it be the question of future monitoring needs.

Hubbell commented that the NESP Science Panel is working on identifying ecological goals and objectives, key indicators, and monitoring needs. He suggested that the Science Panel make a presentation at a future EMP-CC meeting or focused workshop on the issue of monitoring. Barry Johnson said that the Science Panel Report is expected to be complete by September 15. Tim Schlagenhaft asked if there were guidelines regarding how the Science Panel interfaces with other groups. In particular, he asked if the Science Panel had discussed their findings with field managers. He also expressed interest in having the A-Team review the Science Panel report. Janet Sternburg asked if the Science Panel is looking at how individual projects should be monitored as well as how to measure ecosystem health. Barry Johnson explained that the Science Panel is addressing both types of monitoring.

It was also noted that the Status and Trends report is expected to be released at the end of September. Pat Heglund emphasized that the Status and Trends report is different than the

work of the Science Panel. The Status and Trends Report will describe the LTRMP's current ability to detect change, but will not necessarily address all relevant indicators nor make recommendations concerning future monitoring. Gretchen Benjamin said she is concerned that, if the LTRMP's minimum sustainable program (MSP) is limited in its ability to detect change, there is a need to define what level of monitoring will be needed in the future. Pat Heglund agreed that these are important issues, noting that the question is often whether the emphasis should be on detecting annual response or on longer term response.

Bill Franz asked how the EMAP program may fit into discussion of future monitoring needs. Barry Johnson explained that the Science Panel is looking at EMAP, as well as NAWQA and NASQAN.

Tim Schlagenhaft and Janet Sternburg emphasized the need for the A-Team to review the Science Panel report. Schlagenhaft suggested that the A-Team be invited to participate with the EMP-CC in a discussion of the Science Panel report and future monitoring needs at the next EMP-CC meeting in November. He said that the purpose of having the A-Team review the Science Panel report would not be to provide official agency comments, but rather to familiarize themselves with the ideas in the report so that they could participate in the discussions in November. Gretchen Benjamin commented that, even if the two groups do not meet together, the A-Team should be informed that the EMP-CC has decided that the issue of future monitoring needs is a high priority in terms of strategic planning.

In summary, Marvin Hubbell suggested that a communication to the A-Team be prepared that:

- advises the A-Team that one of EMP-CC's highest priorities is defining critical monitoring needs to support ecosystem restoration,
- requests that the A-Team review the Science Panel report and the Status and Trends Report when they are released, with particular attention to the question of ecological indicators, ability to detect change, and ecosystem performance measures,
- invites the A-Team members to attend the November EMP-CC meeting to participate in discussion with the EMP-CC regarding these two documents, and
- advises the A-Team that the goal of reviewing the two reports is to prepare for discussion at the November meeting, not to develop official agency comments on the reports. A consolidated A-Team response is not necessary.

HREP Design Manual and Database

Mark Pratt reported that the main structure of the HREP database was completed in January 2005. Fact sheet and funding data has been entered for projects in all three Corps districts. Project data includes costs, features, location, dates, and sponsor information. Monitoring data for the projects is not currently included in the database, but is planned to be added in the future. Pratt explained that the query tool allows output to be displayed for individual projects or combined into reports by pool, state, Congressional district, or water system. In addition, information can be combined into an update of the HREP summary table in the 2004 Report to Congress table or displayed in one-page summaries or pie charts. Pratt said the database will be available on the EMP website in FY06.

Kara Mitvalsky reported that an outline of the HREP Design Handbook was provided to the EMP-CC in February and chapter authors were assigned in April. The first draft of the Handbook was released for review in July. Mitvalsky explained that each chapter of the handbook is devoted to a different habitat project feature, such as shoreline protection, backwater dredging, or islands. Each chapter also generally follows the same format, including a discussion of the resource problem, design methodology, case studies, references, and lessons learned.

Tim Schlagenhaft asked if the Handbook is simply a “cookbook” or whether it includes a discussion of what approaches should be taken in the future. Mitvalsky explained that some individual chapters include that type of discussion, but there is not a single place in the Handbook that contains recommendations for the future.

Mitvalsky said August 26 is the deadline for comments on the Handbook and the final report should be completed by September 30. [NOTE: Following the HREP Workshop, the due date for comments was changed to September 30 and the target for completion was changed to January 30, 2006.]

Long Term Resource Monitoring Program

3rd Quarter Product Highlights

Pat Heglund reported that the multi-year reports for the macro invertebrate, aquatic vegetation, water quality, and fish components have all been completed on schedule. The recently published synthesis of the 10-year fish component data reveals that nearly all fish species that originally existed in the UMR still exist. However, the composition of fish populations has changed. Fish abundance is most closely associated with water clarity, current velocity, and the presence of aquatic vegetation.

Heglund also reported that draft reports have been completed on sampling design and statistical analysis, temporal and spatial fish trends, and the fish life history database. Final publication will take place in FY 06. In addition, work continues on the Status and Trends Report. Each section of the report will include discussion of the indicator, purpose, assessment, state of the ecosystem, and future pressures.

Three LTRMP products have been delayed. Missouri’s main channel/side channel report for the Open River and the Open River macro invertebrate report were delayed due to restructuring of the field stations. Illinois’ cross component analysis report for Pool 26 was delayed due to problems with field equipment.

Heglund said the aquatic vegetation model is currently available only on the internal Web server. This internet-enabled GIS allows users to quickly produce predictive vegetation maps of Pool 8. In response to a question from Tim Schlagenhaft, Heglund explained that the model is based on water clarity and does a good job of prediction.

Additional Program Elements (APE)

Heglund reported that the FY 06 APE review process has been completed. There were at least two reviews for each APE proposal. The next step is for USGS to complete its review and provide comments back to the proposer.

A-Team Report

Janet Sternburg distributed copies of the A-Team report prepared by A-Team Chair Rob Maher. With regard to the APE process, Sternburg noted that there were nine projects added as high priority, if additional funds are made available. Four projects were added that were not on the original list, including bathymetry, LTRMP workshop, equipment refreshment, and completion of the Status and Trends Report.

Sternburg reported that, during its July 26 conference call, the A-Team also discussed how some monitoring activities might be restored if additional funds are made available in FY 06. Any proposal for increased monitoring will need to meet the requirements for APEs, have clear benefits to the program, and aid in the analysis and detection of trends. Sternburg commented that it may be possible, with some creativity, to put together proposals within these sideboards.

Sternburg also reported that the A-Team discussed the possibility of developing an LTRMP workshop to increase understanding of LTRMP data and its potential management applications. The A-Team is generally supportive of the workshop concept, but believes it would require more effort than is possible to meet the FY 06 APE schedule and that further consideration should be given to including such a workshop in the FY 07 APE process. Tim Schlagenhaft suggested that the LTRMP workshop agenda include a session on cross-component analysis.

Sternburg noted that Jim Fischer will be replacing Jeff Janvrin as Wisconsin DNR's A-Team representative. Gretchen Benjamin explained that Fischer used to be involved in water quality monitoring at the Wisconsin field station and has now been moved to a planner position.

Other Business

Holly Stoerker announced that future meetings of the EMP-CC are scheduled for November 17, 2005 in St. Paul; February 23, 2006 in St. Louis; and May 18, 2006 in a yet-to-be-determined location.

Janet Sternburg announced that the Middle Mississippi River Partnership had a meeting in July to discuss ways to get more ecosystem restoration work done on the floodplain in the middle river. The Partnership is composed of 16 non-profit organizations and government agencies, including NRCS, soil and water conservation districts, The Nature Conservancy, the Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service, and American Land Conservancy.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.

**EMP-CC Attendance List
August 17, 2005**

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Charles Barton | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD |
| Charlie Wooley | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3 |
| Mike Steuck | Iowa Department of Natural Resources |
| Mike McGhee | Iowa Department of Natural Resources |
| Tim Schlagenhaft | Minnesota Department of Natural Resources |
| Janet Sternburg | Missouri Department of Conservation |
| Mike Wells | Missouri Department of Natural Resources |
| Gretchen Benjamin | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources |
| Bill Franz | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5 |
| Rich Worthington | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, HQ |
| Steve Ellis | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD |
| Susan Smith | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD |
| Mike Thompson | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS |
| Gary Loss | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR |
| Marvin Hubbell | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR |
| Mark Pratt | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR |
| Kara Mitvalsky | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR |
| Roger Perk | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR |
| Don Powell | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP |
| Tom Novak | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP |
| Rebecca Soileau | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP |
| Sharonne Baylor | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge |
| Karen Westphall | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Barry Johnson | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC |
| Pat Heglund | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC |
| Jennie Sauer | U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC |
| Tom Boland | MACTEC |
| Holly Stoerker | Upper Mississippi River Basin Association |