

**Minutes of the 131<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Meeting  
of the  
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**August 5, 2014  
East Peoria, Illinois**

UMRBA Chair Arlan Juhl called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Participants were as follows:

UMRBA Representatives and Alternates:

Arlan Juhl	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Dan Stephenson	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Diane Ford	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Robert Stout	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Bryan Hopkins	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Dan Baumann	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Federal UMRBA Liaisons:

Sharon Santure	U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS
Mark Moore	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Col. Mark Deschenes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Liz Pelloso	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuge
Barry Johnson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC

Others in Attendance:

Nathan Grider	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Rob Hilsabeck	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Oller	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Nathan Bishop	Illinois Department of Transportation
Doug DeLille	Illinois Department of Transportation
Karen Shoup	Illinois Department of Transportation
Kevin Stouffer	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Chris Klenklen	Missouri Department of Agriculture
Renee Turner	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Gary Meden	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Ken Barr	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marv Hubbell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Michael Tarpey	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Tim Eagan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Hal Graef	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Bob Clevestine	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO
Kraig McPeck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RIFO

Tom Boland	AMEC
Olivia Dorothy	American Rivers
Tim Schlagenhaft	Audubon Minnesota
Scott Stuewe	HDR
Gary Loss	Missman, Inc.
Greg Ryckaert	Missman, Inc.
Brad Walker	Missouri Coalition for the Environment
Gretchen Benjamin	The Nature Conservancy
Doug Blodgett	The Nature Conservancy
Joe Bartletti	Prairie Engineers
Bryan Cross	Prairie Engineers
Natalie Porter	Prairie Engineers
Audrey Schwing	Prairie Engineers
Elliot Brinkman	Prairie Rivers Network
Dru Buntin	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Dave Hokanson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Kirsten Mickelsen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

### **Minutes**

Diane Ford moved and Robert Stout seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the May 13, 2014 quarterly meeting. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

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

Prior to presenting the Executive Director's report, Dru Buntin and Doug Blodgett with The Nature Conservancy provided logistical information to participants regarding the tour of the Emiquon project site immediately following the conclusion of the Quarterly Meeting. Buntin presented the Executive Director's report and noted that the report is organized according to the focus areas in the 2013-17 UMRBA Strategic Plan. Among the items in the report, in the Commercial Navigation focus area, Buntin highlighted the July 9, 2014 UMRBA Navigation Summit and indicated the event included 97 participants. He said more information on the summit will be presented later in the quarterly meeting. In the Ecosystem Restoration and Monitoring focus area, Buntin said UMRBA staff continue to support and participate in the Upper Mississippi River Restoration – Environmental Management Program (UMRR-EMP) strategic planning process. At tomorrow's meeting, the UMRR-EMP Coordinating Committee will consider recommending the release of the draft plan for public comment. In the Spills Response Planning and Mapping focus area, Buntin noted the upcoming UMR Hazardous Spills Group functional exercise planned for October 2-4, 2014 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. As with the April 2014 tabletop exercise in La Crosse, the functional exercise is designed around a hypothetical scenario in which crude oil shipped via rail is released into the river.

In the Water Quality focus area, Buntin said UMRBA staff provided support for the five UMR state departments of agriculture in the submission of a preliminary application for a multistate Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project. Buntin indicated the multistate RCPP application would be discussed more fully later in the quarterly meeting. The UMRBA Water Quality Task Force (WQTF) met in Moline, Illinois in June 10-11, 2014 and discussed issues related to the UMR Clean Water Act water quality monitoring plan. Buntin said the next joint meeting of the WQTF and the Water Quality Executive Committee (WQEC) is scheduled for September 9-10, 2014 in Davenport, Iowa. Buntin highlighted two upcoming meetings related to cross-cutting initiatives. The America's Watershed Initiative (AWI) Summit is planned for September 30 through October 2, 2014 in Louisville, Kentucky. Buntin said the AWI Summit will include a water quality and quantity focus with specific case study examples, as well as discussion and input on the draft AWI report cards for the component

basins and the larger Mississippi River watershed. Buntin indicated that the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI) will hold their third annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana on September 16-18, 2014.

Buntin directed the Board's attention to page B-10 of the agenda packet for a copy of UMRBA Treasurer Jason Tidemann's statement regarding his review of UMRBA's financial statement for the period of April 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014. Diane Ford offered and Robert Stout seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer's statement. The Board unanimously adopted the motion by voice vote.

### **Marseilles Dam Update**

Gary Meden provided the Board with an update regarding the status of repairs completed at Marseilles Dam since the structure received significant damage as a result of an accident in April 2013. The accident occurred during high water conditions when several barges struck the dam after breaking free from the MV Dale Heller. Meden provided a visual overview to the Board of photographs taken following the accident as well as during the now-completed temporary repairs at the site. Meden said the accident resulted in a number of impacts to the dam, including damage to the trunnion (or hinge) anchor between two of the gates, damage to five gates, and erosion at the powerhouse. The accident also resulted in damage to the town of Marseilles, the river embankment, residences, and a school. Meden said the temporary repairs completed on the trunnion anchor included construction of a temporary rock dike, construction and installation of bulkheads, and deconstruction of the temporary dike. The completed temporary repairs also included addressing erosion at the powerhouse, as well as installing a HESCO barrier (rapidly deployable earth-filled flood protection barrier) and a rock embankment by the school.

Meden said the temporary repairs were completed at a cost of \$10 million, including \$5 million from MVR and \$5 million from the Corps' Headquarters emergency funding account. Estimates for permanent repairs at the site range between approximately \$25 million and \$50 million. Meden said the permanent repairs to the dam will entail replacement of the trunnion anchor, repair of two tainter gates, replacement of three tainter gates, repair of damaged pier bullnoses, and removal of a rock work platform. MVR has secured funding for the dam repair contract. Bids for that contract are due to the Corps of Engineers today. Meden said a contract award is expected in mid-September. A contract for the embankment repair is scheduled for fall 2016 with all repairs to be completed by the end of 2017. However, the schedule will depend on sufficient funding.

Meden provided information regarding the findings of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation of the accident and directed the Board to pages C-3 to C-8 of the agenda packet for a copy of the NTSB accident brief. Meden said the NTSB brief concluded that all parties involved in the decision to move the barge in high water conditions share responsibility. He said it was unclear who was consulted in preparation of the NTSB brief. A Corps of Engineers Commander inquiry has also been completed, while a U.S. Coast Guard investigation is still underway. A number of lawsuits including affected homeowners are ongoing and the Department of Justice is representing the Corps in litigation. Initial depositions started last week, but any settlement of claims is expected to take quite some time.

MVR District Commander Col. Mark Deschenes said, despite damages totaling up to \$50 million, navigation was minimally impacted due to the work of all parties involved. Col. Deschenes said ecosystem impacts were, and will continue to be, considered as the Corps conducts response and repair actions. He said MVR staff were also involved in minimizing adverse impacts resulting from the sinking of the MV Colby as well as in a recent incident at Lock and Dam 14. Col. Deschenes highlighted the risk inherent in all transportation modes, but asserted navigation remains the cheapest, safest, most environmentally friendly mode. He said the bigger challenges for navigation are aging infrastructure and shortfalls in the Inland Waterways Trust Fund.

In response to a question from Olivia Dorothy, Col. Deschenes said the repairs at the Marseilles site were funded with operations and maintenance dollars. Responding to a question from Diane Ford, Col. Deschenes said the Corps has procedures in place to ensure that lessons learned from specific incidents are incorporated into future response efforts. Arlan Juhl asked if the Corps has analyzed the extent to which local flooding would have occurred regardless of the accident. Meden said it is likely that significantly less damage would have occurred had the accident not happened. Col. Deschenes reiterated the significant impacts to the town of Marseilles and said the accident increased the severity of these impacts. In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Meden said the U.S. Coast Guard determines when navigation is closed during high water. He said in this specific case, the decision was made to move the tow because the operator was having difficulty keeping it in place. Meden said, if high water overtops the locks, they become inoperable. Under such circumstances, the Corps may be forced to shut the lock down. In response to a question from Olivia Dorothy, Meden said there are significant training requirements for individuals to obtain a pilot's license. However, Meden said he did not know what ongoing training was required post licensure. In response to a question from Dorothy, Meden said the results of the U.S. Coast Guard investigation would likely be used in the ongoing litigation resulting from the accident.

Col. Deschenes provided the Board with brief updates on three other topics of interest. Col. Deschenes said MVR is working with the Illinois Soybean Association to develop a potential public-private partnership proposal involving operations and maintenance and potentially major rehabilitation efforts on an inland waterways system project. Following the release of the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study report earlier this year, Deschenes said MVR is also involved in continued analysis of potential control technologies at the Brandon Rock Lock and Dam site. This includes the potential for an engineered channel and an aquatic nuisance species (ANS) treatment lock at the site. Deschenes said MVR hosted a ribbon cutting yesterday for the Peoria Island project and indicated the project is operating as intended and is a success story. Dru Buntin recalled that, in a February 2014 UMRBA resolution, the Board expressed its support for further analysis of control technologies such as the ANS treatment lock, while also calling for input to be sought from both the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins interests in the formulation of additional control measures. Buntin said UMRBA would appreciate a briefing from the Corps on the ongoing GLMRIS work at a future meeting.

### **UMRBA Navigation Summit**

Kirsten Mickelsen provided an overview of the UMRBA Navigation Summit held July 9-10, 2014 in St. Louis, Missouri. The intent of the Navigation Summit was to highlight the significance of shipping on the Upper Mississippi, while also reflecting on the status of the system infrastructure and investment priorities. Mickelsen said the summit also included discussion regarding strategies to enhance the inland waterways system by better integrating it into an intermodal transportation network. Mickelsen said summit attendees also discussed the potential for public-private partnerships on inland waterways projects, as well as strategies to strengthen partnerships among Upper Mississippi River ports. Mickelsen said staff from the state departments of transportation assisted greatly in the development of the summit program.

Mickelsen said the first day of the summit was designed to facilitate dialogue among commercial navigation stakeholders, while providing states with necessary information to develop a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the river's commercial navigation system. Mickelsen said the second day of the summit was open only to state agency participants. This session allowed state agency staff to reflect on the previous day's discussions and identify opportunities to enhance coordination on navigation priorities including the navigation and ecosystem dual purpose approach embodied in the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program. Mickelsen said potential actions identified by state participants included:

- UMRBA should consider forming a navigation work group to develop marketing messages, evaluate opportunities to enhance multimodal transportation, and discuss the potential of public-private partnerships.
- UMRBA should continue to serve as a forum for information exchange on navigation issues.
- UMRBA should continue to pursue a balanced approach to navigation and ecosystem needs when undertaking advocacy efforts.
- UMRBA should consider working with the Inland Rivers, Ports, and Terminals Association to seek additional input from regional ports and terminals on enhancement opportunities.

Mickelsen said a summary of the Navigation Summit will be available soon. [Note: Subsequent to this meeting, the summary was made available on UMRBA's website: <http://umrba.org/commercialnav/umrba-navsummit-sumJuly9-10-2014.pdf>.]

Col. Mark Deschenes said discussion at a recent Corps command meeting highlighted for him the importance of partners providing input to the Corps as the agency formulates implementation guidance for the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act. Corps leadership will be hosting webinars to gain public input as the implementation guidance is prepared. Dru Buntin said UMRBA staff intended to participate in upcoming Corps webinars designed to seek public input on implementation guidance development. UMRBA states are particularly interested in the implementation guidance pertaining to the public-private partnership pilot project provisions. Buntin said that, given the likely diverse nature of a revenue generating mechanism necessary to make any inland waterways public-private partnership project viable, it would be helpful if the implementation guidance allowed for a process for development of consensus on project revenue generation components. Col. Deschenes said he understood the need for this and Gary Meden encouraged partners to provide such input to Corps leadership. In response to a question from Arlan Juhl, Meden said Corps Headquarters is currently developing the implementation guidance.

Juhl said Mississippi Valley Division Commander Duke DeLuca's presentation at the Navigation Summit regarding four revolutions impacting the Mississippi Valley was particularly compelling and set the stage for a successful summit. Buntin pointed out that a video of a similar presentation Brig. Gen. DeLuca delivered to the Mississippi River Commission is available on YouTube. Robert Stout said the summit discussions showed the importance of maintaining a partnership between navigation and ecosystem needs on the river. Jim Fischer said one topic not addressed at the summit, but one that needs further attention, is the need for increased channel maintenance. Fischer said climate change may make this need more pronounced. Col. Deschenes agreed and said recent experience with high and low water events in St. Paul District are examples of this. Col. Deschenes said MVS requested dredging equipment from MVR, but MVR was unable to provide the equipment because it was fully engaged in channel maintenance efforts as well within its own District.

### **Regional Conservation Partnership Program**

Dave Hokanson reminded the Board of the past year's meeting series focusing on state development of nutrient reduction strategies. In particular, Hokanson pointed to discussion at the May quarterly meeting regarding the new National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. The intent of the RCPP is to promote, implement, and evaluate conservation programs by building partnerships and using innovative approaches. RCPP priorities include water quality, soil health, and habitat. Hokanson said the RCPP established three funding pools: critical conservation areas (CCAs), national, and state. RCPP combines four existing conservation programs and delivers assistance in accordance with the Environmental

Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP). Hokanson said nearly \$400 million in RCPP funding is available. NRCS is seeking equal partner contribution on projects proposed for funding.

Hokanson indicated that, after the May 13, 2014 quarterly meeting, UMR states expressed interest in a collaborative RCPP proposal and worked to identify what could uniquely be done as a group of states. He said state agency staff participated in multiple consultation conference calls to develop a UMR multistate application. Hokanson said all five UMR states are participating in the application with Missouri serving as the lead state and UMRBA staff facilitating the process. He said the UMR states' preliminary proposal for the multistate project was submitted to NRCS on July 14, 2014.

Hokanson said the goals of the UMR multistate proposal relate to water quality, soil health, and the advancement of state nutrient reduction strategies. The interstate elements of the proposal include a shared watershed focus as well as a process for sharing information on evaluation and best practices. Each state determined the particular approach for implementation in their respective state. Illinois' focus is on soil erosion and phosphorus loss on highly erodible land in 18 UMR border counties. Iowa's focus is on statewide adoption of best management practices (BMPs) such as strip-till, no-till, nitrification inhibitor, cover crops, and bioreactors. Minnesota proposes to increase adoption of conservation practices in the Cedar and Root River watersheds. Missouri's approach targets extending adoption of cover crops on 30,000 acres as well as other conservation practices statewide. Wisconsin proposes to increase adoption of conservation practices in the Lower Rock, Black/Buffalo/Trempealeau, and Grant/Platte/Sugar/Pecatonica watersheds. Hokanson said the proposal envisions UMRBA facilitating the information-sharing provisions by way of three regional workshops during the course of the project.

Hokanson said the UMR multistate preliminary proposal requests \$2.25 million in technical assistance and \$14.32 million in financial assistance for a total of \$16.57 million in funding primarily from EQIP. The preliminary proposal also includes \$16.68 million in partner contributions from the five states and UMRBA for a project total of \$33.25 million. Hokanson stressed that the figures in the preliminary application were subject to change in any subsequent full application.

Hokanson said that, on August 1, 2014, NRCS notified Missouri, as the proposal's lead state, that the project had been selected for a full proposal. NRCS received 600 preliminary applications for RCPP funding and selected 230 projects for full proposal applications. Hokanson said next steps include reconvening state agency staff, consultation with NRCS staff, and modification and finalization of the UMR multistate proposal by the October 2, 2014 deadline.

In response to a question from Dan Baumann, Dru Buntin said working through the regional conservation workshops that are proposed in the UMR multistate project could be one strategy to engage other basin RCPP project partners as well as partners involved in related basin conservation work. Buntin said UMRBA staff will provide information to the Board regarding the RCPP projects funded in the UMR following NRCS's selection. Robert Stout stated the timing of the availability of RCPP funding was fortuitous in that it occurred as the UMR states were completing a UMRBA quarterly meeting series highlighting state nutrient reduction efforts. Stout complimented UMRBA staff for facilitating the nutrient-related quarterly meeting discussions as well as for facilitating work with state agency staff on development of the UMR multistate proposal. In response to a question from Barry Johnson, Hokanson said specific monitoring approaches for the project had not yet been determined. Project-scale monitoring will likely be included in the effort, but the extent to which larger basin-scale monitoring will be included is unclear. Hokanson said preparation of the full RCPP application will likely result in a greater level of detail in the monitoring approaches.

## **Flood Risk Management on the UMRS**

Michael Tarpey briefed the Board regarding MVR's flood risk management activities and asserted that flooding is the most costly type of natural disaster. Tarpey said the Corps and some partners are seeking to transform the traditionally narrow approach to flood risk reduction on the UMRS into a more systemic approach. Participation by multiple partners will be required to develop this systemic approach and associated strategy. Tarpey said the residual risk of catastrophic losses similar to what occurred in the floods of 1993 and 2008 still exists on the UMR. Ultimately, he said implementation of the strategy would require the collaborative participation of federal, state, and local agencies as well as other partners.

As flood risk management was being discussed, Tarpey said the Corps and partners identified the need for a single geo-referenced model for the UMRS. The Corps is interested in working with additional UMR partners to find other applications for the model that might benefit areas such as ecosystem restoration or navigation. Discussion has focused on development of a single hydraulic or Hydrologic Engineering Centers River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) model to replace the multiple models currently in use at various federal, state, and local agencies. In this way, Tarpey said the model would serve as a hub or backbone for multiple uses and provide multiple associated benefits. Tarpey said the following potential ancillary benefits have been identified:

- Improvement of floodplain management
- Enhanced real time river forecasting
- Real time inundation mapping
- Support of ecosystem restoration
- Greater consistency across agencies in regulatory actions
- More accuracy at reduced cost
- General assistance in flood fighting, preparation, and response

Tarpey provided some examples of the 1980's era UNET software still in use and also highlighted the practical benefits of the HEC-RAS graphical interface. Tarpey said the inundation mapping application would have been helpful during high water events this year in order to be better able to predict impacts before they occur. He said conditions during low water events could also be modeled to better characterize impacts. Tarpey said MVR estimates an approximate \$2 million cost for the three-year development of a UMRS HEC-RAS model. The Corps has requested written comments regarding the UMRS HEC-RAS model by August 28, 2014. The agency will distribute a revised scope of work to partners on September 15, 2014, with a target date of September 30, 2014 for the final scope of work. Tarpey stressed that additional funding would be required for the Corps to develop the proposed model.

In response to a question from Olivia Dorothy, Hal Graef said the HEC-RAS model could either supplement or replace modeling used by the Corps in river training structure analysis. In response to a question from Karen Hagerty, Tarpey said the model would likely not include the Missouri River, but would likely include some UMR tributaries such as the Rock and Root Rivers. He said the Missouri River would likely require its own model and is outside the boundaries of MVD. In response to a question from Robert Stout, Tarpey said there could be benefits to nutrient reduction efforts as well as ecosystem restoration. Barry Johnson said ecosystem restoration planners are typically interested in lower flooding frequency and asked if the model would look at such conditions. Tarpey said discussion had included focusing on the hydraulics of the system and not on updating the hydrology.

Kraig McPeck said he would be interested in whether the model could improve the ability to understand the impacts watershed land changes on water flows in the river, such as tiling impacts from moving

water off of the land at a faster rate. Arlan Juhl said he understood that current flood risk management activities have been funded with remaining Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan dollars, but suggested that the Corps consider looking at the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) authorities to determine if there are other funding opportunities such as requirements in WRRDA for improved forecasting. Col. Deschenes said he appreciated the comment and would provide that input to those developing the WRRDA implementation guidance. In response to a question from Dan Baumann, Tarpey said MVR has reached out to staff with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for coordination regarding implications for the flood mapping updates. In response to a question from Barry Johnson, Tarpey said he thought sediment transport could be incorporated into the model. Dru Buntin expressed appreciation to Tarpey for providing an update on the status of the Corps' efforts on development of a HEC-RAS model. Buntin said that, in a meeting the previous day between Corps and state agency staff, participants determined a need for increased outreach to additional stakeholders regarding potential benefits derived from the model.

### **UMRR-EMP Emiquon Project**

Marv Hubbell provided an overview of the UMRR-EMP Emiquon project and said the project has generated the most attention of any of the 55 projects completed since the program's inception. Hubbell said the Emiquon project was moved to UMRR-EMP in November 2013 from the Section 206 program because of the project cost cap in that program. The UMRR-EMP Coordinating Committee (UMRR-EMP CC) and the State of Illinois endorsed this shift at the Committee's November 20, 2013 meeting. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns the Emiquon project site and the project, if completed under UMRR-EMP, would be the program's first completed project in partnership with an NGO. Hubbell said an aggressive schedule in moving the project forward, driven in part by one of TNC's funders for the project, resulted in some of the typical partnership engagement being expedited. The Corps initially proposed a 30 day comment period on the project, but increased the public comment period to 70 days in response to requests. Hubbell said the initial definite project report (DPR) proposed allowing Illinois River water into the site approximately every six years. Hubbell said a number of meetings between technical staff of the Corps and other federal and state agencies have occurred in recent weeks. He said staff from the office of U.S. Senator Richard Durbin has also been involved in discussions regarding the project. Hubbell said many of the questions raised surround management of the Emiquon site.

Hubbell said these technical meetings had resulted in a compromise including some changes to the DPR. The islands proposed for the site will be phased in over a period of years with two islands to be initially constructed. The inlet structure contemplated in the DPR will initially be used only to move water out of the site. The Corps has committed \$1 million over a ten-year period to implement adaptive management principles into the project to monitor site conditions and response as a way to inform future project water management and island construction. Hubbell said over 5,000 acres of the Emiquon site are subject to an NRCS Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easement, and indicated that NRCS would have to issue a compatible use agreement for the project to proceed. Hubbell said the Corps has received input from several current and retired natural resource professionals regarding the project and indicated Corps staff are hopeful the changes address any concerns. In response to a question from Dan Baumann, Hubbell said that, even absent the reconnection of the Emiquon site floodplain to the Illinois River, the project would still be consistent with the approach of other UMRR-EMP backwater restoration sites. In response to a question from Dru Buntin, Hubbell said that, even absent the direct connection originally contemplated in the DPR, the Emiquon site is still connected by groundwater as well as during certain high flow events when the 50 year levee is overtopped, as it had in the past year.

Doug Blodgett provided information to the Board regarding the Emiquon project from the perspective of TNC as the non-federal sponsor. Blodgett addressed the question of the benefits of the Emiquon project and said historically the highest biological productivity in the Illinois River system occurred in the backwaters. TNC believes the project could begin to restore some of this productivity. As it relates to the adaptive management and monitoring proposed for the project, Blodgett said TNC plans to provide \$150,000 in funding to match the \$100,000 proposed by the Corps. Blodgett said the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 authorized the Corps to partner with NGOs on UMRR-EMP projects. TNC saw this as an opportunity for the Illinois River given the low amount of public land in the area.

Blodgett said the Emiquon project area is important given its proximity to the Emiquon and Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuges. TNC first became involved in efforts to acquire the Emiquon project site in 1997 and ultimately acquired 8,600 acres in 2000. The site had been used for row crop production for decades. TNC began restoration efforts at the site in 2007, but there are ongoing needs related to water level management at the site. TNC ceased pumping water off the site, but there are still active agricultural operations occurring within the levee district. Currently, TNC has no capacity to move water off of the site.

Dan Stevenson said the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and TNC entered into a Cooperative Fisheries Agreement regarding the Emiquon site in 2007. Rotenone was used at the site and it was stocked with sport fishery in 2007. Stevenson said some biologists in his agency have concerns with possible impacts to the fishery associated with reconnection, including potential introduction of Asian carp into the project area. However, Stevenson said his agency is comfortable with the compromise and modified DPR, and supports the Emiquon project.

Tim Yager noted that he chaired the UMRR-EMP CC meeting when the committee endorsed moving the Emiquon project to the program. He said the strong partnership in the UMRR-EMP allows for candid conversations resulting in high quality projects that achieve the identified federal interests. Yager noted the USFWS manages property adjacent to the Emiquon project site. The USFWS staff participate in the program's monitoring and science components and are also involved in the environmental review process for projects. Yager said his agency shares the partnership goal of completing the right projects in the right areas based upon sound science. Yager asked Kraig McPeek to provide the USFWS perspective on the project. McPeek said the project has generated a significant amount of controversy and noted the Emiquon project area is unique and has developed into a high quality fishery. McPeek echoed Marv Hubbell's comments regarding the value of the process typically used to formulate UMRR-EMP projects. McPeek said public-private partnership provisions contained in the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act offer the potential to accomplish much more through the involvement of additional nonfederal partners. However, he said the diversion from the typical process for input from program partners on the Emiquon project offer offers an opportunity for lessons to be learned so the partnership can take advantage of additional opportunities for public-private partnership projects. McPeek said most UMRR-EMP projects are unique and must be individually evaluated. McPeek said it is not possible to restore the Illinois River system without looking in the floodplain and this project offers an opportunity to learn the best way to restore floodplain processes.

Sharon Santure said she was not directly involved in drafting the NRCS compatible use agreement. However, she said as an archeologist with the agency, the biggest concerns are how water level management and island construction would impact cultural sites. Santure noted that NRCS staff are involved in the discussions on the project with this intent of ensuring the project is compatible with the Wetland Reserve Program easement.

## **Administrative Issues**

### *FY 2016 – FY 2017 UMRBA Dues Assessment*

Diane Ford offered and Bryan Hopkins seconded a motion to assess the FY 2016 through FY2017 state dues to UMRBA at the current level of \$48,000 annually for each state. The motion was adopted unanimously on a voice vote.

### *Future Meeting Schedule*

Buntin said the next meeting series will be held November 17-19, 2014 in St. Paul, Minnesota, with a joint UMRBA Board and Water Quality Executive Committee meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>, the UMRBA Quarterly meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> and UMRR-EMP CC on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The February meetings will be held February 10-11, 2015 in Rock Island with the UMRBA quarterly meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and UMRR-EMP CC on the 11<sup>th</sup>. The May quarterly meetings will be held May 5-6, 2015 in St. Louis, Missouri.

With no further business, Dan Baumann offered and Robert Stout seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.