

CEMVP-OP-CH

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of River Resources Forum Meeting #94, August 21-22, 2012

Introductions (All)

- Minutes from RRF #93 were approved
- Next Forum: December 4-5, Corps of Engineers District Office, St. Paul, MN

Agency Activities- WDOT (Sheri Walz)

- Currently in the middle of budget planning for the next two years
- There's a strong interest at the upper levels of government to continue supporting ports
- 8/20 – 8/27 is Wisconsin Port's week
- FRAC interests are on the rise

Agency Activities- USCG (Brian Zekus)

- Hastings bridge span: 9/5 at 0600 the safety zone will begin, 9/6 at 0900 plan to float bridge downriver, 9/8 at 1200 safety zone will end (estimated completion)
 - Safety zone stretches from below the railroad bridge (downstream of the Highway 61 Bridge) to above Lock & Dam 2 (upstream of the Highway 61 Bridge)
- MAC fire is conducting a mass rescue exercise on the river tomorrow
- Captain Black is coming upriver on 9/3 and is willing to meet with agency partners that desire to do so
 - Plans to meet with Col. Price

Agency Activities- MnDOT (Dick Lambert)

- Started the port development program in 1996 and there is currently ~\$25 million in it
- OMB is reviewing documents for port development
- There is \$4 million total being held up that's scheduled for port development
- Ports are re-building their dock walls
 - Some of these projects are being held up due to funding

Agency Activities- FWS (Tim Yager)

- Rich King filled the District Manager position in McGregor
- Neil McKenney retired
- Wendy Woyczik filled the Wildlife Biologist position in Lacrosse, WI
- Brian Stemper filled the Wildlife Biologist position at the District Headquarters
- Lacrosse, WI Visitor's Center is opening this Saturday
- Pool 8 Islands, Phase 3, Stage 2 dedication is taking place at Wildcat Landing at 3pm on 8/30

- Habitat Management Plan will take Environmental Pool Plans that have been developed and derive a list of surrogate species for which to focus habitat enhancement
- Public interest is rising as to what the FWS position is on hydro-power

Agency Activities- FWS (Phil Delphey)

- Re-initiated consultation with Federal Highways on St. Croix Bridge
- Released roughly 9 Winged Mapleleaf into the Mississippi River ~1 mile downstream of Lock & Dam 2
 - May have been the first time in 100 years that Winged Mapleleaf have been in the Mississippi River

Agency Activities- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)

- Corey Hanson replaced Scot Johnson temporarily in the division that handles most permitting and environmental reviews
- License fee increase was passed
- \$7.5 million is planned to be used for Asian Carp related projects and monitoring
 - \$2.5 million is set aside for southeast Minnesota
 - Large portion of the funds going toward the LD1 study

Agency Activities- WDNR (Dan Baumann)

- Working on proposals for FRAC in Fountain City and Stockholm
- Understanding is that the only FRAC hitting the river is in Winona, MN
- FRAC demand is 50 million tons, currently shipping 18 million tons
- Preliminary hydro-power applications are being pulled
 - Companies finding that it's hard to make money when you can't control the river flows
- Just got through a contested hearing at Trenton Island
 - Houseboat stuck out beyond recommendation for navigation safety
 - WDNR stated that the line of navigation was where the pier ended and the individual argues that there's no rule stating that
 - The ruling is expected in 6 months

Agency Activities- RIAC (Lee Nelson)

- Industry concern right now is primarily St. Louis and south
 - Tows are down to 25 barges or less going down
 - Real problems are in the harbors and terminals

Agency Activities- MPCA (Judy Mader)

- Mike Sandusky retired on July 17th and was replaced
- Emily Schnick is now assigned to permitting, she will be the individual writing permits

- Chandy McCracken is now assigned to compliance and enforcement responsibilities, lead on permit enforcement
- OSIT questions can be directed to Ken Moon (Chandy's boss) or Jeff Udd (Emily's boss)

Agency Activities- EPA (Larry Shepard)

- Was curious as to the source of the FRAC sand mining
- Mining operations are wiping out existing cranberry marshes and taking sand from underneath, as well as digging into ridges in the driftless area which is flattening out the ridges

Agency Activities- IDNR (Mike Griffin)

- CWD- returned a positive test for Chronic Wasting Disease
 - Huge deal as Iowa is the #1 deer hunting destination in the U.S.
- A lot of the focus has been on working hard to protect and preserve the deer populations

Agency Activities- COE (Steve Tapp)

- Steve Clark took over for Dennis Anderson
- Scott Uhl took over for Bryan Peterson as Chief of Maintenance & Repair
- Provided VOIP numbers to all of the partners
- Drought conditions are a significant concern
 - Head of Raft Channel closure received national media attention, they tried to tie the drought to the grounding even though we're not as impacted in the pooled areas
- There is potential to utilize the Dredge Goetz in the south
- Dredge Thompson has made it to Prairie Du Chien
- MPCA permit has been completed
- Secretary of the Interior launched a recreation.gov website that's a great tool for providing information on recreation within the federal areas of the U.S.
- Corps wide were going through a lock study
 - In 2013, the upper three locks (USAF, LSAF, LD1) will go from 24 hour operations to 0700-1400 on a daily basis

Navigation Workgroup (Paul Machajewski / Dick Lambert)

- Lowry Avenue Bridge- tentative opening ceremony this fall (October/November)
- Beneficial use from Lower Approach to Lock & Dam 2 went toward the Hastings Bridge Project
- Winona Bridge- leaning towards rehabilitating the existing bridge and adding a two lane bridge adjacent to it
 - Lee Nelson stated that the industry is questioning potential problems with upbound traffic as it's nearing a bend
- Mooring cell below Lock & Dam 8 is in the design phase
 - Plan is to finish designing and open up the discussion to the forum

- Lee Nelson stated that the industry is questioning the need to spend \$2.5 million on the cell as opposed to spending those funds on other District needs

Recreation Workgroup (Zach Kimmel)

- Discussion of interest in taking over the RWG chair position
 - MDNR- Dan Dieterman stated that nobody has an interest
 - FWS- there are lots of new biologists, but nobody is available for recreation planning
- There needs to be a determination of what tasks are for the RWG and prioritize those tasks
- IDNR- Mike Griffin stated that we have a habit of approving the beach plans and not acting on them, then at a later time we decide it's time to take action and we need to go through the NEPA process but we don't have money for the process, and that cycle repeats
- Steve Tapp stated that it's not worth it for Channel Maintenance to act on beach plans when it comes to shaping alone, we need to make use of dredge material
- Tim Yager stated that its good to have plans in place with NEPA completed so we're ready to act when the time comes to do so

Fish and Wildlife Workgroup (Elliott Stefanik)

- Discussion pertaining to the impact of native species on invasives
 - There is a general ecological understanding that native species can ward off invasive species, but there's not a lot of documentation supporting that
 - As new resources regarding this become available the FWWG will present that information to the RRF
- Repository for available river data
 - Ron Benjamin stated that a lot of reports are published and posted to the UMRCC library, so we can make better use of the UMRCC library
 - Steve Tapp stated that the repository approach may be to have one individual in each agency list all of the resources they have available through their own organization and collaborate with one another
 - Each agency to determine whether or not a central repository is worth the effort
- FWWG plans to hold a meeting in the October/November timeframe
- Other items for the workgroup
 - Down the road look to narrow down surrogate species for Habitat Management Plans
 - Study the benefits of utilizing FRAC sand from placement sites as opposed to removal from drilling and mining in the driftless area
 - Discussion regarding this to continue in December

Water Level Management Task Force (Mary Stefanski)

- Ruth Nissen is still working on the drawdown summary reports for Pools 5, 6, and 8
- Pool 3 drawdown

- Tim Schlagenhaft and Dan Dieterman are taking the lead on the Pool 3 drawdown as it's out of the refuge
- Pool 3 photo station taking place today
- 2014-2015 is the target date range for the drawdown
- Gretchen Benjamin is working on getting \$100,000 to help fund the drawdown
- Current holdup in the process is the estimate of acres exposed
 - There are five different scenarios
 - Requested last October, GIS staff is completing the work
- Pool 5 invasive plants- Water Hyacinth, Water Lettuce, and Parrot Feather
 - End of July made its way to Lower Spring Lake
 - New introduction in Spring Lake- last year it was in Lizzy Paul's Pond
 - Last year hand collected 1,400 plants
 - Hired a contractor to spray the invasives and help remedy the situation
- Synthesis paper
 - One paper will look into policy and planning
 - One paper will look into effects (this will take longer due to the wait for published papers)
- Plan to meet again in November

Channel Maintenance Program Activities (OP-CH)

- Dredge Goetz encountered several challenges as they were working on the Reads Landing unloading
- Dredging in general was delayed originally due to high water
- Not an abnormal year as far as quantity thus far
- Head of Raft Channel was an emergency closure- 47 hours
 - Six tons of commodity waiting costing an estimated \$1,000,000 in revenue lost
- Mechanical dredging contractor LS Marine is in the second year of their contract (the first of two option years)
 - Production has been very good
- Top three bad channel locations
 - Cannon River- placement site issues need to be resolved
 - Trenton (adjacent dredge cut) hasn't been dredged since 1975, so an environmental review will be needed
 - Upper Approach to LD7- ECR has been completed and will be sent to the OSIT
 - Island 126- lost placement site at Genoa Power Plant, will require an ~14 mile push as of now
 - Due to National Security concerns Genoa Power Plant's process for handling spent nuclear fuel has changed
 - Mike Griffin commented that the Pool 9 beach plans identified five shorelines that need material

- Dan Dieterman questioned whether or not it is possible to use material to partially close off side channels based off of previous channel management studies
- Aaron McFarlane commented that he is still working on the NEPA documentation for the beach plans
- Dan Cottrell commented that there is an emergency closure procedure identified in the CMMP, though we hope it doesn't come to this point
- Dan Dieterman stated that we've had previous discussions about the lack of a placement site here and we'd hate to see an emergency disposal process when we've known about this issue
- Dan Baumann offered WDNR's assistance to help out in any way possible
- There was a significant snag removed yesterday on the Minnesota River, RM 10
- Lower Boulanger site unloading was prolonged due to eagle nesting and Real Estate issues
 - Hope to excavate a portion of Lower Boulanger still, though right now material is coming from the Boulanger Bend dredge cut and being placed on Grey Cloud Island
- Reads Landing unloading- excavated 900,000 out of the 1,300,000 cubic yards identified for removal
 - 105,000 was excavated in 2011
 - Intend to finish the excavation this fall or next spring
 - Plan to clean up the backwater spill (~1,200 cubic yards) this fall
 - Experienced water quality issues with discharging into Brewery Creek, so ended up pumping back onto the site and using stockpiled material as a filter
 - Will continue to discharge on top of the placement site when operations resume
- McMillan Island
 - Considering a permanent pipeline to Buck Creek
 - Working with Glen Haven to unload material from the island
- FRAC- working on sampling four placement sites: Wabasha Gravel Pit, Crats Island, Grand Encampment, Lost Island
 - Working on internal guidelines regarding how to move forward with FRAC demand on dredge material
 - Silica Sand Resources conference to be held in October

Pool 2 Channel Management Study: Boulanger Bend to LD2 (Paul Machajewski)

- Aaron McFarlane is working on NEPA compliance component of the study
- There are three alternatives: no action, channel modification (control structures), and channel realignment
- Plan to identify a draft preferred alternative this fall and schedule a meeting with the partners
- RRF endorsement of preferred alternative estimated to take place in December
 - Lee Nelson questioned whether or not anyone was aware of significant road blocks
 - Paul Machajewski mentioned that the flood stage impacts are a major concern
 - Lee also commented that the Industry supports the channel realignment

Lock & Dam 3 Project (Tom Novak)

- High water impacted EKS' work on the lower embankments
- 9/15-10/31 work has been restricted by Diamond Bluff due to hunting
- Currently working 6, 12 hour days per week
- RWWL plans to move the fine material
 - Jon Hendrickson commented that the work at the RWWL may not be a cure all to stabilize the shoreline

Environmental Management Program (Tom Novak)

- Pool 8 Island dedication to take place 8/30 at Wildcat Park with nine guest speakers
- Capoli Slough Islands
 - Stage 1 was awarded for \$3.9 million
 - Contractors mobilized on March 19th
 - Stage was 50% complete as of July 31
 - Stage 2
 - Low bidder was McHugh Excavating
 - Award is pending
 - Base bid has mandatory granular material from the Above Atchafalaya dredge cut
- Harpers Slough
 - PAR completed April 2012
 - Initiated DPR June 2012
 - Plan to complete DPR March 2013
 - Plan to initiate plans and specs April 2013
 - Plan to complete plans and specs stage 1 October 2013
- Lock & Dam 3 Fish Passage
 - Been meeting with Division and Headquarters the past few weeks
 - Issues with authorization vs. implementation
 - NESF would be the proper funding mechanism as opposed to EMP
- North and Sturgeon Lakes
 - Plan to complete DPR July 2013
 - Plan to initiate plans and specs October 2013
 - Plan to advertise contract March 2014
 - Corps owns a lot of property around North and Sturgeon Lakes
 - Discussion of the benefits of dredging for a drawdown and using material to build islands
 - O&M potentially pay cost of dredging and transportation to Corps Island, while EMP would cover the rest
- Approved fact sheets in the queue
 - Base Ponds Marsh Wetlands (Minnesota Valley)
 - Weaver Bottoms (Pool 5)
 - Clear Lake (Pool 5)

- Lower Pool 10 Islands (Pool 10)
- Tom Novak brought up the idea of a pool wide study in Pool 2 to avoid piece mealing several tasks, to look at the tasks collectively
 - Doesn't want to impact the process with funding and progress with the Pool 2 Channel Management Study

Agency Update on Asian Carp (All)

- WDNR (Dan Baumann)
 - Continuing conversations with other states regarding barriers and other technology
 - Don't want to deter the native species
- MDNR (Dan Dieterman)
 - Tim Schlagenhaft is the Asian Carp coordinator for the state of Minnesota
 - \$7.5 million appropriated this year for Asian Carp efforts
 - Have emergency money to contract a commercial fisherman for sampling in Pool 1 and Pool 2
 - Plans for potential use of an electric barrier at a lock are going forward
 - MDNR supports closures at LD1, LSAF, USAF
- COE (Russ Snyder)
 - COE doesn't have the authorization to permanently close locks
 - Cameras are monitoring fish passage through lockages and there weren't any discernible patterns of fish
 - Bill was introduced to the Senate/House to have the COE conduct a feasibility study in regards to closing USAF
 - Engineers are looking into the electric barrier option at LD1 (preferred option) but also looking into acoustics and other options
 - Electric barriers may present some safety concerns
- IDNR (Mike Griffin)
 - Installed an electric barrier at the IA Great Lakes to prevent spread Asian Carp
 - MO River flood got them into the IA Great Lakes
 - 20 individuals of both species are in the lakes
 - Fisheries biologist is hopeful that reproduction won't occur in the lake system
- FWS (Phil Delphey)
 - Situation is being dealt with out of the regional office
- EPA (Larry Shepard)
 - Kathy Cole is working on the GLMRIS component
- USCG (Brian Zekus)
 - Mike Griffin asked whether or not the USCG could/would decide on the use of an electric barrier from a safety perspective
 - Brian Zekus responded that it is not a USCG determination as to whether or not an electric barrier will be installed

RRF 96 Conference Call Discussion (Steve Tapp/Jim Fischer)

- Discussion of a webinar and conference call option
- COE to facilitate the webinar and conference call
- Mike Griffin asked whether or not the Corps is able to attend meetings sponsored by other agencies
 - Response was that the Corps isn't able to without approval
- COE to come up with a couple different options for conference calls and webinars

Open Discussion (All)

- Dan Dieterman stated that the MDNR received a couple complaints regarding the wake from material barges transporting sand from Lower Dresbach to the Trempealeau placement site
 - No complaints have been made to the COE yet
- COE will talk to LS Marine about the complaints and ask them to reduce wake if feasible around fishermen and recreators

Steve Tapp

Co-Chairman, RRF