

**Minutes of the  
Upper Mississippi River System  
Environmental Management Program  
Coordinating Committee**

**February 18, 1999  
Winter Quarterly Meeting**

**St. Louis Airport Hilton  
St. Louis, Missouri**

Dusty Rhodes of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. on Thursday, February 18, 1999. Other EMP-CC members present were Rick Schuldt (USFWS), Bob Delaney (USGS), Marvin Hubbell (IL DNR), Kevin Szcodronski (IA DNR), Steve Johnson (MN DNR), Gordon Farabee (MO DOC), Terry Moe (WI DNR), and Bob Goodwin (MarAd). A complete list of attendees is attached.

**Minutes of the January Meeting**

Buddy Arnold reported that the updated shortfall projections he presented, referenced on p. 3 of the minutes, were incorrect. The projections he initially presented are accurate. Thus, the projected LTRMP shortfalls, given the assumptions cited in the minutes, ranged from \$838,100 in FY 99 to \$1.6328 million in FY 02. Marvin Hubbell moved and Kevin Szcodronski seconded approval of the minutes of the January 14, 1999 meeting as written. The motion was adopted unanimously.

**Program Management**

*FY 99 Fiscal Performance*

Leo Foley distributed a revised spreadsheet reflecting the Corps' current outyear funding projections for the EMP. He reported that the EMP's FY 99 allocation totals \$18.371 million, including current year appropriations and carryover funds. Of this amount, \$4.830 million, or approximately 25 percent, was expended as of December 31, 1998. Foley characterized this as an excellent expenditure rate, noting that HREP construction typically is more active later in the fiscal year. He reported that the Corps recently transferred FY 99 LTRMP funds to USGS.

*FY 00 Budget Proposal*

In keeping with the President's budget request, the Corps is projecting \$18.955 million for the EMP in FY 00. Foley noted that this amount constitutes full funding under the Corps' interpretation of the EMP authorizing legislation, given that recreation projects are not being constructed. He explained that FY 00 funds will be allocated using the same procedure as in FY 99 - i.e., funding for the Habitat Needs Assessment (HNA) will first be deducted from the total, with the LTRMP receiving 31 percent of the remaining funds. Both the HREPs and LTRMP will be subject to savings and slippage and program coordination reductions in FY 00.

Foley said Corps headquarters has directed the divisions and districts to plan for a potential FY 00 savings and slippage rate as high as 15 percent. He emphasized that this does not necessarily mean the FY 00 rate will actually be that high. Foley also reported that the Corps' current budget projections show \$13.0 million in FY 01 and 02 for the EMP. He stressed that these numbers are subject to revision and are often rather low at this point in the budget process. In response to a question from Gordon Farabee, Dusty Rhodes explained that the Corps' out-year budget ceilings from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) are quite low. MVD simply took its projected construction funding and allocated it among all of its projects, reducing each of them proportionally. Rhodes said the specific amount of the out-year projection is not overly important at this point, but said partner agencies should know that the budget pressure on the Corps is very real. Bob Delaney noted that the USGS has submitted its FY 01 budget proposal to OMB and asked whether the Corps is at the same point in its process. Rhodes said he assumes the two agencies are at roughly the same point in developing their FY 01 budgets.

According to Delaney, the transfer of LTRMP bookkeeping from the Fish and Wildlife Service to USGS is complete. He said USGS will not permit UMESC to implement the LTRMP beyond October 1 unless the agency receives a written assurance of funding from the Corps by that date. Rhodes said the Corps should be able to provide an assurance of funding covering at least the first quarter by the start of the fiscal year.

Kevin Szcodronski asked for an explanation of the Corps' interpretation that \$18.955 million, rather than \$19.455 million, represents full funding for the EMP under the current authorization. Rhodes said that MVD's interpretation is that the \$500,000 authorized for recreation projects under the EMP cannot be spent on other components of the program. Thus, as long as recreation projects are not being implemented, MVD believes that \$18.955 million constitutes full authorized funding for the EMP. Steve Johnson noted that the states have been interested in pursuing cost-shared recreation projects under the EMP in the past and asked whether the Administration would currently entertain such projects. Rhodes said the Corps would execute recreation projects if Congress appropriated funding and directed the Corps to spend the money on recreation projects. However, he emphasized that the Administration has not changed its basic policy that such projects are a low federal priority and will not budget for recreation projects. Szcodronski said he would like MVD to revisit its interpretation that \$18.955 million constitutes full funding, noting that the additional \$500,000 could be very helpful as the program struggles to address budget shortfalls. Rhodes said MVD would provide EMP partners with a written explanation of its interpretation.

#### *UMRBA Budget Testimony*

Holly Stoerker reported that the UMRBA will submit testimony on a number of federal agencies' FY 00 budgets, including the Corps of Engineers. While it has not yet been drafted, Stoerker said she assumes the UMRBA's testimony on the Corps' budget will request funding of \$19.455 million for the EMP.

Terry Moe asked whether the 31 percent figure used to allocate funds between the LTRMP and HREPs had been revised to reflect the absence of recreation projects. Buddy Arnold said the figure is 31.4 percent after accounting for the absence of recreation projects. Arnold said the Corps would use the 31.4 percent figure in allocating funds.

## Reauthorization Issues

### *Chief's Report*

Buddy Arnold reported that General Ballard released his final Chief of Engineer's Report on the EMP February 3, 1999. Arnold highlighted the following changes from the June draft report:

- There is more emphasis on the Habitat Needs Assessment (HNA), including the addition of language describing it as "the primary guide for project selection on a system-wide basis."
- The draft was modified to refer habitat "protection and restoration" projects, rather than "rehabilitation and enhancement" projects. This was done out of concern that "enhancement" suggests improving conditions beyond their historical value.
- An effort was made to clarify the two-tiered habitat project proposal by describing the two tiers as "separate" and "non-overlapping." Arnold explained that \$10.0 million in baseline level projects would be authorized under the current cost sharing arrangements. An additional \$10.0 million would be authorized at an augmented level, which would require 65/35 cost sharing on all projects, regardless of land ownership. For projects under the augmented level, project planning, engineering, and design (PED) would also be cost shared 65/35.

Gordon Farabee asked Arnold how the description of the two tiers as separate and non-overlapping can be reconciled with subsequent language stating that "during formulation of each fiscal year's Baseline Level budget, the Corps will consider the Partners' participation in projects in the Augmented Level." Farabee said this sentence suggests the Corps' budget request for baseline projects will be at least in part determined by the states' participation in augmented level projects. Arnold said he was uncertain how this provision of the Chief's Report should be interpreted. He acknowledged that, in other Corps programs where there are both cost shared and non-cost shared options, priority is sometimes given to cost shared projects. Dusty Rhodes said MVD would seek clarification regarding the meaning of the sentence Farabee cited.

Holly Stoerker asked what language in the Chief's Report should lead one to conclude that PED would be cost shared under the augmented level. Rhodes said this is captured by the reference to cost sharing in accordance with Section 210 of the 1996 WRDA. He noted that PED is currently cost shared 75/25 for EMP projects on non-refuge lands. According to Rhodes, the only real difference under the augmented level would be that the cost share would increase and the Corps would require a cost sharing agreement with the sponsor before initiating project planning. Under the current HREP authority, the non-federal sponsor does not pay its share of PED until the construction cost share agreement is signed. Steve Johnson expressed concern with the prospect of having to execute two cost sharing agreements, one for PED and one for construction. Arnold and Rhodes observed that this is currently the practice under most other Corps authorities and said the Chief's Office is striving for national consistency among programs. Johnson said the two-tier proposal itself is inconsistent with other Corps programs

of which he is aware. Rhodes acknowledged that he is unaware of any precedent for such a structure.

Johnson said he is very concerned with the apparent linkage of funding for the baseline and augmented levels. He said Minnesota cannot and will not cost share projects on refuges or other federal lands. As result, Johnson said there would be no refuge projects in Minnesota under the two-tiered approach proposed in the Chief's Report. Rhodes said other Corps environmental authorities involve cost sharing and emphasized that the Chief's Office is seeking consistency. With regard to Johnson's concern about the additional time required to execute two cost share agreements, Rhodes noted that PED agreements are typically quite a bit simpler than construction agreements. He also said that there are efforts underway to delegate more authority to the field regarding execution of cost share agreements.

Terry Moe expressed concern with the Chief's Report language calling for the HNA "to serve as the primary guide for project selection on a system-wide basis." Moe emphasized that the program partners view the HNA as a useful tool for HREPs, but not the principal driver of project selection. As an example, Moe noted that the HNA may identify significant habitat needs in areas with limited or no potential for HREPs, such as behind levees. He said it could cripple the program if such areas automatically became HREP priorities.

Johnson took note of language on pp. 6-7 of the Chief's Report indicating that "the purpose of the LTRMP is to collect and analyze data that the Corps of Engineers needs to accomplish its missions and projects." Johnson asked whether the LTRMP is currently collecting and analyzing any data that does not met the Corps' needs. Arnold said MVD is not aware of any such data, but emphasized that the Corps does want to place more priority on data analysis. Rhodes noted that funding for the LTRMP comes out of the Corps' overall budget ceiling at the expense of other Corps projects. The money is then passed through to USGS and the states. Given this situation, Rhodes said the Chief's Office is understandably concerned with making certain that the money spent on the LTRMP is meeting the Corps' information needs. Kevin Szcodronski said he can understand the Corps' need to have the LTRMP fit its mission, but said he would like a follow-on statement acknowledging that the current LTRMP is consistent with the Corps' information needs. Johnson observed that the 1986 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) makes the LTRMP itself a Corps mission. Rhodes said the current data analysis, Information Needs Assessment (INA), and restructuring are designed to review and ensure that the LTRMP is serving Corps missions.

Jim Harrison recalled that Congress directed the Corps to implement the LTRMP. He said the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission will not be commenting further on the Chief's Report but will instead be taking its concerns up with members of Congress. Holly Stoerker said the UMRBA will be writing Assistant Secretary Westphal to express the states' concerns regarding the Chief's Report. In response to Stoerker's request, Rhodes agreed to seek and provide clarification regarding the Chief's Report description of budgeting for the two-tiered habitat program as soon as possible.

#### *WRDA Status and EMP Language*

Stoerker reported that there is increasing optimism for a 1999 WRDA. It appears that the Senate may move quickly with something quite similar to the bill it passed last year. This bill

included a provision to reauthorize the EMP, with 65/35 cost sharing on non-refuge lands, as well as specific language concerning the HNA. Rhodes reminded EMP-CC members that last year's Senate language was developed in the absence of Chief's Report. Now that there is a Chief's Report, Rhodes said members of Congress will review the report and may well change their perspectives on some of the specific provisions related to EMP reauthorization.

Farabee noted that land acquisition is very important to Illinois and Missouri on the lower portion of the UMR. He expressed concern that the Chief's Report does not address land acquisition as part of reauthorization. Arnold said the Chief's Report acknowledges a number of administrative issues, including land acquisition, that remain to be addressed. While the report does not speak to the particulars of these issues, it does commit to considering the issues and informing the EMP-CC of the Corps' decisions. Stoerker reminded the EMP-CC members that Corps headquarters has already issued guidance saying that land acquisition is an acceptable component of HREPs. She noted that the states have not proposed a project involving acquisition since this guidance was issued.

Marv Hubbell asked what would happen to a cost shared project initiated under the current EMP authorization if new cost share requirements are enacted before the project is completed. Rhodes said that would depend on the effective date of the new legislation and on what constitutes the date of project initiation. Rhodes observed that Congress will obviously determine the effective date of its EMP reauthorization. He said MVD would research the second question of what constitutes project initiation and provide a response to the EMP-CC.

### **EMP-CC and A-Team Joint Charter**

Barb Naramore reported that UMRBA staff prepared a revised version of the joint EMP-CC/A-Team charter based on the discussion at the November EMP-CC meeting as well as follow-up comments from some members of the two groups. This revision was distributed to all A-Team and EMP-CC members on January 8, 1999, along with copies of the written comments received and a transmittal memo describing which suggestions were incorporated and which ones were not. Naramore explained that the UMRBA staff did not accommodate recommendations that were inconsistent with the discussion at the EMP-CC's November meeting.

The A-Team offered comments on the January 8 draft in a February 9 letter addressed to the two EMP-CC co-chairs. Naramore reported that the state EMP-CC members discussed the A-Team's letter of comment at their February 17 pre-meeting. She explained that the states sought to be responsive to the A-Team's comments while recognizing the constraints under which the various EMP partner agencies operate. Ken Brummett explained that the A-Team's February 9 letter reflects discussions at the Team's February meeting and represents the consensus comments of the A-Team members from the five states, Fish and Wildlife Service, and EPA. He emphasized that the A-Team wants a charter that reflects a true partnership among the partner agencies and that clarifies the A-Team's role.

Kevin Szcodronski said the state EMP-CC members carefully reviewed the A-Team's comments and stressed that they understand and appreciate the A-Team's perspectives. Szcodronski observed that crafting the charter has been greatly complicated by the LTRMP budget shortfall and pending restructuring decisions. He stressed that the states want to be

equal partners as the difficult restructuring decisions are made, while recognizing that the Corps has ultimate authority and responsibility for the program. Szcodronski said the Corps has a good history over the years of listening to the other program partners and accommodating their perspectives, when possible, within budget and policy constraints. He said the states would like assurance their input regarding LTRMP restructuring will be fairly considered.

Szcodronski said that the state EMP-CC members are not prepared to endorse all of the A-Team's recommended changes, but have identified several potential modifications in response to the letter of comment. (A copy of the charter annotated to reflect these suggested changes is attached to the minutes.) In response to a question from Dusty Rhodes, Szcodronski said adding the role of identifying partner information needs to the A-Team's list of specific responsibilities was not intended to suggest that the A-Team should be the sole source of such information. Rhodes emphasized, and Szcodronski agreed, that the Corps needs to listen to all sources on input on such questions. Acknowledging that the state EMP-CC members' suggested changes represent a relatively small portion of the modifications sought by the A-Team, Szcodronski said that the state EMP-CC members would like an opportunity to present their proposed revisions to their A-Team counterparts before the partnership acts on the charter.

Steve Johnson asked why the Corps and USGS are both members of the EMP-CC but are not members of the A-Team. Terry Moe said this is particularly troubling to the A-Team members, who frequently feel that the Corps relies on its Priority Team and does not give due consideration to the A-Team's recommendations. Noting that MVD staff who deal directly with the A-Team were not present, Rhodes said he was not prepared to speak to the question of why the Corps is not a member of the A-Team. However, he said he would look into the matter. Bob Delaney said USGS has no problem being a member of the A-Team and considers itself as such. Naramore noted that, during previous discussions of the charter, Ken Lubinski had informed the EMP-CC that USGS does not view itself as an A-Team member. Delaney suggested that this may have been due to temporary issues and said USGS functions as a member of the A-Team.

Brummett sought to clarify a few issues regarding the A-Team's consideration of the draft charter, emphasizing that the A-Team is not seeking to play the same role as the EMP-CC. However, within the A-Team, Brummett said it is essential to ensure that all members, including the Corps and USGS, are equals. Brummett said the A-Team's concerns regarding the draft charter are not colored by the pending LTRMP restructuring. He stressed that the A-Team members are not afraid of restructuring, but rather are trying to deal with the prospect as effectively as possible. He said the A-Team's bottom line concern with the draft charter is that it does not reflect a true partnership.

Naramore said UMRBA staff would annotate the draft charter to reflect the state EMP-CC members' suggested changes and distribute it to all EMP-CC and A-Team members for their consideration. She asked all partner agencies to complete any internal coordination necessary and provide comments on the revised charter to the UMRBA office by March 31, 1999.

## Habitat Needs Assessment

Mike Thompson reported that the minor revisions to the HNA scope of work (SOW) discussed at the November EMP-CC meeting have been completed. Changes to the project management plan (PMP) to address various comments on technical issues and organizational structure have also been finalized, though Thompson reminded EMP-CC members that the PMP will be revised further as the HNA proceeds. He said cost estimates for the tasks identified in the PMP are scheduled for completion in May.

In response to a question from Steve Johnson, Thompson said he did not know whether the SOW and PMP will need to be revised in response to the HNA provisions in the Chief's Report. Dusty Rhodes said that the Chief's Report is a vehicle for communicating upward within the Administration and to Congress. He said that the contents the Chief's Report are not a direction to modify on-going activities in the field until and unless those recommendations become the basis for a reauthorization. At that point, Corps headquarters would issue guidance interpreting the statute and directing MVD regarding its implementation. Terry Moe urged people working on the HNA to keep focused on the task at hand rather than trying to anticipate future political battles concerning use of the assessment.

Bob Clevestine reported on progress since the November EMP-CC meeting, highlighting the following items:

- Administrative
  - finalized team membership
  - completed updates to SOW and PMP
  - began detailed scopes (work plans)
- Technical Team
  - reviewed PMP technical tasks/subtasks for updates
  - began guiding and habitat association process
  - work plans in progress
- Mapping Team
  - developed spatial data inventory
  - estimated other potential data acquisition costs
  - participated in Technical Team meetings
  - investigated cross-platform data compatibility
  - work plans in progress
- Public Involvement Process
  - completed arrangements with UMRCC to coordinate public meetings
  - public meetings scheduled
  - began Web site construction (site will be at [www.emtc.nbs.gov](http://www.emtc.nbs.gov))
  - provided updates to Technical Team

Dan McGuinness announced that the UMRCC and National Audubon Society will be holding a series of 12 public meetings to get public input into an operation and maintenance plan for the

natural resources of the river system. Each meeting will start with an open house during which participants can review a series of maps providing information about the river system. The meetings will also include an overview of how large floodplain river systems work and what kinds of management options are available. Finally, participants will have an opportunity to express their opinions regarding desired future conditions. McGuinness said that information gathered at the meetings will be available for use in other on-going efforts, including refuge planning and the HNA. Rhodes cautioned that the Corps can participate in the meetings and perhaps make use of information gathered at the meetings, but said the Corps must carefully consider whether it is in a position to provide any financial support to the meetings. Rhodes expressed optimism that the meetings will prove quite useful, but explained that the Corps must be sure it maintains a consistent policy when it comes to providing money to support the activities of outside groups. Rhodes said he would discuss the issue further with Thompson.

Terry Moe asked whether the public meetings will be advertised as an opportunity for people to have input into the HNA. McGuinness said the announcements will make it quite clear that the primary purpose of the meetings is to provide input into the UMRCC/Audubon planning activity that was well underway before the HNA was initiated. McGuinness said other potential beneficiaries, including the HNA and the refuge master plans, will also be mentioned in the announcements. Kevin Szcodronski emphasized that the UMRCC wants to make sure participants are not overwhelmed with bureaucracy and programs. Szcodronski said the goal is to keep participants focused on questions concerning the current and future conditions on the river.

Jeff Stein asked about plans for public meetings specifically focused on the HNA. Thompson said there will be meetings with resource managers and with various non-governmental organizations, but said he does not believe the public involvement group is currently planning a series of HNA-specific meetings for the general public.

Thompson highlighted the following next steps for the HNA:

- EMP-CC endorsement of the SOW and PMP
- finalize work plans for the technical tasks and coordinate those tasks as necessary with the mapping and public involvement work plans
- complete the HNA Web page and use to distribute materials
- generate working cost estimates for all technical, mapping, and public involvement tasks in the PMP

Thompson emphasized that the HNA currently outlined in the PMP is a first cut and said the goal is to create something on which the EMP can build in the future.

## **Long Term Resource Monitoring**

### *A-Team Report*

Ken Brummett reported that the A-Team recommended some minor revisions to the data analysis plan that Ken Lubinski presented at the February A-Team meeting. Brummett described funding for the data analysis as one of the A-Team's top FY 99 priorities. He also

indicated that the A-Team members will not endorse any reduction in the monitoring program without sufficient analysis on which to base such a decision.

### *Shortfall/Restructuring Update*

Dusty Rhodes distributed copies of General Anderson's February 8, 1999 directive to Colonel Mudd regarding LTRMP restructuring. Buddy Arnold said the data analysis and INA are two keys to decisions regarding restructuring the LTRMP. He emphasized the importance of having at least preliminary results from both efforts in advance of the May EMP-CC meeting. Arnold said MVD considered several options and issues discussed at the January EMP-CC meeting and reached the following conclusions:

- The HNA and the INA will proceed as scheduled. Neither will be delayed in response to the LTRMP budget situation.
- Upon further review, MVD agrees that a three percent inflation rate is more reasonable than a five percent rate for the purpose of forecasting out-year LTRMP costs.
- USGS has identified a non-LTRMP source of funds for the computer upgrades that would have otherwise necessitated substantial increases in the Center's operations/equipment/computers line item.

Arnold distributed a revised LTRMP budget allocation projection based on a three percent inflation rate. He explained that the discontinued sediment study is reflected in the co-op agreement line and that the funds for computer refreshment have been eliminated because USGS has identified an alternative source of funds for this equipment. In addition, the out-year projections assume a flat \$100,000 per year reduction in state overhead, rather than \$100,000 in FY 00 and \$200,000 in each of FY 01 and 02 as presented in the previous cost allocation. The projection assumes seven percent annually for savings and slippage, though Arnold noted that Corps headquarters has indicated that the rate could be as high as 15 percent in FY 00. Overall, the revised allocation reflects slightly lower projected deficits. However, Arnold emphasized that these relatively minor reductions do not obviate the need to restructure the LTRMP in accordance with the three principles outlined in General Anderson's directive.

Terry Moe urged the Corps and USGS to consider using a zero percent inflation rate in projecting out-year LTRMP costs. Noting that the LTRMP's proportional share of a \$1.0 million HNA would be \$310,000, Moe also advocated awarding UMESC contracts for as much HNA work as it is capable of doing. Bob Delaney said he anticipates that UMESC will do at least \$155,000 in HNA work during FY 99. Rhodes noted that the HNA management team is in the process of developing and reviewing cost estimates for the various HNA tasks. He urged program partners not to restrict the technical managers' discretion in determining how best to execute the HNA tasks. All things being equal, Rhodes said he would favor supporting the LTRMP when it comes to awarding HNA contracts. However, he stressed that quality must not be sacrificed in an effort to target work and said decisions regarding how to accomplish the various PMP tasks are up to the technical managers. Delaney said he is confident that the LTRMP can compete successfully for HNA work. Gordon Farabee noted that the LTRMP has been collecting data for 12 years and said it certainly makes sense to anticipate that the HNA will be relying heavily on the LTRMP.

### *Progress on Data Analysis and Information Needs Assessment*

Delaney explained that the data analysis is designed to address five basic questions:

- What ability do we have to detect change from one sampling interval to another?
- Are there spatial redundancies in the Program (both within and among pools)?
- Are there gear/method redundancies in the Program?
- Are there target variable redundancies in the Program?
- How well can we estimate material transport?

Marv Hubbell observed that the data analysis is designed to look at what is being collected and the INA is intended to assess what data are needed. Hubbell asked how these two efforts will be blended to give a more complete picture of the program. Delaney said the data analysis and INA are proceeding on parallel tracks and will come together in May.

Delaney reported that the A-Team asked USGS to add some target variables to those that will be reviewed as part of the data analysis. Delaney said one strategy that will be considered in the analysis is shifting from the strategy of monitoring many habitat types and polygons in a few pools to monitoring fewer habitat types and polygons in more pools. By emphasizing stratification across rather than within pools, the LTRMP would enhance its ability to draw conclusions across pools but lose some of its capability to make detailed conclusions about what is happening within the trend pools. Delaney said the data currently support the ability to analyze cause-effect relationships, but said the program lacks the staff to do this analytical work. Hubbell asked whether the data analysis will evaluate the sensitivity of the cause-effect data. Delaney said he was uncertain and referred Hubbell to Ken Lubinski.

Delaney said USGS will also look at the data implications of having different field stations monitor different combinations of components. He emphasized that USGS will prioritize the data analysis and complete as much as possible before the May EMP-CC meeting. While the analysis will not be finished by May, Delaney said there will be sufficient information to give people some insight into different tradeoffs as they consider restructuring alternatives. Moe stressed the importance of ensuring that field managers have an opportunity for input into the data analysis. Delaney said field station teams leaders have been consulted. Delaney said USGS is open to timely input from field resource managers, but stressed that the data analysis is on a fast track and thus any comments would have to be received quickly.

Moe asked why the projected LTRMP costs include between \$150,000 and \$159,100 annually in FY 00 to FY 02 for data analysis and INA. He questioned the need for this level of funding if the primary purpose of the two efforts is to help inform restructuring decisions that will be made in May or shortly thereafter. Rhodes said it is premature to discuss budget specifics for FY 00 and beyond, stressing that the need for continued spending on data analysis and INA can best be determined after the initial work is completed and restructuring decisions are made. Moe said he favors postponing major restructuring until after FY 00. He said this would permit more complete and thoughtful analysis of alternatives. Rhodes said the Corps agreed not to pursue restructuring in FY 99 because the states stressed the importance of avoiding mid-year personnel cuts. Rhodes said it is essential to identify restructuring changes now for FY 00.

If those decisions are not made shortly, Rhodes cautioned that the states will face mid-year cuts in FY 00, precisely the situation they sought to avoid in FY 99. Rhodes said the Corps is committed to restructuring the LTRMP consistent with the three general principles outlined in General Anderson's directive. He noted that there is no guarantee the EMP will receive its full authorized appropriation in FY 00 or beyond. In addition, as discussed previously, there is the possibility of increased savings and slippage rates. Rhodes said the Corps will not continue to manage the LTRMP in a crisis mode and is committed to introducing more flexibility into the program so that it can respond to such exigencies. Moe said he agrees with the need to get out of crisis management, but believes this can be done in a more thoughtful way over the course of the next year. Delaney said it is imperative to restructure the program, but agreed with Moe that there are measures that could be taken to deal with the immediate budget shortfall while allowing somewhat more time to make restructuring decisions. Rhodes said Moe's scenario for avoiding restructuring in FY 00 assumes the very best circumstances. Rhodes stressed that General Anderson and MVD are not willing to make such assumptions because they leave the program with no ability to deal with uncertainties.

Hubbell noted that the EMP-CC asked for the preliminary data analysis and INA results to be presented in May and said he sees no reason to retract that request. He said the point of the discussion in May will be to determine how to act on the information presented. Rhodes concurred, stressing that the data analysis will provide insights into restructuring options. Rhodes said it is important to develop implementation options based on budget scenarios for discussion in May.

Kevin Szcodronski said General Anderson's call for increased emphasis on data analysis and increased flexibility may have troubling implications for the science of the monitoring program. Szcodronski said he hopes the Corps will be open to revisiting these principles once the data analysis provides insight into implications for the science of the monitoring program. Rhodes said the Corps will consider the results of the data analysis carefully, but noted that scientists and program managers may disagree as to the implications of the analysis for restructuring decisions.

Jerry Skalak said the INA will:

- build upon the HNA, analysis of monitoring data, and LTRMP Strategic Plan;
- support integrated river management;
- identify common and unique data and information requirements;
- lead to better leveraging of resources; and
- meet Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requirements for performance measures.

Skalak outlined the following next steps for the INA:

- establish project framework using a small (i.e., 5-6 person) multi-agency team;
- develop a comprehensive existing data/information matrix;
- identify/verify the "scales" of management data and information needs;
- identify gaps between "needs" and existing data and information; and
- develop plans, including time and cost estimates, for meeting identified needs.

Skalak observed that the Strategic Plan articulates relatively qualitative priorities for the LTRMP. He said the INA is designed to establish more detailed, quantitative priorities. In response to a question from Gordon Farabee, Skalak said the INA will confine itself to assessing information needs for managing resources within the UMRS floodplain. Hubbell asked how priority information needs identified through the INA may influence LTRMP restructuring. Skalak said this is not yet clear, but suggested that INA priorities certainly have the potential to shape the program over time. In response to a question from Hubbell, Skalak and Delaney clarified that the INA and data analysis will be considering all LTRMP data, not merely the monitoring trend data.

Skalak said a first cut of the INA will be completed by May 1, but emphasized that the assessment is also designed to help shape the future of the LTRMP under a reauthorized EMP. He said the longer term INA will build on several other efforts, including the HNA and navigation study. Bob Goodwin asked whether anyone had developed a chart depicting the interrelationships among the HNA, INA, and data analysis efforts. Skalak said that he was unaware of any such schematic. Rhodes said the Corps would prepare something for the EMP-CC's May meeting.

#### *Status and Trends Report*

Delaney reported that the Status and Trends Report is complete and will be sent to the printer by the end of February. Two thousand copies of the full report will be printed and should be available within three months. Delaney provided each state EMP-CC member with an unbound copy of the report. Delaney briefly reviewed the graphic from Chapter 16 that summarizes the ecological health of the UMRS' four major geomorphic units using six criteria. He said he anticipates the report in general, and this graphic in particular, will generate significant media interest.

#### **HREP District Updates**

Mike Thompson reported that the final operation and maintenance (O&M) manual for the Stump Lake project is under development and should be completed within three months. Stump Lake is the first project the St. Louis District has completed within Illinois. Thompson said the district plans a dedication ceremony for the project. Dusty Rhodes emphasized the importance of celebrating the EMP's successes and urged the other program partners to help identify and participate in opportunities for similar events. Jerry Skalak said the Rock Island District may hold a multi-project dedication ceremony this summer.

Thompson said the Item 2 pump stations for Swan Lake are under construction and should be completed in FY 99. The hillside sediment control measures, Item 4, are scheduled for completion FY 01. The Cuivre Island project is nearing completion and the O&M manual is under development. Plans and specifications are underway for Phases I and II of the Batchtown project. Phase I will likely move to construction in the fourth quarter of FY 99. Thompson said the St. Louis District updated and resubmitted the Calhoun Point proposal for approval. The final definite project report (DPR) was originally submitted to Corps headquarters in June 1996, but approval was deferred due to lack of available construction funds. The district has resubmitted the project in anticipation that it will be constructed after program reauthorization.

Leo Foley reported that the Rock Island District coordinated with Illinois regarding the pump station at the Andalusia project. The problems have been addressed and the pump station is now fully operational. Foley said the Lake Chautauqua project is now essentially complete and a dedication ceremony is scheduled. The Spring Lake, Illinois project is scheduled for completion this spring. Remaining work includes a well contract and punch list items. The Princeton project was complete in October 1998, with only punch list items remaining for this spring. Illinois DNR is essentially finished with its in-kind work at Banner Marsh. Plans and specifications for Stage II of Banner Marsh are underway, and the Rock Island District expects to award the contract for Stage II in July. The DPR for Pool 11 Islands is scheduled to be released for public review in August. Coordination work on the Rice Lake, Illinois project continues and the DPR may be completed this year. Marv Hubbell expressed Illinois' thanks to Colonel Mudd and the Rock Island District for working closely with the state to resolve problems with the Andalusia pump station.

Don Powell reported that the St. Paul District has completed 17 habitat projects, including the recently completed Rice Lake, Minnesota project. Trempealeau and Pool 8 Islands Phase II are scheduled for completion later this spring. Construction on Phase III of the Mississippi River Bank Stabilization project will begin this spring. The St. Paul District anticipates awarding the contract for Stage II of Polander Lake in May. The Section 8(a) bid for Long Lake was higher than anticipated and the district is currently negotiating with the contractor. If a satisfactory contract price cannot be negotiated, the district will cancel the solicitation.

The St. Paul District currently has six projects in the planning phase. Powell said design work should be completed this year on Pool Slough; Spring Lake Islands, Wisconsin; Harpers Slough; and Ambrough Slough. Design work will be initiated this year on Capoili Slough and Long Meadow Lake. Powell said the district anticipates full expenditure in FY 99. Planning may be initiated next year on Lake Winneshiek, Pool 8 Islands Phase III, and Conway Lake.

Powell announced that the St. Paul District will be hosting a habitat project engineering, design, and construction workshop. The workshop will be held in La Crosse this June. In addition to Corps personnel, other program partners will be invited to participate. In response to a question from Jim Harrison, Powell said the bank stabilization project will be complete with Stage III. He explained that the St. Paul District set a \$2.0 million ceiling on the project and then picked the most critical sites for stabilization work. Citing a high level of public interest in the project, Terry Moe suggested that Pool 8 Islands Phase II would make an excellent candidate for a dedication ceremony. Powell said the district will likely hold dedication ceremonies for both the Pool 8 Islands and Trempealeau Refuge projects.

### **Habitat Project Showcase**

Barb Kimler explained that Spring Lake is a 3,300 acre area in Pool 13 on the Illinois side of the river, approximately two miles south of Savannah, Illinois. Spring Lake is part of the Savannah unit of the Upper Mississippi Refuge and is the only closed area of the refuge.

The area was leveed and drained for agriculture during World War I. The land was later acquired as part of the nine-foot channel project and subsequently transferred to the Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1946, the entire area was a lake. A flood in 1965 created significant breaches in the levee. The Fish and Wildlife Service built a pump station and cross dike in the late 1960s to create a marsh management unit in part of the lake. Resource problems include

sediment accumulation in the breach areas. In addition, the size and topography of the upper lake made it difficult for the Service to manage.

The Spring Lake project was approved in August 1994 with two primary goals:

- restoring wetland values, with the upper lake to be managed for dabbling ducks and the lower lake for diving ducks; and
- improving the water quality of the lower lake for aquatic life.

Overall, 8.5 miles of levee were restored, with the level of protection ranging from five to 50 years. Three independent cells were created in the upper lake, using low berms, stop logs, and pumps. The lower lake functions as a hemi-marsh and has a low levee that provides a two-year level of protection. Culverts in the dikes permit introduction of oxygen-rich water during summer and winter months when low dissolved oxygen can be a problem.

According to Kimler, the biggest construction challenge was repairing the levee breach. The 1993 flood created a new blowout and 30 foot scour hole, underscoring the difficult hydraulics at the site. As a result, the district proposed a set back levee. This resulted in a longer alignment, but at shallower depths. As a result, less material was needed. A rock core was constructed to a five-year elevation and then adjacent material was used to build the levee up to its design height. A riverside bench planted with willows affords further protection. Once the breach was closed, significant work remained to repair and restore the levee. Based on previous experience, the Rock Island District specified certain techniques the contractor was to use, but also tried to avoid being too prescriptive. The contractor misjudged the equipment that would be needed, leading to some construction problems. Kimler said these difficulties were resolved satisfactorily.

Experience with the Andalusia project led the district to modify the contract for the Spring Lake pump station somewhat. The two-way pump station at Spring Lake has two submersible pumps. The district also opted to use aluminum stop logs because field staff at other projects have reported difficulty operating heavier stop logs. Kimler said a neoprene seal was used to ensure a good seal with the aluminum stop logs.

Construction of the Spring Lake project is almost complete. Remaining work includes granular surfacing for the tops of the levees, a pump station for the hemi-marsh, and several punch list items. The project is scheduled to be turned over to the Fish and Wildlife Service this summer. In response to a question from Buddy Arnold, Kimler said project performance data are not yet available. Water quality monitoring at the site just resumed. Kimler said there was heavy waterfowl use on Spring Lake last fall.

### **Other Business**

Holly Stoerker announced that the spring EMP-CC meeting will be held May 20 in the Twin Cities. The summer meeting is scheduled for August 19 in the Quad Cities and the fall meeting is scheduled for November 18 in La Crosse. [Update: The November meeting will not be held in La Crosse due to lack of hotel space. The new location has not been determined.] All EMP-CC meetings will be preceded by meetings of the Governors Liaison Committee and the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.