Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

2013-17 Strategic Plan

January 2013

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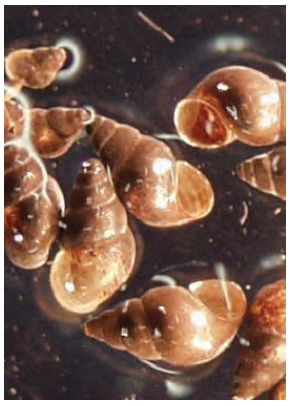
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

2013-17 Strategic Plan Focus Areas

Flood Risk Management

Commercial Navigation

Ecosystem Restoration and Monitoring



Aquatic Nuisance Species

Spill Response Planning and Mapping

Water Quality

Hydropower

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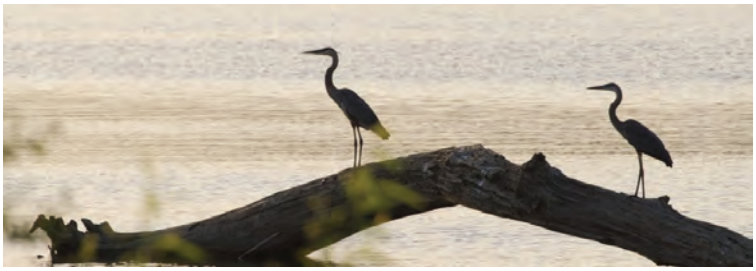
ACRONYMS

ANS	Aquatic Nuisance Species
CWA	Clean Water Act
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FRM	Flood Risk Management
GLMRIS	Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study
IWTF	Inland Waterways Trust Fund
L&D	Lock(s) and Dam
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NESP	Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OPA	Oil Pollution Act
P&G	Principles and Guidelines
UMR	Upper Mississippi River
UMRB	Upper Mississippi River Basin
UMRBA	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
UMRBC	Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission
UMRR-EMP	Upper Mississippi River Restoration-Environmental Management Program
UMRS	Upper Mississippi River System
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
WQEC	Water Quality Executive Committee
WQTF	Water Quality Task Force

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
2013-17 Strategic Plan

PLAN PURPOSE



This strategic plan articulates the states' joint priorities for the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) during the period 2013-17. It also confirms the Association's mission, principles, and functions. By design, the plan is not highly detailed or prescriptive. Rather, it is intended to provide a touchstone for the Association's Board of Directors, committees, and staff. It outlines the central elements of UMRBA's future focus, while preserving the flexibility and responsiveness that have been essential to the organization's past success. As a living document, the plan will guide annual work plan development and execution, while simultaneously accommodating emerging issues and evolving state needs. Reflecting UMRBA's commitment to communication and collaboration, the plan is also intended to inform the Association's many partners about the states' joint water resource priorities.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The UMRBA Board developed this strategic plan over a series of special sessions between November 2011 and November 2012, held in conjunction with the Association's quarterly meetings. At the outset of the process, the Board considered the organization's mission statement and related foundational information. After reaffirming UMRBA's essential structure and function, members then turned to determining the Association's core focus areas and articulating specific strategies within each area. The Board used a five-year planning horizon and solicited input from state members of UMRBA's various work groups, as well as from federal agency representatives and a wide range of other partners (e.g., private sector interests, non-governmental organizations, etc.). The Board wishes to express its appreciation to all who contributed to this effort, and who help advance UMRBA's ongoing work in so many ways.

UMRBA OVERVIEW

History

UMRBA was formed in 1981 as a successor to the former Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission (UMRBC). When that joint federal-state Commission was terminated by a Presidential Executive Order in 1981, the Governors of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin signed a joint resolution calling for "the continuation of an interstate organization to maintain communication and cooperation among the states on matters related to water planning and management." Each Governor subsequently issued an Executive Order establishing his state's membership in the Association.

Since 1981, UMRBA has represented the five states' common interests across a wide range of issues. Initially, the Association's major focus was working with Congress and federal agencies to implement key recommendations from the UMRBC's Master Plan for the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS), including construction of a second lock at Lock and Dam (L&D) 26 and establishment of an ecosystem restoration and monitoring program. Over the years, commercial navigation and ecosystem management have remained central to UMRBA's work, while other issues such as water quality have grown in importance, and still others like hydropower have been somewhat cyclical. However, one common theme has marked the states' approach to all issues — a commitment to collaborative, integrated management of the UMRS for its multiple purposes.

Mission

The purpose of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association is to facilitate dialogue and cooperative action regarding water and related land resource issues. More specifically, the Association endeavors to:

- Serve as a regional interstate forum for the discussion, study, and evaluation of river-related issues of common concern to the states of the Upper Mississippi River Basin.
- Facilitate and foster cooperative planning and coordinated management of the region's water and related land resources.
- Create opportunities and means for the states and federal agencies responsible for management of water resources in the Upper Mississippi River Basin to exchange information.
- Develop regional positions on river resource issues and serve as an advocate of the basin states' collective interests before Congress and the federal agencies.

Fundamental Principles

The following principles are central to UMRBA and its member states:

1. *Consensus* — UMRBA values its strong tradition and culture of consensus.
2. *Integrated Management* — the UMR and its watershed are a nationally significant economic, environmental, and social resource that requires balanced and integrated management. Integrated, multi-purpose management exceeds the capacity and authority of any one entity and must be done collaboratively.
3. *Regional Focus* — UMRBA focuses on issues of multi-state interest and does not typically address matters internal to one state or of a bilateral nature.
4. *Board Leadership* — UMRBA is a Board-led organization, with staff advising and otherwise serving the needs of the Association's member states. UMRBA does not advance perspectives, positions, or interests beyond those held jointly by its member states.
5. *Flexibility* — with respect to both longstanding and emerging issues, UMRBA seeks to anticipate and be responsive to evolving state needs and interests.
6. *Collaboration* — UMRBA places a high value on collaboration, whether the states are collaborating internally or engaging with federal agencies and other partners.
7. *Best Available Information* — UMRBA holds that water resources management decisions should be informed by the best available information, while recognizing that decisions must frequently be made in the absence of all information that might be desired.
8. *Best Achievable Policy* — UMRBA supports the best achievable water resources policies that are in the collective interests of its member states.

Institutional Structure and Governance

UMRBA is structured as a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, with its sole members being the five states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Pursuant to UMRBA's Articles of Association and Bylaws, each Governor appoints one or more representatives and alternates to UMRBA. The mix of representatives and alternates is entirely at the individual Governor's discretion, and those appointees are responsible for coordinating across agencies within their state as needed. The Association's Board of Directors is composed of all duly appointed representatives and alternates, but

each state has one vote on matters coming before the Board. Federal agencies with significant water resource responsibilities in the Upper Mississippi River Basin (UMRB) are invited to name non-voting liaisons to UMRBA. The Board meets quarterly in public session and also relies on several work groups, many of which include both state and federal agency members.

Primary Functions

Consistent with its mission, principles, and structure, UMRBA performs the following primary functions on behalf of its member states, within available resources:

1. Serve as a regional interstate forum
2. Facilitate cooperative action and collaboration
3. Monitor issues
4. Foster communication and disseminate information
5. Identify and voice the five states' collective interests
6. Augment the member states' capacity on river-related issues
7. Foster relationships with federal agencies and stakeholders
8. Shape federal investment and policies

It is important to note that UMRBA has no direct program implementation, land management, or regulatory functions.

VALUE PROPOSITION

UMRBA is the linchpin that enables its member states to achieve their collective vision for integrated, multi-purpose management of the Upper Mississippi River System and its watershed.

Interstate collaboration is critical if the states are to have an effective voice as stewards of this complex, multi-jurisdictional, and globally significant resource. This strategic plan is the navigation chart that will guide the states' joint efforts over the next five years.

2013-2017 FOCUS AREAS

The UMRBA Board has identified seven primary focus areas for the Association during the period 2013-2017. In alphabetical order, these are:

Aquatic Nuisance Species
Commercial Navigation
Ecosystem Restoration and Monitoring
Flood Risk Management
Hydropower
Spill Response Planning and Mapping
Water Quality

Each of these focus areas is described in further detail on the following pages, including a brief history of UMRBA's previous engagement and an articulation of desired outcomes, strategies, and metrics of success. While each focus area is discussed primarily within its own context, interconnections among the areas are central to UMRBA's strategies and its ultimate pursuit of integrated, multi-purpose management.

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

UMRBA facilitates its five states' efforts to work collaboratively with federal agencies and others to advance ANS prevention and control that is compatible with the UMR's multiple uses and recognizes the ongoing nature of ANS threats.

Overview

The existing and potential impacts of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) on the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS) are substantial, affecting a broad range of river resources and uses, including native biota, water quality, commercial navigation, and recreational boating. The profile of ANS issues has increased markedly in the last few years, with decision makers and the public particularly focused on the potential spread of Asian carp from the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to the Great Lakes Basin and to high value inland waters within the Upper Mississippi River Basin. Several options are currently being explored to prevent, monitor, and control ANS spread both within and between the Upper Mississippi River (UMR) and Great Lakes basins. These methods also have implications for ecosystem health and human uses, such as commercial navigation, water quality, flood risk management, and recreation.

History and Current Engagement

UMRBA's work on ANS issues dates back to a 1992 conference that brought agencies, intake operators, and others together to address the likely implications of zebra mussels for the UMRS. Since that time, UMRBA staff have tracked ANS issues on behalf of the Board and facilitated state engagement upon occasion. For example, UMRBA adopted a 2001 resolution on ballast water management and has sought to ensure that ANS issues are addressed when evaluating fish passage as an ecosystem restoration technique on the UMRS. More recently, UMRBA has been engaged in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) and other Asian carp-related efforts, including conversations about potential fish barriers on the UMR. UMRBA's GLMRIS comments called for, among other things, thorough evaluation of the efficacy and impacts of various ANS prevention options, investment in long term controls, and attention to the full range of ANS transfer issues affecting both basins. UMRBA staff serves on the GLMRIS Executive Steering Committee, and the states of Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are also represented directly. Additionally, UMRBA recognizes and coordinates with other entities facilitating interstate ANS collaboration at the regional scale.

Future Efforts

ANS will remain an important environmental and economic issue for water resource managers. UMRBA will contribute to federal and state efforts to control and prevent ANS introduction and spread, employing the following strategies in 2013–17:

DESIRED OUTCOME

Aquatic nuisance species populations and impacts are limited through effective, affordable, safe prevention and control methods

Strategy 1 Advocate the states' common interests regarding key ANS issues, including the balance of prevention and control and the need for federal investment on the UMR.

→ **Metric 1** The states' joint perspectives are communicated in an effective, targeted, and timely manner; advocacy partnerships are formed and are effective.

Strategy 2 Foster interagency communication and dissemination of credible information.

→ **Metric 2** State and federal agencies, governors, the congressional delegation, administration leaders, and the general public are well-informed about ANS issues and policies.

Strategy 3 Facilitate collaboration among states and others on ANS issues as needed (e.g., L&D 19 barrier question).

→ **Metric 3** UMRBA fosters collaboration among key players when needed, but does not undermine or replicate other mechanisms for collaboration.

COMMERCIAL NAVIGATION

UMRBA voices the states' joint perspectives on a range of funding, policy, and programmatic issues affecting commercial navigation in an effort to further the UMRS's function as a Congressionally declared "nationally significant commercial navigation system."

Overview

The Upper Mississippi River System is a vital component of the nation's inland waterway system, providing critical transportation services to the region, nation, and world. Commercial navigation is an efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly method for moving a wide range of bulk cargo. It is a vital link in the nation's multi-modal transportation system and ensures other modes remain cost competitive. Adequate federal investment in the operation, maintenance, and recapitalization of the river system's navigation infrastructure is needed in order to ensure its short- and long-term vitality. Challenges to obtaining adequate federal investment in the UMRS navigation system include i) the Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) impasse, ii) a lack of Office and Management and Budget support for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) spanning both the Bush and Obama Administrations, iii) restrictions on Congressionally directed funding, iv) reduced federal domestic discretionary spending, and v) continuing cost overruns at Olmsted Locks and Dam on the Ohio River.

History and Current Engagement

Commercial navigation has always been a primary component of UMRBA's work, as it is central to the regional economy and the states' multi-purpose approach to managing the UMRS. Since its creation, UMRBA has worked to ensure adequate federal investment in the operation, maintenance, recapitalization, and capacity of the system's navigation infrastructure, with the goal of maintaining and enhancing its reliability and efficiency. Of particular note, UMRBA was actively engaged in the Navigation Feasibility Study and the ultimate authorization of NESP in the 2007 Water Resources Development Act. NESP combines small and large scale navigation efficiency measures with an ecosystem restoration authority. Authorized at $3.9 billion, with a Congressional directive for "comparable progress" in implementing the navigation and ecosystem restoration components, NESP is the first increment of the Corps of Engineers' 50-year recommended plan for the UMRS. Since the program's 2007 authorization, UMRBA has worked closely with an *ad hoc* coalition of supporters, including Waterways Council Inc., The Nature Conservancy, and the Corn Growers, to advocate for NESP funding. However, NESP has received only limited appropriations for planning purposes, and even that funding was curtailed in federal FY 11. While continuing to advocate for NESP, UMRBA is also emphasizing the need for adequate operation and maintenance (O&M) and rehabilitation funds and is also closely evaluating the potential navigation impacts of efforts to limit the spread of Asian carp.

Future Efforts

Commercial navigation will continue to be a major focus of UMRBA's work, and will require increased attention as the need to invest in the system's O&M, recapitalization, and future capacity grows. UMRBA will work with its member states to ensure the continued vitality of commercial navigation on the UMRS, employing the following strategies in 2013–17:

DESIRED OUTCOME

Continued vitality of the UMRS as a nationally significant commercial navigation system

Strategy 1

Advocate to Congress and the Administration for increased federal investment in the operation, maintenance, recapitalization, and capacity of UMRS navigation infrastructure. This includes elevated state advocacy (e.g., Joint Governors' Statement).

- **Metric 1a** — The states' joint interests regarding navigation issues are communicated in a timely, targeted, and effective manner to key decision makers within the Administration and Congress. The states' perspectives influence management, budgeting, and appropriations decisions.
- **Metric 1b** — Coordinated advocacy with other UMRS navigation and ecosystem supporters is effectively employed, providing strong, unified messages about the need for an integrated, systemic approach to managing the river's navigation infrastructure and ecological resources.

Strategy 2

Pursue legislative and policy changes as needed to advance UMRS navigation. Includes elevated state advocacy.

- **Metric 2** — The states' collective interests regarding relevant legislation, policy, and operational decisions are voiced in a timely and effective manner.

Strategy 3

Communicate and disseminate key information about navigation benefits, needs, and developments on the UMRS.

- **Metric 3a** — UMRBA provides decision makers and key stakeholders with accurate and timely information concerning navigation-related developments on the UMRS (including policies, funding, etc.).
- **Metric 3b** — The potential effects of the Panama Canal expansion are well understood and effectively communicated to decision makers and stakeholders.
- **Metric 3c** — UMRBA contributes to enhanced public awareness of the importance of river navigation.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND MONITORING

UMRBA aims to advance the states' collective interests related to river restoration and monitoring to further the UMRS's function as a Congressionally-declared "nationally significant ecosystem."

Overview

The Upper Mississippi River System is a large, complex floodplain ecosystem that supports important ecological processes and functions, and diverse and abundant fish and wildlife populations. It also provides tremendous economic and social benefits locally, regionally, and nationally (e.g., commercial navigation, public and industrial water supply, recreation, and tourism). Even though the river retains important elements of its predisturbance ecological structure and function, it has been dramatically altered due to human intervention, particularly creation of the 9-foot navigation channel and land use changes in the watershed. Guided by collaboratively determined ecosystem goals and objectives, restoration efforts attempt to replicate the river's natural processes and improve habitat for a broad range of fish and wildlife species, while ensuring compatibility with navigation, flood risk management, and other critical human uses. Related monitoring and research efforts are essential to understanding the system's complexity and informing management decisions.

History and Current Engagement

Ecosystem restoration and monitoring has been a major focus for UMRBA since its inception in 1981, when advocating for authorization of the Master Plan's recommendations was a top priority for the states. While UMRBA has contributed to many state and federal ecosystem-related efforts, its work has been primarily focused on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE's) Upper Mississippi River Restoration-Environmental Management Program (UMRR-EMP) and the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). From a restoration and monitoring perspective, UMRR-EMP and NESP have many similarities, though the NESP restoration authority is somewhat broader. More significantly, however, the 2007 NESP authority takes the important step of integrating large and small scale navigation improvements with ecosystem restoration and monitoring. One indicator of this integration is the authorization's call for "comparable progress" in implementing the navigation and ecosystem components. However, NESP has thus far received only limited planning funds, and no construction appropriations, for its navigation and restoration elements. This is attributable to several factors, including the program's overall cost, lack of Administration support, issues with the Inland Waterways Trust Fund, and cost overruns by other navigation projects. Much more modest in scope, the 26 year-old UMRR-EMP does receive consistent Congressional and Administration support for restoration and monitoring. UMRBA was integral to both programs' authorizations and has worked closely with partners in planning for the two programs and in implementing and managing UMRR-EMP. This includes advocating for funding and authorization changes, pursuing policy and process changes within USACE, coordinating interagency implementation efforts, and providing various support services under contract with USACE. In addition, UMRBA seeks to advance other state priorities, such as operation and maintenance of the 9-foot navigation channel and water quality monitoring and assessment, in its restoration-related work.

Future Efforts

The UMRS is a nationally significant ecosystem that supports vital human uses. Continued federal investment is essential to ensure that the system continues to serve its multiple uses. Over the next five years, UMRBA will work to advance ecosystem restoration and monitoring efforts in a manner that also supports navigation and other system purposes, employing the following strategies:

DESIRED OUTCOME

Enhanced understanding and management of the UMRS ecosystem and improved habitat conditions through effective and efficient monitoring and restoration

Strategy 1

Advocate to congress and the administration for increased federal investment in UMRR-EMP and NESP.

Metric 1a

The states' shared perspectives regarding UMRR-EMP and NESP are broadly and well understood and respected within the administration and congress. Those perspectives influence budgeting and appropriations decisions.

Metric 1b

Coordinated advocacy with other UMRS ecosystem and navigation supporters is effectively employed, providing strong, unified messages about the need for an integrated approach to managing the river's ecological resources and navigation infrastructure.

Strategy 2

Pursue legislative and policy changes as needed to advance UMRS restoration and monitoring.

Metric 2a

The states' collective interests regarding relevant legislation and policy are voiced in a timely and effective manner.

Metric 2b

Policy impediments to pursuing priority restoration projects are addressed successfully (e.g., 50-year design life and cost share requirements that limit project type and location in some instances).

CONTINUED

DESIRED OUTCOME

Enhanced understanding and management of the UMRS ecosystem and improved habitat conditions through effective and efficient monitoring and restoration

Strategy 3 — Engage collaboratively on UMRR-EMP and NESP implementation efforts.

- **Metric 3a** — The states' collective perspectives on UMRR-EMP and NESP implementation are communicated clearly and effectively to USACE and other program partners.
- **Metric 3b** — Relevant restoration and monitoring policy and programmatic information is shared with the Board and other state interests.
- **Metric 3c** — Support services agreements are efficiently and effectively executed (e.g., UMRR-EMP).

Strategy 4 — Integrate ecosystem restoration and monitoring with other programs as appropriate.

- **Metric 4** — Integrated approaches are employed where possible to increase efficiencies and enhance outcomes (e.g., coordinating channel dredging with habitat project construction or restoration monitoring with state clean water act monitoring).

Strategy 5 — Communicate the economic benefits of healthy ecosystems and restoration efforts.

- **Metric 5a** — Communication materials clearly describe economic benefits of UMRS restoration and monitoring programs.
- **Metric 5b** — Those benefits are well understood by decision makers and program supporters.

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

UMRBA works with its member states to coordinate their efforts, articulate their joint perspectives, and facilitate communication and collaboration with federal agencies and others on FRM issues.

Overview

Large-scale floods on the Upper Mississippi River System and its tributaries, particularly those in 1993, 2008, and 2011, disrupted tens of thousands of lives and caused billions of dollars in damage to homes, businesses, crops, and public infrastructure. Flood risk management (FRM) on the UMRS, with its vast geographic scale, tremendous economic productivity, and globally significant resources, presents extraordinary challenges. The social, economic, and environmental consequences of flood response, recovery, and mitigation decisions can be profound.

History and Current Engagement

UMRBA's engagement in FRM issues has tended to be episodic, with upticks in activity typically following major flood events or study authorizations. Subsequent to the 1993 flood, UMRBA established a Floodplain Management Task Force that was integral to developing Association position statements on flood recovery, hazard mitigation, pending legislation, the landmark 1994 Galloway Report, and the Army Corps of Engineers' 1995 Floodplain Management Assessment. UMRBA also worked through its Task Force to develop a 1995 Leveed Floodway Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which was signed by the five member states as well as Kansas and Nebraska. However, levee and drainage districts voiced strong concerns with the MOA's emergency flood fighting provisions and what they viewed as a lack of consultation prior to the document's signing. This ultimately led some states to withdraw from the MOA and the Board voted to hold the MOA in abeyance in February 1996. In the late 1990s and 2000s, UMRBA also worked with state floodplain managers to provide extensive state input on the Corps' Flow Frequency Study and Comprehensive Plan, as well as various regulatory and legislative proposals. In 2008, UMRBA authored a flood recovery position statement that both reinforced and updated many of the states' perspectives from the 1993 flood. The Association also participated in the Corps' efforts to address recovery issues through a regional interagency team following the 2008 flood. UMRBA continues to track FRM-related issues on behalf of the states, including the Administration's proposed revisions to the water resources planning Principles and Guidelines (P&G) and potential next steps following publication of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

Future Efforts

Flood risk management will continue to be a central, if somewhat episodic, issue on the UMRS. Key questions over the next five years will likely include floodplain regulation and interest in a systemic FRM plan for the UMRS. UMRBA will work with its member states to ensure their shared perspectives are represented on these and other important matters, employing the following strategies in 2013–17:

DESIRED OUTCOME

Flood risk management resources, policies, and programs on the UMRS effectively and efficiently meet response, recovery, and hazard mitigation needs

Strategy 1 — Advocate the states' collective positions on FRM issues to federal agencies and congress.

→ **Metric 1** — UMRBA communicates the states' shared interests in a timely, targeted, and effective manner — e.g., flood recovery position statements.

Strategy 2 — Foster interagency coordination and information sharing among state and federal agencies.

→ **Metric 2** — State and federal agencies discuss and collaborate on FRM issues and strategies — e.g., floodplain management task force.

Strategy 3 — Identify and respond to emerging FRM issues.

→ **Metric 3** — States are able to effectively respond to emerging issues of shared interest.

HYDROPOWER

UMRBA assists state and federal agencies with hydropower review responsibilities by facilitating information sharing and collaboration concerning hydropower issues and project reviews.

Overview

Interest in hydropower development on the Upper Mississippi River tends to be cyclical, influenced by energy supply and demand and government incentives, among other things. In the 1980s and 1990s, the UMR states faced significant hydropower-related workloads. Many existing hydropower projects in the basin were 30-50 years old and in need of relicensing. Also at that time, federal incentives and energy cost projections stimulated interest in new projects. More recently, private sector interest in new hydropower development on the UMR has again increased. Factors contributing to this recent surge include federal incentives, state laws requiring power suppliers to meet renewable energy targets, increased consumer demand for alternative energy, and new technologies that potentially make hydropower more cost-effective.

History and Current Engagement

UMRBA's focus on hydropower has directly corresponded with the cyclical interest in hydropower development on the UMR. In 1991, UMRBA issued a report examining the substantial increase in project relicensing and new project proposals. Then, in 2010, responding to the recent surge in private sector hydropower interest, the Association formed an *ad hoc* Hydropower Group to facilitate communication and coordination among state and federal agency staff involved in project review and permitting. Group members include participants from all five states (including natural resource and water quality staff), the Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and National Park Service. The group's functions include i) sharing information about proposed projects, the licensing process, policies, and studies; and ii) coordinating agency comments regarding proposed projects on the UMR. While the advancement of new project proposals has slowed substantially in 2012, the Hydropower Group continues to coordinate on remaining projects and explore options for pursing a systemic cumulative effects assessment.

Future Efforts

Hydropower development efforts on the UMR will likely remain cyclical, driven by incentives and the broader energy market. Over the next five years, UMRBA will adjust its level of engagement as appropriate, with the broad goal of advancing the states' interest in hydropower that supports their renewable energy goals and is compatible with the UMR's resources and multiple uses. UMRBA will employ the following strategies:

DESIRED OUTCOME

Hydropower development on the UMRS that supports the states' renewable energy goals and is compatible with multi-purpose management of the system

Strategy 1

Disseminate key information to hydropower group members.

- **Metric 1a** — An inventory of existing and proposed UMR hydropower projects is maintained and provided regularly to the hydropower group.
- **Metric 1b** — Important information relevant to project review and the hydropower group's broader discussions is communicated effectively to the group in a timely manner.

Strategy 2

Facilitate interagency coordination and collaboration among state and federal agencies.

- **Metric 2a** — A forum is provided for hydropower group members to explore mutual concerns, major issues and developments, and project-specific questions.
- **Metric 2b** — Agency review of hydropower project proposals on the UMR is coordinated and based on all available information.

Strategy 3

Advocate the states' collective interests related to hydropower development on the UMRS (e.g., systemic cumulative effects assessment) to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), other federal agencies, and Congress.

- **Metric 3** — The states' joint interests related to hydropower development are communicated in an effective, timely manner to federal agencies and Congress.

SPILL RESPONSE PLANNING AND MAPPING

UMRBA plays a key role in spill response coordination through the Upper Mississippi River Hazardous Spills Coordination Group (UMR Spills Group) and via USEPA-funded spill response mapping and planning activities.

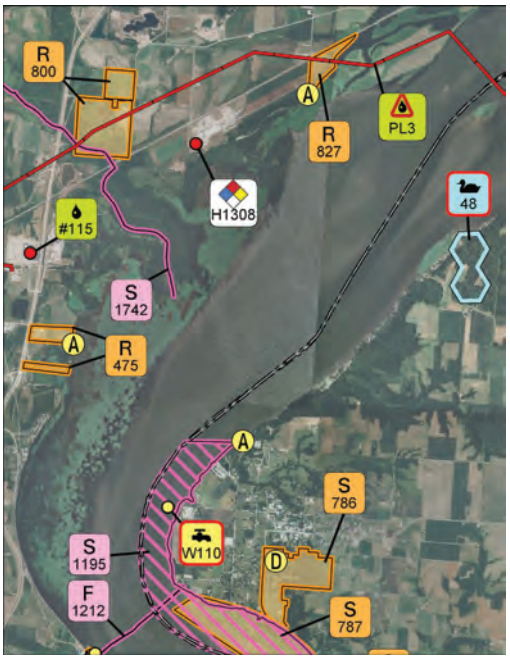
Overview

The Upper Mississippi River is home to diverse natural resources and supports a variety of human uses, including water supply, industry, transportation, and recreation. Hazardous spills prevention and response preparedness is a critical element in maintaining the UMR's multiple uses. Coordinated response among the numerous entities with jurisdiction is essential in minimizing damages from spills.

History and Current Engagement

Since 1989, UMRBA has supported the UMR Spills Group, which includes representatives of state and federal agencies involved in spill planning and response on the river. The UMR Spills Group serves as a forum for interagency coordination, acts as a voice for the region's responders on spill-related issues, and hosts training activities. Perhaps most significantly, the Group developed and maintains the *Upper Mississippi River Spill Response Plan and Resource Manual* (UMR Spill Plan), which has been adopted via a Memorandum of Agreement by the Spills Group's five state and four federal agency members.

UMRBA also engages in an extensive contingency planning and mapping project funded largely by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Region 5. This work has its foundation in the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) of 1990 and has been ongoing since 1992. Products include geographic information system-based sensitivity atlases for the Region 5 states and UMR counties within Iowa and Missouri, as well as contingency plans for several metropolitan areas and National Wildlife Refuges in the region. USEPA funding for this data-intensive project, which UMRBA executes primarily with temporary staff, has been as high as $150,000 to $175,000 in some years.



Future Efforts

There is an ongoing need to enhance and modernize hazardous spill planning and response on the UMR while supporting coordination across multiple sectors, particularly in light of reduced government resources, ongoing jurisdictional coordination challenges, and changes in energy products transported in the region. Over the next five years, UMRBA will promote coordinated and effective hazardous spill planning and response, employing the following strategies:

DESIRED OUTCOME

Coordinated, enhanced, and effective hazardous spill planning and response on the UMR

Strategy 1	Provide an ongoing forum for regional coordination and communication regarding UMR spill planning and response.	**Metric 1** There is productive and sustained engagement by states, federal agencies, and other partners in the UMR spills group.
Strategy 2	Maintain an up-to-date, river–specific source of centralized information for regional responders.	**Metric 2** Comprehensive UMR spill plan update is completed in 2013, and additional incremental updates are made as needed.
Strategy 3	Produce and update OPA-related maps and plans.	**Metric 3** Cooperative agreement with USEPA is continued, and sensitivity maps and contingency plans are maintained and expanded.
Strategy 4	Facilitate distribution of UMR spill plans and response tools to state, federal, and local agencies, as well as other appropriate partners.	**Metric 4** Contact persons and distribution processes are verified; information is distributed in a secure and targeted manner; and all relevant agencies and groups receive current UMR spill plan.
Strategy 5	Co-sponsor periodic training and drills to reinforce and refine UMR plans and other tools.	**Metric 5** Training events are successful in improving skills, testing plans and other tools, and building relationships. Needed updates to plans and tools are identified and executed.
Strategy 6	Review regional spill events and consider implications for UMR response tools.	**Metric 6** Frequency, type, and scope of UMR spills are documented; lessons learned from responses are identified; and plans and other tools are refined as needed.
Strategy 7	Act as a voice for regional responders on spill-related issues.	**Metric 7** UMRBA advocates effectively for the states' joint positions regarding spill-related research, planning, and training on the UMR.

WATER QUALITY

UMRBA supports the states and federal partners in their collaborative efforts to improve UMR water quality protection in a complex environmental and institutional context.

Overview

Protecting water quality is critical in sustaining the Upper Mississippi River as a water supply, diverse ecosystem, recreational area, and commercial artery. Water quality on the UMR has improved greatly since the passage of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1972, but much work remains to address unresolved and emerging issues and preserve water quality gains. The UMR's physical and biological complexity and its multiple jurisdictions present special challenges for CWA implementation.

History and Current Engagement

UMRBA has engaged in water quality issues, to varying degrees, since its inception in 1981. However, it was not until 1998 that an enduring water quality program emerged. Since then, UMRBA's water quality efforts have grown and evolved. In 2007, the Governors committed to coordinating the five states' UMR water quality efforts through UMRBA. Working through its Water Quality Executive Committee (WQEC) and Water Quality Task Force (WQTF), UMRBA has made significant progress, including a 5-state agreement on unified assessment reaches; publication of reports addressing sediment, biological assessment, fish consumption, and other key issues; and regular consultation on the states' assessment and impairment determinations. Seeking to build on much of this previous work, UMRBA is currently engaged with its member states in developing a comprehensive CWA water quality monitoring strategy for the UMR. UMRBA also advocates the states' collective water quality interests to federal agencies and Congress.

Future Efforts

Water quality remains a critical issue on the UMR, with increased attention across multiple sectors at both the regional and national scales, particularly in the area of nutrients. Over the next five years, UMRBA will promote effective, efficient state-led CWA implementation on the UMR, employing the following strategies:

DESIRED OUTCOME

Effective, efficient state-led Clean Water Act implementation on the UMR

Strategy 1

BUILDING ON UMRBA'S 2006 *ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIONS* REPORT, DETERMINE THE STATES' PREFERRED ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUPPORTING THEIR FUTURE UMR WATER QUALITY COLLABORATION.

→ **Metric 1**: STATES' PREFERRED FRAMEWORK IS IDENTIFIED AND CONCRETE STEPS ARE TAKEN TOWARD IMPLEMENTING THIS FRAMEWORK.

Strategy 2

ENGAGE BROAD INTERESTS (E.G., LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WATER SUPPLIERS, TRADE AND PRODUCER GROUPS, NGOS, ETC.) IN SUPPORTING COLLABORATIVE UMR WATER QUALITY PROTECTION.

→ **Metric 2**: AN EFFECTIVE UMR WATER QUALITY CONSTITUENCY SUPPORTS REGIONAL EFFORTS, RAISES THE RIVER'S PROFILE NATIONALLY, AND HELPS ATTRACT FUNDING.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Effective, efficient state-led Clean Water Act implementation on the UMR

Strategy 3	Identify funding mechanisms (federal, state, and private) to support collaborative water quality efforts.	**Metric 3** A well-funded UMR water quality program supports the states' priorities.
Strategy 4	Advocate states' positions on water quality issues to federal agencies and Congress.	**Metric 4** UMRBA communicates the states' interests in a timely, targeted, and effective manner.
Strategy 5	Foster intra- and interagency collaboration and information exchange among the states and federal agencies, as well as with other multi-agency groups.	**Metric 5** There is productive and sustained engagement by the states and USEPA in the WQEC and WQTF. The Board, WQEC, and WQTF coordinate effectively on water quality issues.
Strategy 6	Develop improved monitoring and assessment tools (e.g., monitoring strategy and assessment methodology) that are tailored to the UMR.	**Metric 6** States employ collaboratively developed tools to produce CWA section 305(b) assessments and section 303(d) listings that are increasingly consistent among the states.
Strategy 7	Engage collaboratively on nutrient issues with other state actors, federal agencies, and other partners.	**Metric 7** UMRBA's role in nutrient issues is clearly defined and exercised. Consistent with the states' individual circumstances and priorities, there is enhanced collaboration among the states on nutrient reduction efforts.
Strategy 8	Identify and respond to emerging trends and issues (policy, regulatory, and environmental).	**Metric 8** States effectively respond to emerging water quality issues of common interest.

IMPLEMENTATION

While this plan will guide UMRBA's Board, committees, and staff on an ongoing basis, the Board of Directors has also established a formal process for reviewing and revising the plan. At its annual meetings, typically held in February, the Board will evaluate progress in each of the focus areas and determine its priorities both within and among the focus areas going forward. This will shape the Association's work plan for the coming year. Consistent with its view of the strategic plan as a living document, the Board will revise and amend the plan as needed during the annual review process.

Over the years, the Governors have issued a number of joint statements through UMRBA, and the Board has adopted a range of policy positions. In addition, the Association is party to a number of charters and agreements. As part of its annual strategic plan review process, the Board will reflect on these documents and identify any that need revision or may no longer represent the joint position of the five states.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