

**Minutes of the 173rd Quarterly Meeting
of the
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**February 25, 2025
Virtual**

Grant Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Participants were as follows:

UMRBA Representatives and Alternates:

Rick Pohlman	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Kirk Hansen	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Jake Hansen	Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Grant Wilson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Patrick Phenow	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Dana Vanderbosch	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Chris Wieberg	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Matt Vitello	Missouri Department of Conservation
Levi Woods	Missouri Department of Transportation
Wade Strickland	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Federal UMRBA Liaisons:

JC Nelson	U.S. Geological Survey, Midcontinent Region
Sabrina Chandler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Richard Vaughn	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services
Travis Black	U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration

Others in Attendance:

Dave Glover	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Terra McParland	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Matt O'Hara	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
John Seitz	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Nicole Vidales	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Ryan Hupfeld	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Chad Fields	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Melanie Marshall	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Caleb Whitehouse	Iowa Department of Transportation
Liz Scherber	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Neil Rude	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Nick Schlessner	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Glenn Skuta	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Erin Fanning	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Samantha Clary	Missouri Department of Conservation

Vanessa Perry	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Adrian Stocks	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Sammi Boyd	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Shaili Pfeiffer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Mike Halstead	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Mike Finkenbinder	Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Kelly Keefe	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division
LeeAnn Riggs	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division
Jim Cole	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division
Samantha Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division
Angela Deen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District
Breann Popkin	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District
Nathan Wallerstedt	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District
Kim Warshaw	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District
Steve Gustafson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Leo Keller	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Nicole Manasco	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Davi Michl	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Marshall Plumley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Nic Patterson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District
Shawn Sullivan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District
Kat McCain	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise
Amy Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District
Tim Elkins	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Diane Tancl	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
David Pratt	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Jared Schmalstieg	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Amy Shields	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Anna Hess	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes Toxicology and Ecology Division
Matt Mangan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Sara Schmucker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois-Iowa Field Office
Lauren Larson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois-Iowa Field Office
Jim Dunker	U.S. Geological Survey, Central Midwest Water Science Center
Jim Fischer	U.S. Geological Survey, Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center
Jennifer Dieck	U.S. Geological Survey, Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center
Jaime Painter	U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Mission Area
Molly Woloszyn	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Integrated Drought Information Systems
Sararose LaGreca	America's Watershed Initiative
Alicia Vasto	Audubon
Lindsey Brice	Audubon, Upper Mississippi River
Brent Newman	Audubon, Mississippi River Water Initiative
Jessica Lienhardt	Council of State Governments, Midwestern Office
Kara Phelps	Illinois Natural History Survey
Michael Anderson	Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

Mary Ellen Miller	League of Women Voters, Upper Mississippi River
Madeline Heim	Mississippi River Ag and Water Desk
Nancy Guyton	Neighbors of the Mississippi
Kim Schneider	<i>Our Mississippi</i>
Olivia Dorothy	One Mississippi
Morgan Fong	National Waterways Conference
Kahomy Weston	Owámniyomni Okhódayapi
Brandon Phillips	Riverview Tug Services
Christine Favilla	Sierra Club
Sarah Gatzke	The Nature Conservancy
Bryan Hopkins	The Nature Conservancy
Randy Smith	The Nature Conservancy
Rachel Curry	University of Illinois Extension
Melissa Kenny	University of Minnesota, Institute on the Environment
Barry Draskowski	[No affiliation]
Fritz Funk	[No affiliation]
Michelle Woods	[No affiliation]
Kirsten Wallace	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Brian Stenquist	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Mark Ellis	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Henry Hansen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Natalie Lenzen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Sadie Neuman	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Ken Peterson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Lauren Salvato	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Laura Talbert	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Josh Wolf	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

Minutes

Wade Strickland moved and Kirk Hansen seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the November 19, 2024 UMRBA quarterly meeting as provided in the agenda packet. The motion was approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Kirsten Wallace pointed to the Executive Director's report in the agenda packet for a summary of the Association's work efforts since the November 2024 meeting.

Wallace underscored the significance of the 2024 reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA 2024) for the Upper Mississippi River System. In the same action, Congress supported the region's goals for improving transportation efficiency, disaster preparedness, and ecological health on the Upper Mississippi River System. Congress, again, provided the authority for managing the river through a partnership among states and federal agencies and in cooperation with the affected interests.

Wallace applauded Rep. Sam Graves' (Missouri) leadership in crafting the language for the Upper Mississippi River System Flood Risk and Resiliency Study. Wallace acknowledged and thanked Congressional offices in all five states who collectively supported the Upper Mississippi River provisions,

including the amendment to the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program’s annual authorized funding level for its long term resource monitoring.

Wallace reminded the Board of its action at its November 19, 2024 meeting in which it authorized Wallace to enter into a contractual agreement with Illinois DNR to implement a USEPA Exchange Network Grant. Wallace reported that the grant between Illinois DNR and UMRBA is executed, and now UMRBA moves into the next phase of securing a contractor to create a water resources database for UMRBA’s water quantity and quality data. Next steps involve UMRBA issuing requests for proposal to potential contracting organizations, reviewing applications, interviewing potential candidates, and then selecting a contractor. Wallace anticipates these next steps occurring throughout the next few months.

In response to a prompt from Grant Wilson as Chair, Chris Wieberg moved and Wade Strickland seconded a motion to authorize Kirsten Wallace to enter into a contractual agreement to pay for the work to build the infrastructure needed to house UMRBA’s water resource datasets and increase the Association’s future capacity for supporting interstate data collection and data sharing efforts. The UMRBA contract for the database development is expected to be two years in duration with funding of up to \$135,000 for UMRBA’s contributions to the project.

UMRBA Financial Report

Wallace pointed to UMRBA’s October 2024 through December 2024 financial statements provided on pages B-11 to B-19 of the agenda packet. Chris Wieberg moved and Kirk Hansen seconded the motion to accept the Association’s budget report and balance sheet as included in the agenda packet. The motion was approved unanimously.

Interbasin Diversion Consultation

Kirsten Wallace explained that the Governors’ 1989 Upper Mississippi River Basin Charter sets forth a notification and consultation process for any new or increased water diversion out of the basin that would exceed an average of 5 million gallons per day during any 30-day period. At their February annual meetings, UMRBA members are to report on any qualifying diversion requests. The UMRBA member states reported as follows:

Illinois	—	Rick Pohlman	—	no diversions to report
Iowa	—	Kirk Hansen	—	no diversions to report
Minnesota	—	Grant Wilson	—	no diversions to report
Missouri	—	Chris Weiberg	—	no diversions to report
Wisconsin	—	Wade Strickland	—	no diversions to report

On behalf of the states, Wilson directed Kirsten Wallace to send letters to the Governors reporting the results of the annual diversion consultation.

Data Centers

Emergence of Data Centers Nationally and Regionally

Jessica Lienhardt, with the Council of State Governments – Midwestern Office and the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus, presented an overview of trends in the data center industry, knowledge and

future predications of energy and water usage by data centers, and state legislative actions to incentivize or regulate data center development.

Lienhardt reported that the Council of State Governments – Midwestern Office and the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus are interested in improving knowledge of industry trends, impacts to energy sources and water resources, and best management practices for states and localities. Their next steps involve i) continuing to foster state coordination through the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus Water Use Committee, particularly in relation to the Great Lakes Compact, ii) contribute to regional studies on the impact of data centers in the Great Lakes region, and iii) continuing to employ partnership opportunities to better understand water use by data centers and to align data collection efforts.

State Observations

The UMRBA Board members provided their general observations of development trends and the general questions and understandings of water resource implications that are beginning to be illuminated. Commonly, Board members expressed interest in continuing conversations to exchange information about impacts to water resources from individual or cumulative data centers and best management practices for siting and permitting data centers such as closed-loop cooling, water reuse practices, repurposing retired coal power plans.

National Water Availability Assessment

Jaime Painter, with the USGS Water Resources Mission Area, presented on USGS's National Water Availability Assessment – a comprehensive, scientific assessment of water availability in the United States, integrating water quantity, quality, and use. Painter provided an overview of the results at the national scale and then at the Upper Mississippi River basin HUC-2 scale, including the potential imbalances between water supply and demand.

Stressors to water availability in the Upper Mississippi River basin include the combination of low precipitation and little annual renewable storage in soil moisture, snow, lakes, and reservoirs as well as elevated levels of nitrogen, phosphorous, total suspended solids, pesticides, salinity, manganese.

Demands for water availability include public water supplies, irrigation (seasonally), and thermoelectric energy. Painter noted that, on average, irrigation consumptive use is a larger percentage of water withdrawals in the Upper Mississippi River basin than other parts of the country. Efficiencies at thermoelectric facilities are lessening their cumulative consumptive uses.

Administrative Items

UMRBA Board Chair Rotation

Kirsten Wallace thanked Grant Wilson for his service as Board Chair over the past year.

Rick Pohlman moved and Chris Wieberg seconded a motion to appoint Wade Strickland to serve as UMRBA Chair. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Wade Strickland moved and Kirk Hansen seconded a motion for Chris Wieberg to serve as UMRBA Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Kirk Hansen moved and Rick Pohlman seconded a motion to appoint Jason Tidemann to serve as UMRBA Treasurer. The motion for carried unanimously by voice vote.

Future Meeting Schedule

May 2025 in La Crosse, Wisconsin

- UMRBA Quarterly Meeting – May 20
- UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – May 21

August 2025 in Edina, Minnesota

- UMRBA Quarterly Meeting – August 5
- UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – August 6

October 2025 in Quad Cities, Illinois/Iowa

- UMRBA Quarterly Meeting – October 28
- UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – October 29

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.