

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

**May 14, 1998
Spring Quarterly Meeting**

**Radisson Hotel St. Paul
St. Paul, Minnesota**

Tom Hill of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. on Thursday, May 14, 1998. Other EMP-CC members present were John Blankenship (USFWS), Bob Delaney (USGS), Marvin Hubbell (IL DNR), Kevin Szcodronski (IA DNR), Steve Johnson (MN DNR), Gordon Farabee (MO DNR), and Terry Moe (WI DNR). A complete list of attendees is attached.

Minutes of the February Meeting

Mike Thompson offered two corrections to page 3 of the draft February meeting minutes. First, the study of capacity alternatives referenced in the first full paragraph is being done for the Swan Lake, not the Batchtown, project. Second, the value engineering study for the Batchtown project, referenced in the third full paragraph, was completed in the third quarter of FY 96. With no further changes, Steve Johnson offered and Kevin Szcodronski seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 1998 meeting as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

Program Management

Leo Foley reported that, as of March 31, 1998, the EMP had expended \$7.2 million of the \$19.46 million in expenditures scheduled for FY 98. This represents a 37 percent expenditure rate through the first six months of the fiscal year. However, Foley said the three districts and the EMTC all anticipate full expenditure by the end of the fiscal year.

Foley reported that the Corps reprogrammed \$1.5 million in construction funds to the EMP since the February EMP-CC meeting. This money was reprogrammed primarily to help offset the shortfalls associated with repair work at Lake Chautauqua. Foley emphasized that construction funding remains extremely tight within the Corps and said the reprogrammed money will most likely have to be "repaid" from the EMP's FY 99 allocation. Even with the reprogrammed funds, the Rock Island and St. Paul Districts need \$2.6 million and \$800,000, respectively, in additional FY 98 funds to meet obligations under contracts that have already been let. The LTRMP would need \$917,000 in additional money to come up to full funding for the year.

In response to a question from Terry Moe, Deb Foley said footnote #4 on the St. Paul District spreadsheet included in the agenda packet is out-of-date and should be deleted.

Noting MVD's previous indication that it will no longer exempt the LTRMP from savings and slippage beginning in FY 99, Bob Delaney asked the Corps for an estimate of the FY 99 savings and slippage rate. He emphasized that the LTRMP does not have the capacity to absorb a savings and slippage assessment without affecting its core activities and will therefore need to plan in advance for the reduction. Tom Hill said MVD will provide an estimate to Delaney as soon as possible.

HREP District Updates

Deb Foley said the St. Paul District was able to get an early start on construction due to good spring weather. Except for the channel excavation work the contractor could not do last winter due to poor ice conditions, construction on the Rice Lake (MN) project is complete. The contractor has a one-year extension and is exploring options for completing the work. Island construction on the Pool 8 Islands project resumed in April, as did work on the remaining water control structures for Trempealeau Refuge. Stage 2 of the Mississippi River Bank Stabilization project is scheduled for completion this summer. The St. Paul District is preparing plans and specifications for Stage 3 of the bank stabilization project and expects to award the contract in September. Foley also reported that plans and specs for Stage 2 of Polander Lake are underway, with contract award scheduled for FY 99. The island construction component of the Polander project will be done in conjunction with the Channel Maintenance Program's unloading of the Wilds Bend placement site. Long Lake has been taken off the deferred project list and is now scheduled for contract award in FY 99. The preliminary draft Definite Project Report (DPR) for Pool Slough came in with a substantially higher cost estimate than anticipated. The district is reviewing the draft DPR, which was scheduled for completion in April. Design and coordination work is also underway on Spring Lake Islands (WI), Ambrough Slough, and Harpers Slough.

Paul Kowalczyk reported that the \$1.5 million reprogrammed to the EMP in April means the Rock Island District will not have to pay interest through June. Construction on the Spring Lake (IL) project has resumed and the main contract is expected to be completed by June. Wet weather delayed the Princeton project, but construction is expected to resume soon. The Rock Island District is working with Illinois DNR on some small modifications to address problems with the pump station and access channel at Andalusia.

At Lake Chautauqua, the Corps expects to turn over the pump station to the Fish and Wildlife Service by the end of May. With respect to the pending contractor claim for \$3 million in damages, Kowalczyk explained that any claim over \$500,000 is subject to an audit. The Corps expects to complete that audit by the end of June, at which time it will begin negotiations with the contractor regarding a possible settlement. Kowalczyk said the district should have a better idea whether it will settle with the contractor by the August EMP-CC meeting. High water has hindered progress on the Lake Chautauqua repair work, but the contract was 41 percent complete by mid-April.

Kowalczyk also reported that the Rock Island District expects to award the final Spring Lake contract, which will be for well construction, in September. Due to funding constraints, the

mast tree planting at Cottonwood Island has been delayed until FY 99. The Rice Lake (IL) DPR has been delayed at Illinois' request pending a determination by the state regarding how large of a project it is prepared to support. The draft DPR for Pool 11 Islands is scheduled for release by the end of May. The St. Paul District will be doing technical review of Pool 11 Islands.

The Performance Evaluation Report for Monkey Chute is complete and the project is meeting its design objectives. The Big Timber evaluation report is nearing completion and, for the first time, the Fish and Wildlife Service as project sponsor will be asked to sign the report. According to Kowalczyk, project sponsors will be asked to sign all future Performance Evaluation Reports.

In response to a question from Terry Moe, Kowalczyk explained that reopening the Andalusia project is allowing the Corps to fix relatively minor problems with the initial construction. More specifically, dredged material was not pushed far enough back from the access channel. A small section is being redredged and the material is being pushed further back from the channel. Stop logs at the pump station are also being replaced with gates. Moe distinguished such work from routine operation and maintenance and expressed support for reopening projects when it is clear there is a problem with the original design or construction. Kowalczyk said there are some minor problems with the Big Timber project, but said he does not think it will be necessary to reopen the project.

Gordon Farabee noted that Cottonwood Island is the only active Missouri project in the Rock Island District. Farabee asked whether Missouri should be proposing future projects given current funding constraints. Kowalczyk said the Rock Island District would be happy to look at any proposals Missouri has and could go as far as preparing fact sheets. Any further work on new proposals would have to await EMP reauthorization. Tom Hill encouraged Farabee to submit new project ideas, stressing the importance of having projects in the pipeline.

Marvin Hubbell explained that Illinois is reevaluating its funding commitment to Rice Lake as part of an overall assessment of its financial commitment to EMP, §1135, §206, and flood control projects. Illinois will provide its letter of commitment for the Rice Lake project after it completes this comprehensive evaluation. Hubbell said he expects to get back to the Rock Island District on Rice Lake by the end of June.

With respect to Tom Edwards' continuing concern with the Banner Marsh project, Hubbell reported that he met with Edwards for approximately half a day to review and respond to Edwards' concerns point-by-point. In addition, Illinois staff joined Edwards for a site visit on February 27 to look at the borrow sites with which he is concerned. Hubbell also emphasized that Edwards has met with site staff on numerous occasions. Hubbell said he feels he and others at Illinois DNR have made a sincere effort to understand Edwards' concerns, incorporate changes where they believe modifications are warranted, and clearly identify those points upon which they do not concur.

Mike Thompson reported that an order for a portable pump for the Stump Lake project has been awarded and delivery is scheduled for July 1998. Items 1 and 3 of the Swan Lake project are complete. Item 2, which is the two pump stations, has been delayed due to high water and is 15 percent complete. Item 4, the hillside sediment control measures, is 59 percent complete.

Cuivre Island is 60 percent complete and is scheduled for completion in August. The remaining work at Cuivre Island involves revegetation. The micro modeling effort for the Batchtown project has been cancelled. A report will be prepared on the findings and work on plans and specs for Batchtown will begin in June.

Thompson also reported that MVD approved the Stag Island DPR in April. The St. Louis District has requested funds to commence plans and specs for the project. Thompson said the district will be consulting with Missouri DOC staff regarding information the state submitted on the Norton Woods project. Farabee said the district's activity report incorrectly identifies Missouri DNR as being responsible for operation and maintenance of the portion of the Cuivre Island project on state-owned lands. Farabee said Missouri DOC will be doing this O&M.

John Wetzel reported on significant secondary waterfowl nesting benefits at the Lake Onalaska HREP. Wetzel said there were 166 mallard nests on the Lake Onalaska islands last year. As of May 8 of this year, there were 133 nests. Wetzel said he expects more than 200 nests for the season this year. These nests are likely to produce approximately 1,600 ducklings, with an estimated value of \$100,000 to \$200,000. Tom Hill observed that data such as Wetzel provided is extremely important in documenting project benefits. He said information about project outputs should be incorporated into the HREP database initially developed as part of the Report to Congress process. Terry Moe concurred, noting that considerable effort went in to developing the database and urging that it be maintained in the future. Moe requested a presentation on the database at the August EMP-CC meeting. Ken Lubinski suggested that the LTRMP's project status reports (PSRs) could also be used to communicate HREP results. Hill said the Corps would consider this possibility.

Jonathan Ela asked about concerns that the Pharrs Island HREP is having adverse effects on riparian landowners. Hill said landowners in the Sny Island Levee District are claiming that the Pharrs Island project is responsible for levee erosion. According to Hill, the Corps believes the project may be a factor, but is certainly not the sole cause of the erosion. Other factors include damage from the 1993 flood. Hill said the Corps is using emergency funds to address the Sny District's most pressing erosion problems. A more thorough assessment will be required to identify the major contributing factors and design a long-term fix to the erosion problem. Regular operation and maintenance funds will be used to implement the non-emergency measures. In response to a question from Ela, Hill said he was unaware of any similar concerns with other HREPs.

FWS Refuge Budget O&M

John Blankenship reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service's nationwide refuge operation and maintenance budget increased by \$18 million in FY 98. The Administration is seeking another \$14 million in additional refuge O&M money for FY 99. Blankenship attributed the success in winning the FY 98 increase in part to the Service's new Refuge Operating Needs System, which ranks various O&M needs. Blankenship said EMP HREPs do not rank particularly high in the system and said he would be working to improve the HREPs' competitiveness with other Service O&M needs. Blankenship also reported that some members of the House are seeking \$341,000 in FY 99 funding for HREP O&M on the UMR refuges. He estimated annual HREP O&M needs at \$350,000. Moe urged Blankenship to keep program partners informed regarding refuge O&M funding and other issues relevant to

the EMP. Moe emphasized that program partners need timely information to formulate and articulate positions on such issues.

Long Term Resource Monitoring

DOI Audit

Tom Hill explained that MVD asked for a DOI audit of the LTRMP shortly after the Corps' division reorganization. Hill attributed MVD's request to its assumption of an on-going program rather than to any specific concerns with the LTRMP. Hill said the DOI auditors concluded that all funds are being used appropriately and did not offer any major findings or recommendations. According to Hill, the auditors did examine the question of whether the EMP authorizing legislation requires a non-federal cost-share for the LTRMP. The auditors concluded that such a cost-share is not required. Among their other findings, the auditors recommended that the field stations carry their LTRMP property on state books and that the EMTC's cooperative agreements with universities include more detailed information concerning tasks and products. Bob Delaney concurred with Hill's summary. Delaney said the property inventory issue is one on which the EMTC has been working for some time. Delaney also explained that the auditors reported that cooperative agreements are not an appropriate vehicle through which to establish relationships with private universities. He said the EMTC has cancelled the cooperative agreement it had with a private university and will explore the possibility of using an alternative type of agreement. Delaney said the Corps and EMTC have until May 20 to comment on the draft audit, after which the final audit will be issued.

Status and Trends Report

Ken Lubinski briefly summarized comments which EMP-CC state members and the Corps of Engineers had submitted on the draft Status and Trends Report. He described the states' joint comments as primarily focused on the structure and organization of the report, as well as policy or management conclusions in the report that the states deemed inappropriate. Lubinski said the Corps also expressed concern with the report's "management commentary." In addition, the Corps commented on:

- delays in completing the report,
- the report card included at the end of the report,
- the identification of information gaps without explaining what the LTRMP is doing to address these gaps or why it is not possible/appropriate for the program to do so,
- the lack of an executive summary,
- the review process, and
- several technical issues.

Lubinski attributed some of the delays with the report to requests from the Corps that EMTC staff work on other tasks. With respect to the report card approach, Lubinski acknowledged the limitations of such a device, but emphasized that the EMTC views this as the first step in developing a useful tool. In the future, the EMTC would like the report card to reflect more quantifiable measures. Lubinski said EPA is very interested in using the Upper Mississippi

River as a pilot in developing quantifiable biocriteria. He expressed the EMTC's interest in working with the EPA on such a pilot, which he said could well result in quantifiable metrics for the six criteria in the report card.

In answer to the Corps' concern that the information gaps identified in the report imply a disconnect between identified needs and the LTRMP's direction, Lubinski emphasized that the long term monitoring scheme cannot be redirected every time a new information gap is identified. Jerry Skalak said the Corps understands that identifying a gap should not necessarily have implications for redirecting the LTRMP. But Skalak expressed concern that the casual reader of the report may well question the adherence to a fixed monitoring scheme in the face of obvious research needs. Skalak urged that the report be modified to explain why various choice and tradeoffs have been made.

Lubinski said work has begun on an executive summary for the report. The draft summary will be refined based on the changes made to the report and will likely be distributed at the end of May. The completed report is due to be submitted to the printing contractor by July 1. The executive summary will be a fairly concise, freestanding document suitable for broad public distribution. In answer to questions about the review process to-date, Lubinski explained that the individual chapters were first circulated to various experts for technical review. At least one management agency person reviewed each of the individual chapters. The entire document was then sent to select individuals familiar with the Upper Mississippi. Terry Moe and John Wetzel expressed concern that there was not more opportunity for program partners to review the document in its entirety. Moe said the comments of the one Wisconsin DNR staff person who did review the entire document were not reflected in the revised draft that was circulated for policy review in February.

Lubinski reported that some of the technical comments received on the policy review draft were quite extensive, including recommendations to add major new topics such as emergent plants to the report. He reminded program partners that the EMTC distributed the outline for the Status and Trends Report at several times during the report's development and said that any major additions should have been suggested at that time. According to Lubinski, there is no time to develop additional sections for the report. He said the EMTC intends to publish annual follow-up reports and recommended that new topics be pursued in these subsequent reports.

Moe said some chapters of the draft do not include sections that explicitly address status and trends. Lubinski acknowledged that the chapter authors varied in how they implemented the basic outline, which called for them to describe current status, trends over time, future outlook, and information gaps. Lubinski said the EMTC would attempt to bring more uniformity to the report structure, but noted that some variation is inevitable given differences in the information the authors are trying to convey.

After considerable discussion regarding how to proceed in revising the current draft, it was agreed that EMTC staff would develop a revised report, which it would then provide to Tim Schlagenhaft, John Wetzel, Dan Wilcox, Jerry Skalak, and UMRBA staff for review. Lubinski emphasized the need for a quick turnaround review in order to keep the report on schedule for delivery to the printer in early July.

EMTC Strategic Plan

Bob Delaney reported that the EMTC distributed a draft of its Strategic Plan to approximately 160 people for review in February. The EMTC received comments from the five states, Corps of Engineers, Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission, USGS's National Wetlands Research Center, and EMTC and field station staff. In response to comments, the EMTC shortened and streamlined the plan and made a variety of other editorial changes. The section on implementation strategies is being expanded to include strategies for non-LTRMP activities. Delaney asked whether the EMP-CC would like an opportunity to concur with the final Strategic Plan, similar to the committee's previous endorsement of the LTRMP Operating Plan. Members expressed interest in such an opportunity, but questioned how this might be accomplished given the EMTC's schedule for finalizing its Strategic Plan. After some discussion, it was agreed that the EMTC would distribute a final draft of its plan to the EMP-CC. Committee members will then be responsible for contacting the UMRBA office to indicate whether they are prepared to concur with the plan. If necessary, UMRBA staff will schedule a conference call to discuss any outstanding issues. Assuming agreement is reached, a letter expressing the EMP-CC's concurrence will be prepared.

Steve Johnson asked what flow chart would be reflected in the EMTC's Strategic Plan. Tom Hill said he thought the Corps and EMTC reached agreement on the flow chart at the last EMP-CC meeting and that the flow chart dated March 25 would be included in the plan. Delaney said the EMTC agreed to follow the Corps' flow chart in the LTRMP work planning process, but emphasized that this did not necessarily mean the March 25 flow chart would be included verbatim in the EMTC's final Strategic Plan.

Terry Moe noted that the draft Strategic Plan calls for the EMTC to prepare annual State of the River Reports. Moe said the EMP-CC should discuss this proposal at its next meeting and provide some direction to the EMTC regarding the content and scope of the reports.

Center Merger Update

Bob Delaney reported that it now appears the Upper Mississippi Science Center (UMSC) will retain its drug registration program. Keeping the drug registration program means that the UMSC will not have space to accommodate staff currently located at the EMTC. Thus, while the two Centers will be merging administratively, they are unlikely to co-locate anytime in the near future. Delaney said there might be some small-scale relocations, such as co-locating the combined center's water quality specialists. The administrative merger is scheduled for October 1. Delaney said there is likely to be a new name for the combined center, which will be headed by Dr. Leslie Holland Bartells. Merger teams have been formed to address the following three areas: administration and science support, science opportunities, and partners and marketing. Ken Lubinski is heading the science opportunities team and Terry Dukerschein is leading the partners and marketing team. Each team is charged with developing a list of options for Holland Bartells' consideration by the end of June.

Habitat Needs Assessment

Tom Hill reported that MVD has not yet responded to John Blankenship's March 27 letter suggesting that the Fish and Wildlife Service serve as a Technical Co-Chair for the Habitat

Needs Assessment (HNA). He noted that General Anderson and Don Herndon did discuss the proposal in a meeting with Bill Hartwig. Hill apologized for the delay and said the Corps would respond to the Service's proposal.

Sharon Cotner distributed copies of the HNA Status Sheet #2. The revised description reflects comments made at the February EMP-CC meeting, including explicit language confirming that the Open River is included within the scope of the HNA and that the Corps intends to use the expertise of other agencies and organizations in completing the assessment. Cotner noted that the description was also revised to clarify that initial efforts will be focused on developing a plan of study rather than detailed scopes of work.

Cotner reported on two major developments since the February EMP-CC meeting:

- 1) Identification of the funds necessary to initiate work on the HNA
- 2) Approval from Corps Headquarter to start the assessment

Bob Delaney noted that the LTRMP is providing the \$300,000 that will be used to begin the HNA. Delaney said the \$300,000 comes from unexpended past year LTRMP funds. Cotner said the Headquarters approval to proceed came within the last two weeks. She expressed optimism that the first HNA meeting could be scheduled within the next three to four weeks. Cotner said she has already spoken with many program partners regarding how their agency will be represented in the HNA. She stressed the importance of fully involving the partner agencies and other interested parties while also keeping the size of the group manageable. Cotner said she plans to issue a formal request for the various agencies and organizations to name their participants in the HNA. In response to a question from Marvin Hubbell, Cotner said the letters to partner agencies would be addressed to the agencies' EMP-CC members.

In response to a question from Ken Lubinski, Cotner and Hill said the Corps is confident that it has the authority to conduct the HNA under the current EMP authorizing legislation. Hill said he envisions the assessment as a one to two year effort that will have the same spatial scope as the EMP. In response to a question from Gordon Farabee, Hill said the balance of the funding necessary to complete the HNA will come from EMP appropriations, as well as any contributions program partners are able to make.

Terry Moe expressed support for the Service's proposal to serve as Technical Co-Chair. Hubbell emphasized the importance of involving a broad range of perspectives and expertise in the assessment. He said Illinois is committed to making its staff expertise available to the HNA. In response to a question from Hill, the other state EMP-CC members endorsed the Service's Technical Co-Chair proposal.

Long Term Resource Monitoring (continued)

Work Plan Process

Jerry Skalak reported that the new LTRMP work plan process will have little effect on planning for FY 99, but will be used in developing the FY 00 work plan. Skalak explained that the flow chart is intended to clarify the understanding between the Corps and USGS regarding

the work planning process and does not, from the Corps' perspective, represent a substantial change in approach. Skalak further explained that the Priority Team is intended to provide the Corps with a mechanism to coordinate internally on LTRMP issues. The Priority Team members are Tom Pullen (MVD), Jerry Skalak (MVR), Ken Barr (MVR), Leo Foley (MVR), Dan Wilcox (MVP), Jon Hendrickson (MVP), Tim George (MVS), and Pat McGuinness (MVS). Bob Delaney noted that the EMTC draft Strategic Plan calls for draft scopes of work (SOWs) to be developed by late July or August for the coming fiscal year. Skalak said this schedule is consistent with the work plan process reflected in the flow chart and said the LTRMP SOWs should be submitted to the Priority Team.

Steve Johnson said some field managers are concerned that the March 25 flow chart is focused primarily on the Corps' internal process and does not show how the entire program partnership engages in developing the LTRMP work plan. Johnson said he developed a supplementary flow chart in answer to these concerns that attempts to depict how the partners work together collectively. He distributed copies of his flow chart and provided a brief overview. During the course of his overview, Johnson suggested some possible modifications to the proposal he distributed. Johnson emphasized that his flow chart is intended to augment, not replace, the flow chart developed by the Corps in consultation with the EMTC. Tom Hill thanked Johnson for his efforts and said it could well be helpful to have a supplement that focuses more on the partners' interactions. Johnson agreed to revise the flow chart to include any modifications he would like to make and then distribute it to the full EMP-CC for comment. Ken Lubinski requested that the final LTRMP work planning flow chart(s) use USGS terminology for key products, such as scopes of work and the Annual Performance Plan. He explained that the EMTC is required to use these terms in its Strategic Plan and emphasized that consistency between the Strategic Plan and the flow chart(s) would avoid confusion.

Partnership Roles and Responsibilities

John Wetzel recounted that the LTRMP Management Review Committee report and the draft EMP Report to Congress both recommended development of A-Team and EMP-CC charters. He distributed copies of a draft A-Team charter developed by A-Team Chair Tim Schlagenhaft and other team members. Wetzel emphasized that the draft charter is still being reviewed by the full A-Team. He described the draft as a relatively simple document designed to explain the A-Team's responsibilities, composition, and other key factors.

Holly Stoerker reported that the state EMP-CC and A-Team members discussed the draft A-Team charter yesterday, focusing on such general issues as the A-Team's membership, functions, and lines of accountability. Stoerker outlined the states' perspectives on these basic questions:

- The A-Team is an advisory committee of the EMP-CC that is authorized to communicate directly to the EMTC.
- The list of members in the draft charter appears to be complete, but the charter should explicitly acknowledge each state member's obligation to coordinate with other state agencies as needed.

- The eight A-Team functions identified in the draft charter are generally on target, but a ninth function should describe the members' role in coordinating internally within their own state or agency.
- The EMP-CC members should be the signatories for the A-Team charter.

Bob Delaney observed that the EAT and CRIC teams, which preceded the A-Team, were originally established by the EMTC, with the EMP-CC serving only to approve the memberships of the committees. Delaney expressed support for establishing a more direct linkage between the A-Team and the EMP-CC. Steve Johnson emphasized that, in practice, the A-Team has functioned in an advisory capacity to the EMP-CC, though it works directly with the EMTC. Johnson suggested that the draft charter list the states, rather than specific state agencies, as members of the A-Team.

Marvin Hubbell recommended a single charter for the EMP-CC and the A-Team to better reflect the close linkages between the two groups. He explained that the joint charter would identify each group's separate functions while also describing their interrelationship. Gordon Farabee expressed support for Hubbell's recommendation, but questioned who would most appropriately sign such a joint document. Stoerker and Tom Hill said the EMP-CC members could execute a joint charter for the two groups. Wetzel cautioned that any joint charter should clearly articulate the A-Team and EMP-CC's individual roles and responsibilities. Barb Naramore expressed confidence that this could be done within the context of a single charter. Hubbell emphasized that he views development of a charter as something that will strengthen the A-Team. Delaney suggested the possibility of linking the A-Team and EMP-CC to the UMRBA. Naramore and Hill said this would not be appropriate because the UMRBA is an organization of the five states, whereas the A-Team and EMP-CC include both state and federal members.

With respect to the composition of the A-Team, Lubinski questioned whether either the Corps or the EMTC should actually serve as a member, given that the A-Team's role is to advise the EMTC in implementing the LTRMP. Hill agreed, saying that the Corps would be happy to have someone serve as an adviser to the A-Team but that this person should not be a member of the team. Lubinski said the EMTC would like to take a similar approach.

Terry Moe asked whether the current Corps/Fish and Wildlife Service co-chair arrangement for the EMP-CC should be continued under the new charter. Various possibilities were discussed, including having the Corps serve as sole chair, adding the USGS as a third co-chair, and having the Corps and USGS serve as co-chairs without the Service. Kevin Szcodronski and Marvin Hubbell emphasized the importance of the Service in implementing HREPs and cautioned against eliminating the Service as co-chair without careful consideration. Stoerker suggested that, as the program has become established, the symbolism of the co-chairs is perhaps less important than it was in previous years. She expressed confidence that all members of the committee would have equal status regardless of the co-chair arrangement. Hill said the Corps values the EMP-CC greatly and would be happy to do whatever the other members want regarding the chair position. He said the committee's contribution to the program is paramount and the Corps' role as sole chair or co-chair is secondary.

John Blankenship concurred that the primary goal is to have all members actively involved in the committee. He expressed a desire to have the EPA and NRCS become more involved in the EMP. Delaney said it is important for the Service to co-chair the committee. Given that USGS is a science agency and is involved in the smaller of the program's two primary components, Delaney said USGS is happy to have the Service represent the Department of the Interior as co-chair of the EMP-CC. Jim Weaver suggested that the group consider using a rotating chair as a means of actively engaging all agencies. He said such an approach has been used successfully elsewhere, including in south Florida.

Members of the committee agreed to have UMRBA staff draft a single charter for the A-Team and EMP-CC for their consideration.

Reauthorization Activities

Tom Hill reported that Corps Headquarters continues to work on the draft Chief's Report. He said Headquarters has expressed support for EMP reauthorization, but has concerns with elements of General Anderson's recommendations that it views as having national implications. Hill said MVD is working hard to support its recommendations, which were endorsed by the program partnership. According to Hill, the Corps hopes to release a draft report within the next few weeks. Upon release, there will be a 30- to 45-day review period. Hill noted that Congressional action on reauthorization is not necessarily contingent upon completion of the Chief's Report. He explained Congress sometimes authorizes projects and programs based on other reports, such as a Division Commander's recommendations. However, Hill emphasized that a completed Chief's Report would certainly facilitate the reauthorization process.

In response to a question from Hubbell, Hill said the states indicated at yesterday's UMRBA meeting that they would be comfortable with a 30- to 45-day review period, assuming there are no big surprises in the draft Chief's Report. If it appears to be important to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) schedule, Hill said the Corps would try to keep to a 30-day review. Hill anticipates that the Governors, UMRBA, and EMP-CC members will receive copies of the draft Chief's Report. He said letters of comment from the Governors would be preferable to letters from agency heads. Holly Stoerker noted that the five Governors have expressed their support for EMP reauthorization in a joint letter dated March 16, 1998.

With respect to Congressional activity, Stoerker reported that the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment held hearings on WRDA, but did not offer outside witnesses an opportunity to testify on specific projects and programs. As a member of Congress, Representative Kind (WI) did take an opportunity to testify in favor of EMP reauthorization. In addition, the Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force, of which Kind is a co-chair, submitted written testimony supporting the EMP. Stoerker said the UMRBA also submitted written testimony in support of EMP reauthorization to the subcommittee. According to Stoerker, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has not yet scheduled WRDA hearings.

Stoerker reported that the Association has scheduled a Congressional briefing on the EMP for May 18 at the request of the UMR Task Force. She said the five state delegations, committee staff, and the states' Washington office staff have been invited to the briefing. Each of the

states will participate in the briefing, along with UMRBA staff. In addition to the briefing, the states and Association staff will be making a series of visits to individual Congressional offices.

Stoerker expressed the states' disappointment that there was not an EMP placeholder in the Administration's proposed WRDA, which was released on April 22. She noted that there were placeholders for a number of other "candidate projects" which do not yet have completed Chief's Reports. At its meeting yesterday, the UMRBA approved a letter to Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Michael Davis expressing the Association's disappointment with the Administration's failure to include a placeholder for the EMP. However, Stoerker emphasized that the states are not pinning all their hopes on the Administration's WRDA proposal. She said the Association would be working closely with members of Congress to pursue reauthorization options.

In response to a question from Ken Lubinski, Hill said it is difficult to estimate the likelihood that WRDA will be enacted this year. Hill said Congress has expressed an interest in passing a WRDA, as evidenced by tentative House plans to markup its WRDA in mid to late June. He also said the Administration would like to see a WRDA 98. Stoerker noted that the Administration's WRDA does not have many individual projects, but does include policy provisions related to important matters such as shoreline protection and revising the recently overturned harbor maintenance tax. She said such policy issues might drive interest in reauthorization this year.

District Project Showcase: Polander Lake

Don Powell explained that the Polander Lake project, located on the Minnesota side of the Mississippi River upstream of Winona, Minnesota, is the only habitat project in Pool 5A. Polander Lake is approximately 1,200 acres, with depths ranging from two to five feet over most of the lake. Twenty percent of the lake is over five feet in depth. According to Powell, the area has important value for fisheries and migratory waterfowl. Prior to impoundment, there was a 73-acre lake connected to a network of running sloughs. Impoundment created the larger lake, with a series of small islands. Over the last fifty years, those islands have gradually been disappearing due to erosion and the lake has lost depth due to sedimentation. An important barrier island has been lost to erosion, increasing flow to the lake and thereby degrading conditions for vegetation and overwintering fish.

As part of the project planning process, bathymetric and vegetation changes in the area over time were assessed. Minnesota DNR fish survey and Corps mussel survey data were also used. According to Powell, the Polander Lake HREP objectives included:

- creating a 50/50 mix of vegetation and open water for birds,
- maintaining an area with depths of at least four feet for fish, and
- reducing flow in approximately one-third of the lake by 50 percent.

Project features included:

- rehabilitating and constructing barrier islands,
- stabilizing islands in the lower lake using rock fill, and
- constructing new islands in the lower lake to reduce wave action.

The final DPR was approved in December 1992, but in 1993 a commercial fisher reported paddlefish in the lower lake. As a result, project construction was staged, permitting some components to move forward while delaying others until the paddlefish issue could be studied. Construction of Stage 1, which included a closure structure, 1000-foot island in the upper lake, and island stabilization work, commenced in June 1994 and was completed in October of the same year. The paddlefish study was completed in February 1997. The study found paddlefish concentrating in two areas of the lake, but not in the area of the proposed island complex. As a result, the St. Paul District is preparing plans and specifications for Stage 2. Sand for the islands will be taken from Wilds Bend, a nearby channel maintenance placement site. This is the lowest cost option for the Polander Lake project and also reduces costs to the district's Channel Maintenance Program for offloading Wilds Bend. Powell estimated that this approach will save approximately \$500,000 from the Polander Lake Stage 2 costs. The two areas where paddlefish are concentrated will be connected via a dredge cut and will be linked to a deeper part of the lake. The fine materials from this dredging will be used in establishing vegetation on the island complex.

Powell estimated the total cost for Stages 1 and 2 at \$3.4 million. The Fish and Wildlife Service will be responsible for project operation and maintenance, which is estimated at \$3,900 per year. Performance monitoring and evaluation will focus on vegetation, bathymetry, flow velocity, and temperature. Powell said the project is expected to increase aquatic vegetation by about 300 hundred acres, to approximately 50 percent of the lake area. Vegetation density is also expected to increase. Twenty acres of waterfowl nesting habitat and 400 acres of reduced flow area for centrarchids will be created. Habitat for invertebrates and fish spawning will also be established. In response to a question from Paul Kowalczyk, Keith Beseke said physical changes are still occurring in response to Stage 1 and thus it is too early to assess biological response to these measures.

Tom Edwards expressed concern with the high costs of Illinois River HREPs compared with the relatively low cost of Polander Lake. Powell said nearby sources of rock for the island stabilization work and the opportunity to obtain coarse materials from the channel maintenance site both served to reduce project costs. Steve Johnson noted that taking material from the Wilds Bend placement site was not the state's first choice. He explained that Minnesota views this decision as a tradeoff in order to save money.

Other Business

Holly Stoerker announced that the next EMP-CC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 20, to be preceded by meetings of the Governors Liaison Committee on August 18 and the UMRBA on August 19. (Note: the August 18 GLC meeting was subsequently cancelled.) The EMP-CC's fall meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 20, with the GLC and UMRBA meetings set for November 18 and 19, respectively.

In response to a question from Mark Beorkrem, Tom Hill reported that the Mississippi River Commission's low water inspection trip is scheduled for August 16 to August 30. He encouraged people with questions about the trip to contact Dean Caldwell or Gwen Jones at MVD.

EMP-CC Attendance List
May 14, 1998

Tom Hill	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
John Blankenship	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3
Bob Delaney	U.S. Geological Survey, EMTC
Marvin Hubbell	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Kevin Szcodronski	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Steve Johnson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Gordon Farabee	Missouri Department of Conservation
Terry Moe	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Buddy Arnold	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
David Sills	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Deb Foley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Don Powell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Leo Foley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Paul Kowalczyk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jerry Skalak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Sharon Cotner	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Mike Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
John Barko	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, WES
Jim Weaver	U.S. Geological Survey, BRD
Keith Beseke	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ken Lubinski	U.S. Geological Survey, EMTC
George Garklavs	U.S. Geological Survey
Tom Boland	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Bruce Hawkinson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Walt Popp	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Jerry Vineyard	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
John Wetzel	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Dan McGuiness	National Audubon Society
Mark Beorkrem	Mississippi River Basin Alliance
Jonathan Ela	Sierra Club
Tom Edwards	River Rescue
Pat Regan	Iowa Farm Bureau
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association