

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #93, April 24, 2012

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #92 were approved
- Next Forum: August 21-22, potential Minnesota River Tour in Shakopee, MN

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- Flooding hasn't been much of a concern this year, which has made things much easier
- MV Mississippi trip has been cancelled
- Bruce Boldon is back in the office
- Industry Coordination Meeting was held on 4/10, the two biggest concerns addressed by the Industry were not meeting face-to-face and holding the meeting in April
- Bryan Peterson took on the position of Operations Manager for Locks & Dams
 - The Chief of Maintenance & Repair position Bryan previously held is expected to be filled within the next month

Agency Activities- MPCA (Judy Mader)

- Paul Aasen resigned as Commissioner of the MPCA on May 1st and left the Agency on May 9th
 - John Linc Stine, Deputy Commissioner of the MPCA, was named Commissioner by Governor Dayton on May 9th
- Judy is currently planning to retire in July
 - There is still discussion regarding what will happen with her position, if it's filled, it won't be until after she has retired
- Organization is getting closer to the one water approach

Agency Activities- FWS (Tony Sullins)

- Three new mussel species have been added to the endangered list: sheepnose, spectaclecase, and snuffbox
 - Currently working on consultation with the Corps of Engineers (Terry Birkenstock)
- Working on the release of sub-adult winged maple leaf mussels, there are a grand total of 11 adults near Hidden Falls
- Organized the first annual endangered species art contest- will do more in the future

Agency Activities- FWS (Mary Stefanski)

- McGregor District Manager position is currently open
- Two Private Lands Biologist positions are open

- La Crosse Visitors Center may open by June/July timeframe

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Ecological services (environmental reviews) and waters (permits) divisions have been merged
- Bill Huber is the contact below Hastings for permitting, above Hastings it's Molly Shodeen
- Scot Johnson's position was posted today, whoever fills the position will likely have a big role in the river
- License fees will likely increase as there is needed fiscal support for other activities
 - Hunting/fishing licenses haven't increased in over 11 years
 - If fee increases aren't passed, MDNR involvement in the RRF and workgroups will decrease

Agency Activities- USCG (Brian Zekus)

- Three employee turnover is coming soon, three new employees will be brought in as three leave

Agency Activities- UMWA (Greg Genz)

- Dodged most channel issues thus far
- Mayor of Minneapolis- voting on May 11th pertaining to the closure of the Minneapolis terminal, will have 180 days to vacate if passes
 - If passes, the 2nd largest fertilizer storage area in the metro area would be closed
- There will be a Mississippi Makeover tour in Pool 2 on 6/13
 - Planning to load at CF Industries dock and then go upriver and downriver from there
- Jim Fischer questioned whether or not there was any transport of FRAC sand in the metro area
 - Greg Genz responded stating that two docks in St. Paul are moving FRAC sand and there is discussion of a dock at Jordan as well

Agency Activities- LMRWD (Terry Schwalbe)

- Governance study is looking into the LMRWD's role and partnership with the COE
 - The LMRWD is legally obligated to provide the COE land for placement of dredge material
 - Report to come out in the near future pertaining to the LMRWD's sponsorship
 - Concerned about spending of municipalities and return on investment
 - Hired two graduate students to complete the study
 - Looking into options: sustain current operations, turn sponsorship over to MnDOT, The Port Authority, the County, etc
 - Studying whether or not tile patterns by farmers or climatic changes are causing flows to increase on the MN River
 - Jon Hendrickson commented that the solution to the problem of velocity of the river is storing water within the watershed

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- Karen Oostercamp is now a Fisheries Biologist out of Guttenberg
- Scott Gritters relocated to Bellevue
- Still working on an MOU with the COE
 - For now, CH will have to coordinate with Mike regarding dredging and placement in Iowa, have an OSIT, and Mike will issue a permit as needed
- State wanted the IDNR to sell off all land if tillable

Agency Activities- WDNR (Jim Fischer)

- Still learning to work as an enterprise agency
 - Recently hired 300 positions state-wide
- Still have a high emphasis on streamlining the permitting process
- Implementing rule changes is now a two year process
- Currently in the process of back filling Jim's position, which is now called the Water Quality Coordinator
 - The individual that fills this position will be the WDNR OSIT representative and possibly an alternate RRF representative
- Information sheet pertaining to FRAC sand mining and transport is currently posted on the WDNR website
 - Covers the environmental impacts, though it is not an EA

Lock & Dam 3 Progress Update (Tom Novak)

- Lock and Dam 3 completion timeline
 - Guidewall- April 2011
 - Closure Dike- October 2011
 - Channel- February 2012
 - RWWL- March 2012
 - RWWL is still working on moving fine material
 - As-Builts- May 2012
- RWWL material came from the Cannon River
 - Approximately 11,000 cubic yards was removed
- 61% of the Lower Embankment Project is complete
 - Project completion is approximately four months out
- Reforestation is 65-70% complete
 - Work is being done through Randy Ulrich's shop

Environmental Management Program (Tom Novak)

- Most of the funds are going towards Capoli Stage 2
 - Anticipate to advertise late May or early June

- Pool 8 Islands- there are 3,400 tree plantings that remain to be done
- Pool 8 Islands Project dedication is scheduled for August 30th
- Capoli Slough- Newt is making good progress, they expect most of the work to be done by the fall
- Lock & Dam 3 Fish Passage- Plan to complete the feasibility study
 - Minnesota Channel- \$11.5 million
 - Wisconsin Channel- \$19 million
 - Attorneys just finished the legal review, going to MVD next for review
 - MVD review anticipated for June, with a public meeting anticipated to be held in July
- North & Sturgeon Lakes- working on initiation of Problem Appraisal Report, anticipated completion October 2012
 - Discussion of island building with dredge material from the navigation channel

Conference Call-In Discussion (Steve Tapp/Jim Fischer)

- Increased difficulty in planning due to FRAGO 3 requirements
- Greg Genz stated that he prefers to have all of the meetings on a face-to-face basis with a conference call-in option
- Dan Dieterman commented that we could complete a trial run at a meeting in the future
 - Mike Griffin offered to help test the conference call and webinar capabilities for the December RRF

Pool 2 Channel Management Study- Boulanger to Lock & Dam 2 (Paul Machajewski)

- Historically the stretch from Boulanger to Lock & Dam 2 has been a 25-30% dredging frequency area
 - Since 2006 the dredging frequency has been annually to biennially
 - In the last six years, eleven years worth of dredging has been done based on average quantities
- There has been an increase in flows from 1971-1990 versus 1991-2010
 - Mississippi River flows have increased ~25%, while Minnesota River flows have increased ~70%
- USCG has a greater requirement to consistently mark the reach
- Industry has been forced to restrict the number of barges transiting the reach and avoid operation at night
- Pool 2 CMS alternatives:
 - No action- maintain the “status quo”, do what we are currently doing to keep the channel navigable
 - Channel Control Structures- implement the use of additional channel control structures to channel the flow of the river in order to increase scour
 - Realign Navigation Channel- dredge a new channel that will be more self sustaining
 - If we dredge a new channel, we need to determine where to go with the material

- If the Boulanger Slough Channel is dredged, this will remove sediment from the system
 - Won't likely change fine sediment deposition into Lake Pepin, but will likely cause a slight increase to deposition at the head of Lake Pepin
- Greg Genz mentioned the concern for navigational safety if channel control structures are used
- Jim Fischer stated that he would like to see a specific analysis of where the material would likely be going

Fish & Wildlife Workgroup (Elliott Stefanik)

- Dan Dieterman was curious as to whether or not tasking the FWWG with a study to determine the effect of native species on invasive species would be a worthy cause
 - For example, bluegills consume a lot of the eggs of common carp, what is the impact on carp?
 - Elliott Stefanik questioned the ability to utilize habitat projects as a way to impact Asian Carp populations
- There was discussion of whether or not the FWWG should be tasked with developing a central repository as a reference of where to find specific data
 - Jim Fischer recommended starting with a simple spreadsheet as a guide or map to locations of specific material

Agency Update on Asian Carp (All)

- Corps (Stefanik)
 - Chicago District is leading the way for the Corps
 - Working with the MDNR on fish deterring technologies, fish barriers, etc., providing information to MDNR as it is received
 - Currently working on getting a camera at Lock & Dam 1 to observe what fish are doing adjacent to the lock before, during, and after a lockage
- MDNR (Dieterman)
 - Asian Carp and invasive species issues have taken on a massive role in the MDNR
 - Working on authorization to close USAF Lock
 - Working on obtaining funding for fish barriers, there is a potential need for up to \$8 million
 - A statewide risk assessment has been proposed
- WDNR (Fischer)
 - Discussion about adding two employees whose roles would be tied to aquatic invasive species- Jim suggested having one of them assigned to the Mississippi River alone
 - These employees would support the restoration of native species' habitat
- IDNR (Griffin)
 - Fisheries doesn't think that Asian Carp will proliferate into the Iowa Great Lakes
 - Asian Carp are prevalent in Iowa waters
 - Bigheads are existent up as far as Pool 14, though not in great numbers
- USCG (Zekus)

- USCG is currently awaiting a proposal to provide safety requirements
- FWS (Sullins)
 - His particular office hasn't devoted a ton of staff/resources to the Asian Carp issue, but the FWS as a whole is involved
- As a whole, it was stated that political pressure is causing knee-jerk reactions to this dilemma- we need to be more proactive and less reactive in our response to Asian Carp

Water Level Management Task Force (Mary Stefanski)

- Last meetings took place in January and March
- Teresa Newton compiled a letter report pertaining to mussel movement throughout the 2010 drawdown
 - Natural mortality was approximately 5%, during the drawdown it increased six times
 - Mussel movement study spanned two years and consisted of 6,100 observations
- Gretchen Benjamin is working on capital campaigning for a pool wide mussel study in Pool 3
- WLMTF put together a sub-group to create a synthesis paper for the last three drawdowns
- Currently awaiting an estimate of acres previously exposed to go forward with a proposed drawdown depth for a potential Pool 3 drawdown
- Dan Cottrell is going to check with Keith LeClaire on Pool 3 bathymetry
- WLMTF plans to meet again in May

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (OP-CH)

- Two dredging areas stand out as significant problems as of now: Island 126 and Lower Dresbach Island
 - There are placement issues tied to the potential dredging at Island 126, we may have to transport the material to our Lansing Highway Bridge placement site (14.3 miles away)
- Currently hoping to prolong dredging until 6/1 if conditions allow
- Plan to have EMP work on the dredging schedule, but we will not distribute dredging notices for such work
 - Most often CH doesn't have the necessary information to issue a dredging notice before the dredging begins
- Pool 2 mini-unload- we plan to exercise an option under the mechanical dredging contract to excavate the Lower Boulanger placement site
 - Currently plan to excavate ~73,000 cubic yards of material
 - Real Estate agreements are still pending, but we hope to start the excavation by the end of the month
- Reads Landing Project
 - Excavated ~140,000 cubic yards of material in 2011
 - Planning to excavate an additional 860,000 cubic yards of material from the placement site in 2012, in addition to 300,000 cubic yards in the channel (Chippewa Delta dredge cut)

- Project completion is estimated to be mid-June
- City of Wabasha's 2010 well-head protection plan has instigated some changes to dredge material placement at the Wabasha Gravel Pit
 - We've lost ~500,000 cubic yards of capacity for future use
- Lost Island is most likely the next major excavation
- There is potential to install a permanent pipeline at McMillan Island that runs to Buck Creek for future placement site excavation
- CMMP- we set a couple days aside to work on annual updates and plan to post to the web and send out an informative email in the near future
- Mary Stefanski questioned the progress/status of the Weaver Bottoms, will follow up with Randy Urich
- Dan Dieterman mentioned that he would like to see the channel downstream of Reads Landing dredged
 - Steve Tapp stated that we don't have the authorities to do that

Navigation Workgroup Activities (Paul Machajewski)

- Lowry Avenue Bridge- hope to have the grand opening later this summer
- Hastings Bridge- currently one year behind but efforts are going forward to get back on track
- Winona Bridge- analyzing whether it's most logical to rehabilitate the existing bridge as opposed to constructing a new bridge based on cost
 - Discussion of potentially using a floating bridge during construction
 - Project will likely last throughout three winters
- I90 Bridge- still on schedule for construction late this year
- Industry brought up the use of funds for the mooring buoy
 - RIAC suggested that the funds may be of better use elsewhere

Recreation Workgroup Activities (Zach Kimmel)

- Haven't met as a workgroup since early last summer
- Pool 7 and Pool 8 beach plans are still in the works
- Discussion of portages on embankments
 - Conclusion that an articulated concrete mat might work best
 - From a Corps perspective, we don't want to draw people to embankments
- Continued discussion on who may be willing to take over as recreation workgroup chair
 - WDNR commented that they are unable to provide any resources at this time, while no other agencies commented
- Recreation workgroup plans to meet late May/early June

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF