

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

**August 23, 2006
Quarterly Meeting**

**Radisson Hotel
La Crosse, Wisconsin**

Charles Barton of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. on August 23, 2006. Other EMP-CC representatives present were Charlie Wooley (USFWS), Mike Jawson (USGS), Martin Konrad (IA DNR), Tim Schlagenhaft (MN DNR), Janet Sternburg (MO DOC), Gretchen Benjamin (WI DNR), and Al Fenedick (USEPA). A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

Barton introduced Colonel Robert Sinkler, the new Commander of the Corps' Rock Island District. Having assumed command on July 21, Colonel Sinkler said he has been very impressed by what he has learned so far about the EMP and its accomplishments.

Minutes from the May 2006 Meeting

Martin Konrad moved and Gretchen Benjamin seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the May 17, 2006 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Program Management

Marv Hubbell announced that Hank DeHaan has been selected as the Corps' new LTRMP manager.

FY 06 Implementation

Hubbell reviewed the EMP's basic fiscal information for FY 06, noting that scheduled expenditures total \$19.835 million for the year. This reflects the \$20.0 million appropriation, less a one percent rescission, plus \$35,000 in carry-over from FY 05. There was no savings and slippage assessment in FY 06. Expenditures through the third quarter were \$9.736 million and obligations were \$12.302 million [Note: This expenditure figure is a correction to the spreadsheet provided in the agenda packet].

As was first reported at the February EMP-CC meeting, the Corps held back \$805,000 in FY 06 funding that would have typically been allocated to the LTRMP under the standard HREP/LTRMP allocation formula (i.e., 68.6/31.4). Of this amount, \$650,000 was later transferred to MVS to cover outstanding needs associated with the Calhoun Point project. The remainder was retained in MVR, with the expectation that these funds might be required

for the Lake Odessa project. Subsequent to the May EMP-CC meeting, MVR transferred \$350,000 to MVP for the Pool 8 Islands Phase III project. Hubbell emphasized that the holdbacks and transfers have been part of the Corps' effort to respond to the Congressionally imposed changes in contracting detailed at previous meetings.

Hubbell also reported that the Corps is going through an agency-wide process of restoring funds to projects and programs from which they were previously transferred. As part of this effort, Hubbell said the EMP has paid back \$542,000 to various projects and programs, including Section 519. He said staff from the three districts will meet next week to determine how to allocate this payback amount among the three districts. In response to a question from Gretchen Benjamin, Hubbell explained that this agency-wide process is an attempt to settle old accounts as the Corps adopts the new contracting procedures. Charles Barton added that there was no funding set aside for paybacks this year, so many projects and programs are scrambling to make these payments. Benjamin said MVD is to be commended for its efforts to live within the new contracting rules. Tim Schlagenhaft asked whether the \$540,000 corresponds to the amount the EMP received from other projects and programs in prior years. Hubbell said he could not confirm the precise number, but said he expects the \$540,000 figure is probably slightly in excess of the EMP's net receipts from the other projects and programs in question. Janet Sternburg asked whether there are any other old "debts" that the EMP might be asked to repay in the future. Gary Loss said this year's paybacks are an attempt to do a final leveling, but also said that he could not guarantee that something else would not be identified in the future. Sternburg expressed concern with the timing of the payback, observing that it is difficult to make these kinds of adjustments so late in the fiscal year. [Note: Subsequent to the August 23rd meeting, it was determined that the \$542,000 targeted for payback had in fact *not* been transferred from the EMP, and will not be transferred from the program in FY 06. The \$542,000 that had been set aside for transfer was instead allocated to the Lake Odessa HREP. The prospects for the EMP being required to repay these funds in FY 07 or beyond are uncertain.]

FY 07 Appropriations/Budget

Hubbell reported that the FY 07 energy and water appropriations bill is still pending in Congress. According to Hubbell, the House-passed measure includes \$20.0 million for the EMP, while the Senate Appropriations Committee has approved \$16.0 million. This compares with the Administration's funding request of \$26.8 million. Hubbell presented the following estimated allocations under the House and Senate funding levels, assuming no savings and slippage and a one percent rescission:

FY 07 Allocation Estimates
(in millions of dollars)

Total FY 07 Program	16.000	20.000
Savings & slippage	0.000	0.000
Recession (1%)	0.160	0.200
Administrative Costs	0.475	0.560
Regional Mgmt. (incl. LTRMP Admin)	0.325	0.325
ITRC/SET	0.075	0.075
Public Involvement	0.025	0.035
Program Initiatives	0.050	0.125
SUB (Total-Admin)	15.365	19.240
LTRMP @ 31.4%	4.825	6.041
HREP @ 68.6%	10.540	13.199
St. Paul District	3.162	3.960
Rock Island District	4.216	5.279
St. Louis District	3.162	3.960

Hubbell noted that the 2004 LTRMP restructuring plan assumes the LTRMP allocation will be at least \$4.363 million annually, a figure that is met under both of the funding scenarios presented above.

Hubbell revisited the LTRMP budget categories that have been in use since the program was restructured in 2004, defining them as follows:

1. The minimum sustainable program (MSP) is not the level of monitoring that is needed on the UMRS, but is rather a streamlined program that the partners believed could be maintained between FY 05 and FY 09 based on the budget assumptions reflected in the restructuring plan.
2. MSP+ was not part of the 2004 restructuring plan, but has been used as a category in FY 05 and 06. Items funded under MSP+ were important priorities, including bathymetry, glide path, and equipment refreshment; but funding was not “guaranteed” for the five year plan.
3. The additional program element (APE) category consists of competitively funded proposals for research, analysis, and other science-based activities. APEs are one-year in duration, must not require adding permanent staff, and must result in definable products at their conclusion.

Hubbell announced that the Corps is planning to eliminate the MSP+ category in FY 07 and address activities previously funded under MSP+ through the APE process.

Hubbell reported that the Senate-passed Water Resources Development Act of 2006 includes two EMP-related provisions. The first would permit nongovernmental organizations to serve as nonfederal HREP sponsors. This is consistent with the partners' recommendation in the 2004 Report to Congress. The second provision would add research on nutrients and the development of remediation strategies to the authorized scope of the LTRMP. Hubbell observed that the LTRMP already does some nutrient monitoring. In contrast, the development of remediation plans would be a significant departure for the program.

Tim Schlagenhaft said he would like to know more about the intent and potential impacts of the nutrients amendment. However, given that the provision was included in the manager's amendment shortly before Senate passage of WRDA, there is little information available. Schlagenhaft said the state partners were inclined to wait and see what happens with the provision in conference. But he stressed that the LTRMP is already doing nutrient monitoring and said Minnesota would be very concerned that any modifications to that effort not diminish the program's other monitoring efforts. Gretchen Benjamin added that the EMP has never had the budget needed to execute the full LTRMP as originally envisioned, and the monitoring efforts have been further scaled back on multiple occasions. Given this, Benjamin said, adding additional mandates to the program would be very detrimental.

Enhancing HREP Utilization of Available LTRMP Data

Hubbell acknowledged that the HREP component has used LTRMP data in planning and designing habitat projects for years. However, Hubbell said the Corps would like to see the HREPs' use of LTRMP data enhanced, including making the use of that data more consistent across habitat projects. As a pilot effort, UMESC staff conversant with the LTRMP data will be assigned to assist the Huron Island and Beaver Island project delivery teams in obtaining and interpreting relevant data. If this approach proves useful, Hubbell said he would like to make it a routine practice with all HREPs, budget permitting.

In response to questions from Sternburg, Hubbell said the two pilot projects are not in monitoring trend pools and it is too early to draw conclusions about the usefulness of LTRMP data for projects beyond the trend pools. Martin Konrad asked how the Corps would fund the effort to enhance HREP utilization of LTRMP data. Hubbell said the costs would be included in the regional management category, and thus would be borne proportionately by the HREP and LTRMP components (i.e., approximately two-thirds and one-third, respectively). In response to a question from Benjamin, Hubbell said he did not yet have a cost estimate for the level of staff time that would be required, but he estimated the expense at between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Schlagenhaft asked whether the same staff person would be involved in supplying data for all project phases. Hubbell said he would like to concentrate the work with a single person in order to ensure continuity. However, he said that it would sometimes be necessary to draw on other staff with particular areas of expertise.

Benjamin expressed support for making use of LTRMP data in developing HREPs. However, she emphasized that any proposal to dedicate EMP resources toward such an effort should be subject to the same standards that would apply to an APE project — i.e., the partners should ensure that the effort is resulting in useful products before continuing funding each year. She

also cautioned that mining data for a habitat project can be very time consuming and questioned whether a single staff person could successfully supply data to multiple HREPs in different phases. Benjamin said it would be important to carefully define this person's scope of responsibility and make it clear that the various program partners still have a responsibility to contribute data to their projects as well. Hank DeHaan suggested that, as they are developed, the data mining protocols could be added to the HREP design manual to help ensure consistency. Sternburg said she was not certain how the focus on using LTRMP data would differ from the existing practice of gathering data from a broad range of data sets and sources that is a routine part of HREP planning. Schlagenhaft observed that the idea of a dedicated staff person providing LTRMP data to HREPs did not seem like a particularly good fit for the APE program.

Hubbell emphasized that he is not proposing to fund the effort to enhance the HREPs' use of LTRMP data as an APE. Instead, he reiterated his expectation that it would be funded as a regional program administration expense, with the costs thus borne proportionately by the two components. That being said, Hubbell agreed that the use of funds for this purpose should still be held to some of the same standards as APEs. In particular, he cited the need to ensure that the effort is producing useful products and results before continuing funding from one year to the next. Hubbell said he would prepare a written proposal, including cost estimates and process recommendations, for the EMP-CC's consideration at its November meeting.

Public Outreach

Marv Hubbell reflected on the EMP's 20th anniversary, observing that the program's record of accomplishment and its longevity are both impressive. He emphasized the importance of pausing to recognize the EMP's strong record of success at this important milestone. Hubbell also expressed the Corps' appreciation for the EMP partners' many contributions to the anniversary celebration. He then provided a variety of logistical details concerning the afternoon's planned events.

Hubbell reported that the EMP has been successfully showcased at a variety of other recent events. These included a one-week session of the Corps' Planning Associates Program focused on ecosystem restoration, a visit from an OMB budget examiner, and a group of visitors from Brazil. Hubbell said participants in these various events consistently remarked upon the EMP's commitment to partnership, learning, and improving. Gretchen Benjamin said that the City of La Crosse recently celebrated its 150th anniversary. USGS, the Corps, and Wisconsin DNR were all represented at the event and included information on the EMP in their displays.

EMP Operating Approach

Marv Hubbell said he drafted the operating approach presented at the May meeting in order to articulate how he thought the EMP should be managed and function in the coming months and years. Assuming the role of EMP Program Manager at a time of both uncertainty and opportunity, Hubbell said it was his goal to maintain the EMP as a vital, fully functioning program that is performing at a high level. After some discussion at the May meeting and favorable initial reaction from EMP-CC members, it was agreed that the EMP partners would review the operating approach paper and provide their comments to Hubbell by July 1. Hubbell reported that he did not receive any comments subsequent to the May meeting.

Charlie Wooley expressed his appreciation of Hubbell's efforts in drafting the operating approach. Wooley described it as crisp, clean, and direct, and recommended that the EMP-CC endorse it as a blueprint for the program. Gretchen Benjamin echoed Wooley's comments, and said she was particularly pleased to see increased public outreach efforts as one of the highlighted areas for improvement. Martin Konrad said he likes the operating approach document, especially its emphasis on refining the program's goals and objectives.

Tim Schlagenhaft observed that, with the NESP authority pending, there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the EMP's future. While generally concurring with the operating approach's statement that "the fundamental focus of the EMP will not change," Schlagenhaft emphasized the need for flexibility. For example, should NESP not be authorized, he said Minnesota would want to explore the possibility of modifying the EMP in order to permit floodplain restoration projects. Charles Barton said that he did not see anything in the operating approach that would preclude looking at new needs and options for the EMP. Hubbell stressed the Corps' desire for the EMP to be the best program it can be, regardless of what happens with NESP.

Benjamin moved and Wooley seconded a motion to endorse the operating approach as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects

SET Application of Selection Criteria

Marv Hubbell reported that, despite efforts following the May EMP-CC meeting, many of the new HREP fact sheets were not available in time for the System Ecological Team (SET) to evaluate them in mid-July, as had been proposed. Currently, only 3 of the 15 new fact sheets are complete. Hubbell said he has established a new deadline of August 30 for all fact sheets that will be forwarded to the SET for evaluation. The ongoing delay is due at least in part to the new fact sheet format, which calls for data from the Habitat Needs Assessment (HNA). Hubbell assured the EMP partners that the Corps will provide the staff assistance needed to incorporate the HNA data in the pending fact sheets. The new schedule, according to Hubbell, calls for the SET to meet and review the fact sheets during the week of October 23, with a report to the EMP-CC at the committee's November meeting. Hubbell said he did not know whether there would be sufficient time between October 23 and the EMP-CC's November 16 meeting for that report to include the SET's sequencing recommendations.

Links between HREPs and TMDLs

Hubbell reported that the three UMR District Commanders had recently received identical letters from EPA Region 5 posing a series of questions about how water quality issues are considered in the Corps' ecosystem restoration work on the river system. Hubbell invited Bill Franz to describe the letters and EPA's areas of concern. Franz observed that, for some time, people in various contexts have been thinking about the relationship between ecosystem efforts and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs). He said EPA's letter was intended to spark efforts to explore this relationship. In particular, the letter asks the Corps 1) whether water quality impairment has been a factor in past project design and selection and 2) whether there might be

ways in the future to address impairments through ecosystem restoration projects. Franz suggested that, if restoration projects are being done in part to address water quality-related habitat limitations, but the UMRS is not generally listed for that type of water quality problem, it begs certain questions about water quality standards, assessments, and listings. Franz said EPA is interested in both mainstem and tributary impairments.

Hubbell said the Corps has not yet responded to EPA's letter, but said one likely element of the response will be to encourage EPA staff to participate on project design teams. On a more systemic scale, Hubbell said the Corps is also certainly willing to have the district-level discussions that EPA's letters requested. He added, however, that the Corps must be careful to remain within its authorities. Thus, for example, water quality issues may be an important consideration for a particular project, but they are not a program focus for either the EMP or the pending NESP. Hubbell said the Corps is in the process of identifying the points of contact EPA requested in its letters. He said it is likely that MVS will rely on an MVR POC, while MVP will likely name its own technical contact.

Tim Schlagenhaft asked whether there are TMDL funds available that could help implement ecosystem restoration efforts. Franz said EPA would examine this, but explained that TMDL funds are typically restricted to preparing and writing the TMDL. Funds for implementation usually come from various programs and resources within the subject watershed.

Holly Stoerker noted that the UMRBA Water Quality Task Force has been discussing issues related to the habitat/water quality connection for some time. At tomorrow's UMRBA meeting, staff will be outlining a possible project to address some of these issues. Stoerker distinguished this potential project from the Corps' response to EPA's letters, explaining that the UMRBA will be deciding whether it will play a role in bringing a range of water quality and ecosystem restoration players together for a broader dialog. Hubbell expressed enthusiasm for the project idea, noting that the Corps will be responding more directly to the specific requests raised in EPA's letters. Noting that TMDLs are ultimately a state responsibility, Stoerker said it is good EPA and the Corps are thinking about the connections between water quality and ecosystem restoration, but stressed that the states need to engage in this discussion as well. Janet Sternburg said the potential UMRBA project sounds like a good way of initiating the necessary dialog among all players.

HREP Design Handbook and Database

Hubbell reported that Corps staff has finished revising the HREP Design Handbook in response to partner comments. The first edition of the handbook is now complete, and a copy will be available at this afternoon's EMP anniversary celebration. Hubbell went on to explain that the Corps will rely primarily on CDs for distributing the handbook, and will prepare only a very limited number of hardcopies. He thanked Kara Mitvalsky and others for their great work in preparing the HREP Design Handbook.

Hubbell also reported that Corps staff continue their efforts to link the HREP database, which is in Access, to GIS. This will enable users to query the database in a variety of ways, resulting in customized reports of EMP outcomes and accomplishments. While development of the revised database has taken longer than he would have liked, Hubbell expressed optimism that

the completed database will be a very useful tool. He noted that one source of delay has been the effort to standardize the way project features are described.

District HREP Reports

Don Powell reported that draft definite project reports (DPRs) are due out in September for Capoli Slough and Harpers Slough. [Note: Subsequent to the August meeting, the Capoli and Harpers draft DPRs were delayed until November due to deployment of the project manager.] Minor data collection is being done for Lake Winneshiek and Conway Lake. Plans and specs are underway for Pool 8 Islands Phase III Stage 2. Construction on Spring Lake Island was completed in June. The project, which included construction of four islands, came in slightly under budget. MVP awarded the contract for Long Meadow Lake, which is on the Minnesota Valley Refuge, in March. Construction on Long Meadow Lake is slated to start in September and will likely continue over the winter. The Pool Slough project is nearing completion, with a pre-final inspection scheduled for tomorrow. Remaining tasks include getting the pumping station in place and operational, something Powell said he hopes can still be accomplished this year. MVP awarded the contract for Pool 8 Islands Phase III Stage 1 this past spring. This stage includes protection of the Coon Creek delta and island stabilization. Construction began last week in shallow water conditions. While progress has been slow, the breakwaters should be complete by late September. Keeping to this schedule is important because the area is heavily used by waterfowl hunters. Powell also indicated that MVP has placed seven project completion reports on its FTP site. In addition, the district has been doing monitoring and bathymetry at various project locations.

Mike Thompson reported that MVS is completing the final Independent Technical Review for the Pools 25/26 project. Design work on Pools 25/26 was incorporated into the plan formulation process. The district expects to submit the project to MVD for approval in the first or second quarter of FY 07. Ted Shanks and Wilkinson Island will both have undergone functional analysis workshops by the end of FY 06, and formal plan formulation for both projects will be initiated in FY 07. Thompson said MVS will start the solicitation and contract award process for Batchtown Phase III in September. Construction on Calhoun Point Phase II should be completed in September. There have been problems with the lower lake pump at the Swan Lake HREP. Thompson said this may be attributable to a latent design problem. MVS will be working with the Fish and Wildlife Service to resolve the issue. [Note: Subsequent to the August meeting, it was determined that sediment is reducing pumping capacity, creating the appearance that there was a problem with the pump.] Project Evaluation Reports are under development for the Cuivre Island and Stump Lake projects. The district will be awarding some contracts for bathymetric work before the end of FY 06. There is not much current activity in MVS on bioresponse or baseline monitoring.

Hubbell reported that MVR has five projects in the planning phase. The district is working with Illinois to resolve a few issues on the Rice Lake project, which is scheduled for completion of the draft DPR by the end of the calendar year. The DPR for Fox Island is expected to be complete in the very near future. As reported earlier, the Huron Island and Beaver Island projects are the subject of a new pilot approach to enhancing the use of LTRMP data in HREP planning. Hubbell said MVR hopes to complete plans and specifications for Lake Odessa Phase 2 in early FY 07. The Rice Lake project had been scheduled for plans and specifications during the second half of FY 07. But progress on the project has slowed, and the

Fox Island project will instead take this slot for design work. Depending on the level of funding available, Hubbell said MVR may be able to fund the construction contract for Lake Odessa Phase 1 Option A or B this year. If not, both options will be construction priorities for FY 07. Monitoring work is ongoing for the Sunfish Lake project, and the Fish and Wildlife Service is evaluating HREP revegetation efforts. A report on the Service's findings is expected soon.

Long Term Resource Monitoring Program

Monitoring Data and Statistics—Implications for LTRMP Management and Science

Barry Johnson began his presentation by noting that the LTRMP collects a lot of data, begging the questions of why and what can be done with the data. He reviewed the four fundamental goals established in the LTRMP's 1992 Operating Plan:

1. Develop a better understanding of the ecology of the UMRS and its resource problems
2. Monitor resource change
3. Develop alternatives to better manage the UMRS
4. Provide for the proper management of LTRMP information

Johnson observed that statistics can be applied to the first three of these goals. However, the types of data that should be collected, the frequency of that collection, etc. depend on the specific questions being asked. He provided examples of both ambiguous and well-defined questions—e.g., How many samples are enough? vs. A 5% annual decline in bluegill abundance necessitates management intervention when we are 80% certain the decline is occurring. How many samples are required to reliably detect such a decline in Pool X? Johnson also briefly highlighted some possible types of analyses, including evaluating sampling design and methods, status, trends, temporal and spatial patterns, relations among factors, and effects of management actions. Detailed information on LTRMP statistical procedures is available on the UMESC web site. Johnson then explored several examples using fisheries data from four reaches, identifying possible trends and patterns among reaches.

Depending on the partners' interest, Johnson said presentations at future EMP-CC meetings could focus in more detail on specific topics, including status, trends, temporal and spatial patterns, relations among factors, and effects of management actions. Gretchen Benjamin asked whether these topics could be explored in the standard meeting framework, or whether one or more special workshops might be needed. Johnson said he was open to the committee members' ideas. Marv Hubbell said the key question for the EMP-CC is whether the LTRMP's capabilities are meeting the partners' expectations and needs, regardless of the forum where the question is addressed.

Tim Schlagenhaft said Johnson's presentation illustrated the importance of asking the right questions and then shaping the program to answer those questions. Schlagenhaft asked whether the EMP-CC, or a working group, should focus on identifying the right questions for the program's future. Such an effort would consider past work, the LTRMP Strategic Plan, findings of groups like the Science Panel, etc. He stressed that such an effort would be very timely at this point in the LTRMP's evolution.

LTRMP Product Status Update

Mike Jawson reported on the LTRMP's third quarter product highlights, including presentations at three professional meetings and conferences, publication of two LTRMP reports and two fact sheets, release of several new web products, and completion of an APE project involving migratory bird ground surveys. He noted that one of the new fact sheets summarizes the LTRMP's efforts to take the pulse of the UMRS over the program's first 20 years. Jawson also reported that USGS and Corps staff continue to work on revising the Status and Trends Report. However, the report's estimated release has been further delayed until the end of calendar year 2006.

Planning for FY 07

Jawson explained that the scope of the minimal sustainable program (MSP) in FY 07 is expected to be the same as for FY 06 and the two previous years. This includes the following:

- Monitoring the three components — i.e., fisheries, water quality, and aquatic vegetation
- Analysis and reporting
- Statistical evaluation
- Data management
- GIS support
- Bathymetry support

With the planned elimination of the MSP+ category in FY 07, Jawson noted that it remains to be determined how data visualization, bathymetry, and equipment refreshment will be handled under the Additional Program Elements (APE) program. No glide path expenditures are planned for FY 07, but spending on the other former MSP+ categories is anticipated in FY 07. [Note: Subsequent to the August meeting, it was clarified that there would be some minor glide path expenditures in FY 07 associated with one field station position. Also, the Corps announced its intention to substantially modify the previous approach to collecting bathymetric data under the MSP+.]

Jawson also summarized the status of the FY 07 APE selection process. In response to a March 31 call for proposals, 39 letters of intent (LOIs) were submitted. After an initial partner review of the LOIs, 24 full proposals were submitted. Both the A-Team and the Corps have reviewed and ranked the proposals. Jawson said USGS needs to complete its review and coordinate the final APE selections with the Corps and A-Team. Final decisions on the APE selections cannot be made until the LTRMP's FY 07 funding allocation is known.

A-Team Report and Monitoring

Jawson emphasized that, from USGS's perspective as the science agency charged with implementing the LTRMP, the primary determinant of all activities should be their relationship to the goals of the program. As such, Jawson expressed his hope that the partners would engage in a respectful and forthright dialog concerning the pending proposal to restore selected

monitoring elements to the program. He also urged the partners to express their interests rather than their positions.

Janet Sternburg gave the A-Team report on behalf of the team's chair, Rob Maher. She reported that, at its August meeting, the A-Team examined the FY 07 APE proposals and the team members' individual rankings of those proposals. As part of that discussion, several members expressed some dissatisfaction with the APE process. In particular, state members were concerned with the lack of transparency in the final step — i.e., when the Corps and USGS make final project selections. This led to an A-Team recommendation that the A-Team chair observe that final step in the future. Regarding the APE process more generally, Sternburg observed that it has been a learning process, and there are undoubtedly opportunities for improvement. With the decision to eliminate the MSP+ category, Sternburg said it would be timely to review to process more comprehensively.

Jim Fischer explained that the A-Team's proposal to restore selected monitoring elements is not intended to reopen the very difficult restructuring decisions that were made in 2004. Instead, it is responsive to recent discussions at both the A-Team and EMP-CC regarding what would be the top priority increment of monitoring to bring back if resources permit. He noted that funding for APEs in FY 05 and 06 was \$809,000 and \$1.067 million, respectively, well above the \$633,000 and \$521,000 anticipated for APEs under the restructuring plan. As such, Fischer said, it is reasonable to consider directing some of those additional resources to restoring priority monitoring elements.

Fischer said an A-Team working group developed a specific proposal to restore selected monitoring elements on an annual basis, contingent upon sufficient funding. Recognizing important longitudinal differences in data needs, the proposal calls for restoring first period fish monitoring by the lower four field stations and fixed site water quality monitoring by the Minnesota and Wisconsin field stations. The state A-Team members endorsed the proposal at their August meeting, though there were outstanding questions regarding the description of specific products and how any restored monitoring should be treated from a budget programming perspective. Since then, the working group has attempted to respond to the Corps' request to elaborate more on the anticipated products. Fischer said the A-Team is deferring to the EMP-CC regarding the question of what budget category would be most appropriate for the restored monitoring.

Marv Hubbell said the A-Team proposal does an excellent job describing the importance of the information lost through the elimination of these monitoring elements under the restructuring plan. In particular, it highlights the application of these data to understanding the status of the resource. However, Hubbell said he would like to see the proposal modified to include more specificity regarding the one-year products. He explained that much of the discussion at the past two A-Team meetings has provided significant insight on this, yet the written proposal does not fully capture these ideas. Hubbell also acknowledged that the monitoring proposal has been scrutinized more than the typical APE proposal. He emphasized that this is not out of some desire to subject monitoring to a different standard, but rather reflects recognition that we have learned a lot since the 2004 restructuring and we should apply that to our decisions moving forward. With those changes, Hubbell said the Corps is inclined to view the proposal quite favorably. He noted that it has received many positive comments from Corps staff.

Regarding how to handle the proposal, Hubbell said the Corps believes it should be considered as part of the FY 07 APE process, subject to the same requirements as other APEs. This would include making an exception to allow the proposal to be considered as a late entry. He said the Corps would consider the EMP-CC's recommendations regarding how to handle review in future years, assuming the proposal is included as an FY 07 APE.

Mike Jawson expressed general concurrence with Hubbell's perspectives. But he also said USGS has reservations about the value of restoring the proposed monitoring elements as a one-year effort. While there are clearly expectations that the restoration of these elements would extend beyond a single year, Jawson said those expectations should lead us to a broader dialog about where the partners want to go with additional monitoring before restoring any elements. The question, according to Jawson, should be what kind of monitoring will best address the partnership's priority questions.

Fischer expressed confidence that a single year of monitoring data could be leveraged against the LTRMP database and would be valuable. He suggested that it would contribute more to system understanding than many of the research projects funded as APEs. Hubbell said he is not concerned about the value of the data, but instead wants to make sure that the proposal clearly articulates the application(s) and better defines the products. He reiterated that he has heard these things addressed coherently in the A-Team's discussions, but does not see them reflected in the written proposal.

Martin Konrad said he would like the EMP-CC to take the following two actions:

1. adopt the A-Team's proposal for restoration of selected monitoring elements, and
2. consider potential refinements to the APE process.

In explaining the second of his two recommendations, Konrad emphasized that five-year plans need to be flexible. In their LTRMP restructuring plan, the partners did not anticipate the level of funding that has been available in FY 05 and 06. Konrad said the current APE process does not seem well-structured to consider the A-Team's monitoring proposal. He expressed doubt that it would rank well under the current process. Hubbell emphasized that he did not share Konrad's doubt, saying he anticipates that it will compete very successfully with the other APEs for FY 07 funding. Nevertheless, Hubbell said he would welcome an opportunity to review and refine the APE process.

Jawson explained that USGS requested more time to review the A-Team proposal, in part, in order to identify possible scientific refinements to the recommended approach. For example, he noted that doing the additional water quality sampling on a set schedule would not be the best way to capture unique events, which were cited as one of the justifications for restoring the fixed site sampling. Jawson said he did not necessarily share Hubbell's confidence in the value of the data that would result from the additional monitoring as proposed. However, Jawson emphasized that USGS believes the approach outlined in the A-Team proposal could be enhanced.

Janet Sternburg recalled that the partners developed the MSP for fiscal reasons. Prior to that restructuring, the elements now being proposed for restoration were part of a monitoring program that all partners supported as scientifically valid. According to Sternburg, no one was

questioning the first period fish sampling or the fixed site water quality sampling. Given that nothing has fundamentally changed, she questioned why any of the partners would have problems adding it back into the program. She emphasized that the A-Team is not proposing to go back to the 2002 level of monitoring. Instead, the team is proposing a modest, relatively low cost way of getting some key information that has been missing. Hubbell said Sternburg's question is a fair one.

Gretchen Benjamin observed that, when the MSP was defined as part of the restructuring plan, there was no consideration of how funds in excess of the \$4.4 million baseline were to be allocated. The diminishing APE funding over the five-year plan is simply the result of subtracting the cost-indexed MSP amount from the \$4.4 million baseline assumption. However, in FY 05 and 06, the amount actually available to USGS for the LTRMP exceeded the \$4.4 million baseline. Benjamin emphasized the need for a rationale, transparent process for allocating those additional funds, should the baseline be exceeded in future years.

Tim Schlagenhaft stressed that there are clearly some things we could do to improve the APE process and make all of the partners more comfortable. In particular, he said that sharpening the questions/themes would bring better focus to the proposals. Under the current system, Schlagenhaft said the APE proposals are generally fine projects, but are not necessarily focused on our priority questions for the LTRMP. Schlagenhaft said the states would also like the USGS and Corps to rank the proposals based on their scientific merit concurrent with the A-Team's rankings, and to share those rankings with the partnership. Later, as a separate process, after the partners all understand each other's science priorities, the Corps and USGS could determine where those priorities need to be modified based on administrative concerns, such as staff availability. Schlagenhaft said this administrative review and final selection process should also be as transparent as possible.

Hubbell endorsed Schlagenhaft's ideas for refining the APE process. As one specific improvement, Hubbell said the A-Team Chair will be present when the Corps and USGS do the final selection of APEs.

Jawson expressed his perspective that there are two things at issue: 1) the A-Team's FY 07 monitoring proposal and 2) how we can function better in the future as a partnership on matters including program direction, size of the MSP, role of monitoring, etc. Jawson said a dialog on these broader issues would serve us well.

Hubbell acknowledged that the idea of restoring monitoring was raised in the FY 06 APE selection process, but there was no formal proposal and the idea surfaced too late. As a result, the idea was not addressed. By asking for modifications to the current proposal, Hubbell emphasized that the Corps is not seeking to delay its consideration. To the contrary, he stressed the Corps' commitment to considering the A-Team's proposal for FY 07 and thus the importance of finalizing the proposal promptly. He suggested having the Corps, USGS, and the proposal authors (i.e., John Chick and Jim Fischer) confer via phone next week. Jawson said USGS would complete its review and provide comments in time for such a call. After some further discussion, it was agreed that others need not be involved in this call. Once the authors have made modifications in response to the Corps' concerns and have addressed any USGS comments that they believe are compatible with their intent in offering the proposal, then it will be forwarded for consideration in the final FY 07 APE selection process.

In response to the state members' earlier suggestion, the EMP-CC also agreed that there should be an effort to refine the APE development and selection process for FY 08 and 09, with a particular focus on 1) articulating more specific questions to better target proposals on partners' priorities and 2) ensuring greater transparency in the process. As an initial step, EMP-CC members agreed to submit their thoughts on scoping the APE refinement effort to Corps staff by September 15. The Corps will then synthesize those comments and get them back out to the partners, leading to a discussion on the desired scope of the refinement process and specific priorities the partners want addressed.

Other Business

Ken Lubinski said that, with 20 years of LTRMP data, we are now getting to the point where those data have the potential to be extremely useful for management. He suggested the partners reevaluate the HREP planning approach with an eye toward how LTRMP data could be better used. Marv Hubbell observed that both the pending Status and Trends Report and Barry Johnson's presentation from earlier today make it clear that there are some cases where the existing data provide great insight, and others where there are still significant data needs. Charlie Wooley noted that the EMP operating approach endorsed by the EMP-CC calls for ongoing efforts to enhance the links between the HREP and LTRMP components. Holly Stoerker said the pilot effort to help the project design teams make better use of LTRMP data should be quite helpful in that regard.

Barb Naramore announced that the next EMP-CC meeting will be held on November 16, 2006 in St. Paul, and will be preceded by NECC/ECC meetings on November 14 and a UMRBA meeting on November 15. The subsequent two quarterly meeting series will be held February 20-22, 2007 in St. Louis and May 22-24, 2007 in the Quad Cities. The final order of meetings for the February and May meetings has yet to be determined. [Note: Subsequent to the meeting, it was determined that the EMP-CC will most likely meet on the final day of the February and May meeting series.]

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

**EMP-CC Attendance List
August 23, 2006**

EMP-CC Members

Charles Barton	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Charlie Wooley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Mike Jawson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Al Fenedick	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

Mike Harden	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Mike Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Rip Runyon	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Kathy Kornberger	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
T. Miller	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
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
Roger Perk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marvin Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Hank DeHaan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Scott Whitney	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Darron Niles	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Kara Mitvalsky	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Angie Freyermuth	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Terry Birkenstock	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
Tom Hempfling	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, LRD
Gene Fleming	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, LRC
Bill Franz	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Doris Bautch	Maritime Administration, Great Lakes Region
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island Field Office
Sharonne Baylor	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Linda Leake	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jennie Sauer	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Brian Ickes	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Brian Gray	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jeff Houser	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Ken Lubinski	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC/The Nature Conservancy
Mike Griffin	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Walt Popp	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Terry Dukerschein	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Larry Kieck	Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Harbors
Tom Boland	MACTEC, St. Louis
Dan McGuiness	National Audubon Society
Brad Walker	Prairie Rivers Network
Vince Shay	The Nature Conservancy
Catherine McCalvin	The Nature Conservancy
Heather Schwar	HNTB
Robin Grawe	Mississippi River Citizen Commission
Keith Beseke	Citizen, FWS Retired
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association