

Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program Coordinating Committee Quarterly Meeting

October 25, 2023

Highlights and Action Items

Program Management

- **On October 2, Congress enacted a continuing resolution extending current funding levels of the federal government until November 17, 2023.** The President's FY 24 Budget and House and Senate Appropriations Committees' energy and water spending measures include \$55 million for UMRR. The final appropriation is not yet known.
- **Marshall Plumley & USGS UMESC have met with state field station leaders regarding impacts to field stations in the event of a shutdown.**
- **The draft FY 24 plan of work for UMRR at \$55 million is largely consistent with the FY 23 plan of work with the addition of regional project sequencing.**
- **Marshall Plumley introduced a matrix to track environmental justice processes under UMRR from fact sheet development through feasibility. Plumley will distribute the draft matrix following the meeting. Coordinating Committee members recommended engaging communities earlier in the process, maintaining a connection between communities and resource managers, sharing LTRM information with communities, and ensuring environmental justice efforts are embedded in projects and not developed in parallel to be implemented later. Plumley requested additional feedback on the matrix be emailed to him.**
- **The three UMRS Corps district-based river teams are scheduled to initiate project selection this fall or early winter per guidance from the UMRR Coordinating Committee. The UMRR program planning team (PPT) will meet following the river teams' initial meetings to address any questions or concerns.**
- **UMRR will hold a programmatic workshop on May 7-9, 2024. The location has not yet been determined. Potential workshop topics include monitoring and adaptive management, HREP/LTRM integration, HREP design handbook update, and HREP lessons learned, among others. A workshop agenda planning team will convene a meeting in November or December to begin planning. Planning team members are as follows:**

Kara Mitvalsky
Brian Markert
Lane Richter
Elisa Royce
Angela Deen
Kacie Opat
Julie Millhollin

Davi Michl
Sara Schmuecker
Sharonne Baylor
Jeff Houser
Jim Fischer
Kirk Hansen
Ryan Hupfeld

Vanessa Perry
Nicole Ward
Matt Vitello
Molly Sobotka
Jeff Janvrin
Brenda Kelly
Andrew Stephenson

- **The UMRR 2022 Report to Congress is still in review at the ASA(CW)'s office. Coordinating Committee members requested release of a draft final report to allow sharing within their agencies to leadership and in discussions with Congressional offices.**

Strategic Planning

- **UMRBA staff presented a proposed process to the UMRR Coordinating Committee for developing the next UMRR strategic plan. The UMRR Coordinating Committee largely agreed to the proposed process and UMRBA staff will make the following modifications:**
 - **Draft an 18-month schedule of the process that includes major touch points such as quarterly meetings and the UMRR workshop.**
 - **Refine teams' roles and responsibilities and draft a list of potential participants.**

The Coordinating Committee will convene meetings virtually on November 27 and December 11 to discuss the revised document.

Communications

- **The UMRR Communications and Outreach Team (COT) finalized the team Framework in August 2023.** Highlights for the COT in FY 23 included providing support for the LTRM Status and Trends snapshot summary rollout, a discussion on environmental justice, and partner agency presentations on communication initiatives, success stories, and lessons learned.
- **On October 18, 2023, Rachel Perrine sent a poll to COT members to help prioritize activities for calendar year 2024. Results of the poll will be discussed at the November 1, 2023, meeting.** In FY 24, the COT anticipates providing support for the release of the 2022 UMRR Report to Congress, continuing to share lessons learned from partner agency communications efforts, and additional environmental justice discussions.

Habitat Restoration

- The three District HREP Managers presented their respective District's FY 23 accomplishments and priorities.
- MVP celebrated the first drone flight through its small unmanned aerial systems program which can collect high resolution video and imagery that will aid planning, monitoring, and public affairs efforts around projects.
- MVR continued spillway construction at Keithsburg HREP and awarded the forestry services MATOC totaling \$9.5 million over five years.
- MVS completed the pump station at Clarence Cannon Refuge and completed aerial lidar, digital ortho photography, and bathymetry to support multiple projects.

Long Term Resource Monitoring and Science

- Accomplishments of the fourth quarter of FY 23 include publication of the following manuscripts and completion report:
 - *River Geomorphology Affects Biogeochemical Responses to Hydrologic Events in a Large River Ecosystem*
 - *Long-Term Changes in Concentration and Yield of Riverine Dissolved Silicon from the Poles to the Tropics*
 - *Reimagining large river management using the Resist–Accept–Direct (RAD) framework in the Upper Mississippi River*
- **Jim Fischer started as the new USGS LTRM Branch Chief and Davi Michl as the new USACE LTRM Project Manager.**

- LTRM implementation planning process resulted in nine projects addressing information needs being proposed.
- Hosting two science webinars on September 25, 2023 and October 5, 2023. Recordings of the webinars are available at <https://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental-Stewardship/Upper-Mississippi-River-Restoration/Key-Initiatives/Workshops/>
- On October 11, 2023, USGS held a dedication event for the UMESC facility and water quality lab renovation.
- All 2022 LTRM data has been uploaded online and on graphical browsers.
- **Topobathy pilot study contracts were awarded in September. Low water may be advantageous for topobathy lidar acquisition this fall.**
- The A-Team met on October 18, 2023. A-Team members reviewed focal areas and initial work groups for the 2024 UMRR LTRM science meeting. A-Team members suggested additional topics including emerging contaminants, lentic fish assemblages, refuge and backwater overwintering habitat, turtle bycatch, and floodplain forestry. **The next A-Team meeting will be held in conjunction with the January 16-18, 2024 science meeting. [Note: The A-Team scheduled a meeting on November 30, 2023 to finalize focal areas ahead of the science meeting.]**

Other Business

Upcoming quarterly meetings are as follows:

- **February 2024 – Virtual**
 - UMRBA quarterly meeting – February 27
 - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – February 28**
- **May 2024 – Quad Cities**
 - UMRBA quarterly meeting – May 21
 - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – May 22**
- **August 2024 – St. Paul**
 - UMRBA quarterly meeting – August 6
 - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – August 7**