

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

**November 20, 1998
Fall Quarterly Meeting**

**Plaza One Hotel
Rock Island, Illinois**

Dusty Rhodes of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. on Friday, November 20, 1998. Other EMP-CC members present were Rick Nelson (USFWS), Bob Delaney (USGS), Marvin Hubbell (IL DNR), Kevin Szcodronski (IA DNR), Steve Johnson (MN DNR), Gordon Farabee (MO DOC), and Terry Moe (WI DNR). A complete list of attendees is attached.

Announcements

Bob Delaney announced that the combined Upper Mississippi Science Center and Environmental Management Technical Center will be known as the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center (UMESC).

Dusty Rhodes announced that he will be replacing Tom Hill on EMP matters now that Hill has retired and MVD has combined its planning and program management functions. Rhodes also reported that Congress did not enact a 1998 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) before adjourning in October. As a result, the EMP has not been reauthorized. However, Rhodes said the Corps will continue to manage the EMP with the expectation that it will be reauthorized prior to the end of FY 02. In keeping with this decision not to manage the program for shutdown, the Corps will move forward with the habitat needs assessment (HNA). According to Rhodes, money remains tight within the EMP and throughout the Corps. He thanked Delaney for transferring \$500,000 in LTRMP funds back to the Corps at the end of FY 98 to meet pressing habitat project needs.

Minutes of the August Meeting

The minutes of the August 20, 1998 meeting were approved as written.

Reauthorization

Buddy Arnold reported that the Chief of Engineers' Report on the EMP is not finished. Based on conversations with staff at Corps Headquarters, Arnold said he does not expect the final Chief's report to differ substantially from the June draft. Arnold said there will be some further discussions regarding the draft report's recommendation to expand the EMP-CC membership to include non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Headquarters staff has not provided a

revised schedule for completion of the report, but has indicated that the final report should be released in the near future.

Holly Stoerker said the EMP reauthorization proposals developed in the House and Senate for WRDA 98 may signal where Congress will begin when it takes up the reauthorization as part of the next WRDA. According to Stoerker, the language passed by the Senate on October 9 would have reauthorized the EMP through FY 09, with annual appropriations authorized at \$22.75 million for HREPs and \$10.42 million for the LTRMP. The Senate version would have required completion of a HNA within three years and would have established an independent technical review committee to review habitat projects, monitoring plans, and the HNA. It also included provisions increasing the state cost-share for projects on non-refuge lands to 35 percent and requiring HREPs to simulate natural riverine processes to the maximum extent practicable. According to Stoerker, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee continued working on its bill until it was clear that controversies involving other projects were going to block action on WRDA prior to adjournment. Stoerker said the House committee never officially released its proposed EMP reauthorization language, but she said the committee's preferred language is thought to be fairly close to the Senate-passed provisions. In one notable departure, the House committee's language would have authorized the EMP through FY 16.

Stoerker also reported that, when it became apparent there would not be a WRDA 98, the UMRBA sought appropriations language directing the Corps to manage the EMP as if its authorization were not expiring in FY 02. According to Stoerker, the appropriations panels were not necessarily opposed to including such a directive, but could not accommodate the addition so late in their process. As a result, the FY 98 energy and water appropriations measure does not include such language. Stoerker said the states welcome the Corps' decision not to initiate ramp down of the program.

In response to a question from Terry Moe, Stoerker said committee staffers are generally not optimistic regarding the prospects for a WRDA in 1999. She noted that it has been approximately 30 years since a WRDA was enacted in an odd year (i.e., a non-election year).

Program Management

FY 1998 Fiscal Performance

Leo Foley distributed copies of a detailed spreadsheet and a revised summary sheet. He apologized for not having the detailed spreadsheet available for the agenda packet and said he would welcome questions after the meeting, when people have had an opportunity to review the spreadsheet. According to Foley, the EMP obligated \$19.6 million of its \$19.779 FY 98 allocation, for an obligation rate of 99 percent. The program expended \$18.745 million, for an expenditure rate of 95 percent. Foley characterized both of these rates as quite good. He noted that the EMP's FY 98 appropriation was only \$16.0 million. Thus, the \$19.779 allocation includes the \$16.0 million FY 98 appropriation as well as \$1.254 million in FY 97 carryover and \$2.525 million in reprogrammed FY 98 funds. According to Foley, the LTRMP's FY 98 scheduled amount of \$5.791 million includes \$505,000 that was transferred to the HREP program late in FY 98 and \$643,000 in carryover from FY 97. Foley said the \$505,000 transferred from the LTRMP to HREPs will be returned to the LTRMP in FY 99.

FY 1999 Budget

Leo Foley reported that the Corps interprets the current EMP language as limiting the program's annual authorized appropriation to \$18.9 million because the recreation projects component, authorized at \$500,000, is not being implemented. Under this interpretation, the EMP received its full authorized funding for FY 99. Foley said EMP administrative costs of \$110,000 and HNA costs of \$500,000 were deducted from the \$18.9 million in FY 99 funding. The remaining \$18.29 million was allocated proportionally between the HREP and LTRMP components, with each of these two components then being assessed for savings and slippage at a rate of 7.23 percent.

According to Foley, \$4.1 million of the Rock Island District's \$6.477 million FY 99 allocation is dedicated to paying outstanding bills and repaying various sources of the additional funds the district received in FY 98. Of this \$4.1 million, \$1.935 million is subject to repayment to Corps projects outside of the EMP, \$1.5 million will go to paying outstanding bills on the Lake Chautauqua project, and \$505,000 will be repaid to the LTRMP.

Steve Johnson said the A-Team was told last week that the LTRMP contributed approximately \$300,000 to the HNA in FY 98. Johnson asked why this amount is not reflected on the spreadsheet. He noted that the \$300,000, in combination with the \$155,000 being assessed against the LTRMP for the HNA in FY 99, would exceed the LTRMP's proportional share of a \$1.0 million HNA. Bob Delaney explained that the USGS transferred approximately \$290,000 of unspent FY 95 and 96 funds back to the Corps toward the end of FY 98, with the expectation that the money would be used for the HNA. Delaney said he also anticipated that this money would come back to the LTRMP in the form of contracts to do work for the HNA.

Foley said the Corps initially intended to use the \$290,000 for the HNA, but subsequently determined that outstanding HREP bills were a higher priority. By using the money to pay off habitat project contractors, the Corps was able to reduce interest charges. Foley also emphasized that HNA assessments against the LTRMP will be a separate matter from any work that the EMTC or field stations may be asked to do as part of the HNA. He said he expects the LTRMP will receive contracts to do some HNA work, but stressed that there are no foregone conclusions regarding how any particular HNA task will be accomplished.

Dusty Rhodes explained that the LTRMP had unused money from prior fiscal years while the habitat component had significant need for additional funds. Rhodes said the Corps asked USGS to return the money, which it did. He said the \$300,000 was used for HREPs and will not be counted toward the LTRMP's HNA contribution. Foley said the approximately \$300,000 in FY 95 and 96 funds was separate from the \$505,000 that was reprogrammed in FY 98 from the LTRMP to the HREPs. According to Foley, the \$505,000 will be returned to the LTRMP in FY 99. Rhodes explained that the Corps made a management decision on how best to address overall program needs with available funds at the end of the fiscal year. He invited other members of the EMP-CC to let the Corps know if they have an alternative proposal for how the situation should have been handled.

Kevin Szcodronski said he does not necessarily have a problem with the Corps' decision. He said he is primarily interested in the bottom line question of whether there is sufficient funding

to maintain the current monitoring program. Rhodes said MVD will aggressively pursue any construction money available within the Corps for reprogramming, but said there will likely be little such money available. He stressed that competition for additional money will be quite high and emphasized that the EMP, including the LTRMP, must have an execution plan based on the money currently in hand.

Delaney suggested revisiting the formula for allocating funds between HREPs and the LTRMP in light of the Corps' decision that \$18.9 million represents full funding when the recreation projects component is not being implemented. Under a \$19.455 million EMP with recreation projects, Delaney said the allocation percentages are as follows:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
HREPs	66.8
LTRMP	30.6
Recreation Projects	<u>2.6</u>
	100.0

Under an \$18.9 million program without recreation projects, Delaney said the percentages should be as follows:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
HREPs	68.6
LTRMP	<u>31.4</u>
	100.0

Delaney said this adjustment to the allocation formula would increase annual funding for the LTRMP by \$75,600, assuming full funding of \$18.9 million. Rhodes said the Corps would review Delaney's suggestion. [Note: According to the Corps, subsequent review revealed that the revised allocation formula would not increase the LTRMP's annual funding in FY 00 or beyond.]

Holly Stoerker asked for an explanation of the Corps' new interpretation that \$18.9 million represents full funding for the EMP without the recreation projects component. She noted that the Administration policy precluding implementation of recreation projects has been in place since early in the EMP, while the Corps and others have always viewed the EMP as having an annual funding authorization of \$19.455 million. Foley said legal counsel in Corps Headquarters recently determined that the EMP without recreation projects is limited to \$18.9 million per year. Rhodes said he will request a legal opinion explaining this new interpretation and will share that opinion with the EMP-CC.

Draft Charter

Barb Naramore recalled that EMP-CC members endorsed the idea of developing a joint charter for the EMP-CC and the A-Team at their May meeting. UMRBA staff agreed to develop a draft charter in advance of the August meeting, but subsequently delayed creating the draft because the Chief's Report and various reauthorization proposals were pending. Although the Chief's Report and reauthorization both remain pending, the UMRBA staff proceeded as discussed at the August meeting, drafting a joint charter for discussion at the A-Team and EMP-CC's November meetings. She reported that the draft charter was distributed on November 5, 1998. The A-Team was not able to discuss the draft at its November 9-10

meeting and plans to take up the matter at its February 2-3 meeting. Naramore said Tim Schlagenhaft, A-Team chair, has requested that the EMP-CC delay action on the draft charter until after the A-Team's February meeting.

Naramore briefly summarized the draft charter, noting that it has general sections providing an introduction and discussion of the authorities under which the two bodies operate. Two more detailed sections describing the purpose, membership, roles and responsibilities, and operation of the EMP-CC and A-Team follow these general sections. As drafted, the partner agencies' EMP-CC representatives would sign the charter. In follow-up to discussions at the EMP-CC's August meeting, Naramore said she confirmed with Dave Carvey that the Natural Resources Conservation Service wishes to continue as a member of both the EMP-CC and A-Team. Al Ames has also confirmed that the Maritime Administration wishes to remain a member of the EMP-CC. Based on the partner agencies' preferences and NGO feedback at the August meeting, the draft charter does not include provisions for NGO membership on the EMP-CC.

Dusty Rhodes said the Corps has reviewed the draft charter, does not have any recommended changes, and is prepared to sign the document. Gordon Farabee suggested that p. 5 of the draft be changed to indicate that the A-Team chair is responsible for working with the EMP-CC chair and *vice chairs* to ensure coordination and communication between the A-Team and EMP-CC. Farabee also recommended that the A-Team chair, or the entire A-Team, be included as signatories to the charter. Marv Hubbell concurred, saying he believes it would be sufficient to have the A-Team chair sign the charter.

Terry Moe asked for clarification regarding the logic behind having the Corps and USGS serve as observer members of the A-Team but as official members of the EMP-CC. Tom Pullen said the A-Team recommends what goes into the LTRMP work plan. The Corps and USGS are responsible for ensuring that the work plan is executed. Pullen said the Corps and USGS should not be voting members of the group that gives them advice. Moe asked why this same logic does not apply to the Corps' relationship to the EMP-CC. Bob Delaney said the A-Team focuses on providing technical advice while the EMP-CC addresses policy matters. As such, Delaney said he believes it is appropriate for USGS to be an official member of the EMP-CC. Rhodes concurred, describing the EMP-CC as a policy advisory group, in contrast to the A-Team's technical focus.

Moe observed that the A-Team does sometimes address policy-related issues, such as responding to EMP-CC requests for advice on how to accommodate budget shortfalls. Moe said he does not see a reason for the Corps and USGS to have one kind of membership on the A-Team and another kind on the EMP-CC. Bill Bertrand said it would be difficult for the Corps and USGS to vote as members of the A-Team because they would in effect be voting on what sort of advice to give to themselves. As such, their votes would be interpreted as foretelling the decision that they would ultimately make as the implementing agencies. Steve Johnson noted that the draft charter describes the A-Team as advising the EMP-CC, not the Corps and USGS. He asked whether the charter should be revised to reflect the kind of direct advisory relationship to the Corps and USGS that Rhodes, Delaney, and Bertrand mentioned.

After some further discussion, Naramore requested that EMP-CC and A-Team members submit comments on the draft charter no later than January 4. She said she would modify the draft based on those comments and distribute a revised draft by January 8. The revised draft

will then be discussed at the February A-Team and EMP-CC meetings, with final action possible at the EMP-CC's February meeting.

Habitat Needs Assessment

Scope of Work and Project Management Plan

Dusty Rhodes said MVD is committed to completing an HNA within two years, at a cost of no more than \$1.0 million in EMP funds. He said the overall cost of the assessment could exceed \$1.0 million if money is available from other agencies and programs. Rhodes said the Corps will ensure that the program gets a quality product as scheduled and within budget. He emphasized that \$1.0 million is not a big budget for the effort and said efficient execution will be critical.

Holly Stoerker observed that considerable time and effort have already been expended discussing how to organize the HNA. She cautioned that this focus is coming at the expense of more substantive discussions regarding how to scope and implement the assessment. Stoerker summarized the states' recommendations regarding organization and process as follows:

- Streamline the HNA organizational structure — an elaborate committee structure is not required to implement the HNA, but an efficient means of ensuring collaboration and communication among participants is needed.
- The program partners and other interested parties need to be able to participate in the technical work of the HNA and need to have their views considered in policy decisions regarding the assessment.
- The EMP-CC should serve the same basic policy function for the HNA as it does for the other aspects of the EMP. It is unnecessary and even counterproductive to form a separate HNA steering committee to perform this function.
- The process used in developing the Report to Congress worked well and should be used as a model in conducting the HNA.

Rick Nelson said the Fish and Wildlife Service concurs with the states' recommendations. He said it is important for the EMP partners to work together to create a partnership HNA. Beyond that, Nelson said the Service is more interested in the substance of the HNA than the organizational structure used. Rhodes said the HNA will ultimately be a Corps report, as was the Report to Congress. But he emphasized that the Corps will do everything it can to ensure that the assessment is a partnership product and agreed that the Report to Congress process is a good model. Rhodes observed that the draft scope of work (SOW) distributed prior to the meeting focused too much on organizational structure and not enough on how to accomplish the work. He said the scope will be modified to address this problem.

Mike Thompson thanked everyone who helped review the draft SOW and project management plan (PMP). Thompson said some of the comments received were not reflected in the revised draft distributed on November 10. He attributed this to lack of time rather than disagreement

with the substance of the comments. Thompson summarized coordination efforts related to drafting the SOW and PMP as follows:

- August 18, 1998 HNA meeting — workgroup identified and tasked with drafting the SOW
- August 20, 1998 EMP-CC meeting — EMP-CC concurred with the workgroup approach and requested draft SOW
- Workgroup met in Rock Island and identified a smaller group to generate the SOW
- September 1998 — the smaller group met in La Crosse and provided the first draft SOW to the St. Louis District
- September 23, 1998 — St. Louis District generated a draft SOW and PMP and coordinated those drafts within the Corps and with the workgroup
- November 10, 1998 — the coordinated draft SOW and PMP were forwarded to the EMP-CC for comment

Thompson highlighted several basic assumptions regarding the HNA:

- It will be an assessment of existing, future forecast, and desired future conditions and habitat needs.
- The HNA will look at pool, reach, and system scales as related to the EMP (i.e., bluff to bluff).
- The methodology will incorporate GAP Analysis and guild/species patch matrix approaches.
- The budget is \$1.0 million and the schedule calls for completion of the HNA by September 2000.

Thompson distinguished between the SOW and PMP, describing the SOW as essentially an executive summary of the PMP. The PMP will lay out the detailed tasks and descriptions. He reported that the St. Louis District has so far received minor technical comments on the SOW and PMP, some of which have not been addressed due to time constraints. Thompson said the final PMP will include work plans with detailed scopes for specific tasks and products.

According to Thompson, next steps include:

- obtaining EMP-CC comments on the SOW;
- implementing the HNA organizational structure; and
- developing work plans, initiating technical tasks, and meeting the schedule for various products.

Thompson outlined a proposed organizational structure for the HNA (attached), emphasizing that the technical, mapping, public involvement, and report committees will be working groups

that produce products, not technical advisory bodies. Rhodes said the EMP-CC is the policy body for the EMP and thus should serve this function for the HNA. He said there is no reason to form a separate policy committee for the HNA. Rhodes went on to explain that the HNA project manager, Mike Thompson, is ultimately responsible for ensuring that that assessment is completed on-time and on-budget. According to Rhodes, the HNA's two technical co-chairs, Ron Yarbrough and Bob Clevensine, will share this responsibility, with Thompson, Yarbrough, and Clevensine functioning together as the HNA management team. Rhodes said Thompson and the two technical co-chairs can come to him for assistance if they encounter difficulties that they cannot resolve.

In response to a question from Rick Nelson, Bob Clevensine expressed comfort with the basic structure laid out by Rhodes and Thompson. Clevensine asked whether the state EMP-CC members are confident their state personnel can participate and be responsive to requests coming from Thompson and the two technical co-chairs. Marv Hubbell said Illinois held a preliminary meeting to discuss its participation in the HNA. Hubbell said he was pleased that 7 to 10 state employees with a range of expertise expressed interest in working on the assessment. Hubbell emphasized that these people realize that participation means actually working on products, not merely serving as technical advisors. Kevin Szcodronski said the HNA is a high priority for Iowa and said he and others in the state will make every effort to be involved in the assessment. Szcodronski said he will name a central technical point of contact (POC) in Iowa for the HNA. That individual will then be responsible for determining what technical expertise the state can lend to specific tasks. Terry Moe said Wisconsin will be taking a similar approach, with Jeff Janvrin serving as the state's technical POC. After further discussion, EMP-CC members agreed to have each program partner name a single technical POC. Those individuals will be charged with identifying and obtaining assistance from others within their state or agency who can be of help on specific tasks.

Gordon Farabee asked why the draft SOW and PMP do not reflect his previous recommendation that the HNA examine pre- and post-impoundment conditions. Farabee noted that this pre- and post-impoundment approach was included, at his request, in the status sheet that Sharon Cotner and Bob Clevensine previously developed. Farabee emphasized that he is not advocating extensive data acquisition, but rather an effort to look at what information is available concerning these two key points in the river system's history. He said such an approach is likely to be particularly helpful showing what may be possible on the Open River. Tom Pullen and Bob Clevensine agreed that looking at past conditions will be an important part of identifying desired future conditions. Thompson said Minnesota also advocated looking at past conditions in its comments on the draft SOW and PMP. Thompson said that Minnesota's suggestion was not reflected in the revised SOW/PMP due to lack of time rather than any disagreement with the recommendation. Moe said Wisconsin is not opposed to looking at existing information, but said he would oppose spending substantial money to document historic conditions. Moe also emphasized that any examination of pre-impoundment conditions should not be interpreted as support for removing the locks and dams. Jon Duyvejonck said work being done under the Navigation Study should provide important information about past conditions.

Rhodes agreed that examining past conditions may be useful in identifying what people want in the future. He said it should be possible to gain insight from past conditions without necessarily developing system-wide geographic information system coverages for particular

points in time. Rhodes said the draft SOW and PMP will be revised to include provisions for examining past conditions. Bob Delaney observed that the decision to have the HNA look at conditions bluff-to-bluff is something of a departure from the Report to Congress, which viewed the program as limited to areas connected to the floodplain. Rhodes acknowledged the change, saying that several people successfully argued that the assessment should look at areas behind the levees.

Relationship to Nutrient Strategy

Tom Pullen reported that a joint federal/state task force has been established to address the problem of hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. The Environmental Protection Agency coordinates the task force, and General Anderson represents the Corps of Engineers on the group. The task force will be developing a nutrient management strategy that will focus on using various agencies' authorities and programs to reduce nutrient loading to the Gulf. Nutrients from the Mississippi River Basin are posited to be a significant factor in Gulf hypoxia. Pullen characterized Gulf hypoxia as an increasingly high profile issue for the public and suggested that there may be opportunities for EMP habitat projects to address water quality issues, including nutrient management, in more explicit ways. He recommended that the HNA should consider relationships between habitat and nutrients.

Gordon Farabee observed that the Pool 25 water level management project, which has been done under the Section 1135 authority, is generally viewed as a fish and wildlife project. However, Farabee emphasized that water level management can also have significant water quality benefits.

Bob Delaney noted that the EMTC has received two grants from EPA to expand its water quality monitoring efforts. He also reported that the Natural Resources Conservation Service is funding a full time person at the EMTC to coordinate NRCS activities with the EMP and other river programs. According to Delaney, the National Science Foundation and the EPA have also provided a \$700,000 grant to model nutrient management on the lower Minnesota River.

Marv Hubbell acknowledged that Illinois has questioned the cause and effect linkage between nutrients in the midwest and hypoxia in the Gulf. He emphasized that this does not mean that nutrient issues are not of interest to the state of Illinois. Rather, according to Hubbell, the work of Dr. Winstanley and others is intended to ensure there is rigorous science behind any conclusions regarding the midwest's contributions to Gulf hypoxia. Hubbell said Illinois may be limited in its ability to support nutrient reduction efforts based on potential benefits to the Gulf, but may well be interested in reduction efforts to improve water quality within Illinois.

Terry Moe asked Pullen to clarify what he sees as the connection between the HNA and the hypoxia issue. Pullen said that some habitats may be better at keeping nutrients from the main channel and the Gulf than others. He said this potential to reduce nutrients may be a factor that partners want to consider in selecting projects. At this point, however, Pullen said he was merely suggesting that the EMP partners be aware of the increasingly high profile issue of nutrients and think about how it may ultimately relate to the EMP. Moe said Wisconsin would be unlikely to support nutrient reduction as a major EMP goal.

UMRCC/Audubon Coordinated Public Outreach Proposal

Jon Duyvejonck briefly summarized the history of the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC), which was formed by resource agencies from the five basin states in 1943. Initially formed to assess fisheries stocks, the UMRCC's focus has broadened over the years and the group now includes technical sections for fish, wildlife, recreation (currently inactive), water quality, and law enforcement. An Executive Board consisting of a representative from each of the five states governs the UMRCC. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides a coordinator and administrative support to the UMRCC.

Duyvejonck said the UMRCC membership has become increasingly concerned with the river's long term health and the future of its natural resources. In 1993, the UMRCC issued a Call to Action, which highlighted the need to address certain key management issues. As a next step, the UMRCC is developing a plan with specific recommendations for addressing the problems identified in the Call to Action. Dan McGuiness, formerly of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission and currently with the National Audubon Society is drafting this plan, a Strategy for Operation and Maintenance of the UMRS Ecosystem. Duyvejonck said the draft strategy addresses the following natural processes:

- assimilation of wastes;
- sediment transfer in the basin;
- return of natural floodplain to allow channel meanders and habitat diversity;
- provide for seasonal flood pulse effect and periodic low flows to improve nutrient base and plant growth/succession;
- enable connectivity of backwaters to main channel;
- provide for opening of side channels, create islands, shoal, and sandbar habitat;
- manage channel maintenance and disposal to support ecosystem objectives;
- sever the pathway for exotics enter and spread within the UMRS; and
- provide fish passages at dams.

As part of this effort to develop a natural resources management strategy, the UMRCC and Audubon Society will be holding a series of public workshops to learn what the public wants and what it views as the major river issues. Duyvejonck noted that these meetings will likely be similar to those that are needed for the HNA public involvement effort. Expressing concern that the public will be confused and frustrated by seemingly redundant meetings, Duyvejonck said UMRCC and Audubon are interested in the possibility of combining their outreach meetings with those of the HNA. He said the UMRCC Executive Board has endorsed the idea of a joint public involvement strategy.

McGuiness explained that the National Audubon Society has launched a campaign focused on the Upper Mississippi River and its watershed. The campaign has been developed by the 40,000 members of Audubon's 43 chapters in the five states and is guided by a 25-member advisory team. The campaign is designed to inform people, take action, and influence public policy.

McGuinness went on to explain that Audubon and the UMRCC are planning a series of 10 public meetings on the Upper Mississippi for late March and early April. He said the series could be expanded to include locations on the Illinois River. The meetings will be designed to:

- inform people about the river, including how the river looks today and current thinking about river management, and
- invite people to provide feedback, using detailed maps as a basis for discussion.

McGuinness said the meetings will provide critical public input for the UMRCC's natural resources management strategy and Audubon's river campaign. He expressed optimism that the meetings could also be coordinated to meet the HNA's public involvement needs.

Dusty Rhodes observed that the EMP-CC had, in its earlier discussion, empowered the HNA project manager and technical co-chairs to make decisions about how best to implement the assessment. Rhodes cautioned the EMP-CC against micro-managing the HNA and said the decision regarding how to proceed with public involvement should be left to the management team. Rhodes noted that the management team will need to consider a range of issues carefully, including difficulties that might arise if the EMP appeared to be linking itself with the activities of a private group. Marv Hubbell agreed with Rhodes that the HNA management team should decide how to respond to the UMRCC/Audubon proposal.

In response to a question from Terry Moe, McGuinness said the UMRCC and Audubon Society will be sharing the costs of the public meetings. If the HNA is included, then the allocation of any additional costs would need to be determined, according to McGuinness. He said the UMRCC and Audubon will be proceeding with their public meetings regardless, but would welcome coordination with the HNA if that proves feasible. Tom Pullen said a meeting to discuss the HNA public involvement strategy is scheduled for November 30 in St. Paul. Hubbell asked whether there are limits on what types of public involvement strategies can be used in the HNA. Rhodes said there are some Office of Management and Budget restrictions on surveys, but said there is generally fairly broad latitude. Rhodes stressed that innovation is encouraged.

In response to a question from Moe, Jim Harrison said the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission continues to support development of the UMRCC strategy and is comfortable with the idea of a joint public involvement strategy. Kevin Szcodronski explained that the UMRCC is grateful the Audubon Society is allowing McGuinness to continue his involvement in drafting the natural resources management strategy. However, he emphasized that the UMRCC is not seeking to align itself with the Audubon Society as an organization. Rather, the UMRCC is continuing a working relationship that originated when McGuinness was with the Boundary Area Commission. He said the UMRCC will be sensitive to how people perceive the relationship between the two organizations.

Other HNA Issues

Ken Lubinski asked whether the HNA will result in a laundry list of needs or whether the objective is to identify priorities. If the goal is to identify priorities, he stressed that building

consensus regarding those priorities will be a considerable challenge and will require a carefully constructed process. Dusty Rhodes said the HNA will be a tool for designing and selecting habitat projects and emphasized that the Corps will continue to manage the program, with the EMP-CC serving as a policy advisory board. Tom Pullen said the district HREP process may be modified somewhat to work with the new tool, but said the HNA is not designed to replace the district process.

Holly Stoerker said she understands Rhodes' and Pullen's observations regarding how the HNA will be used as a tool, but questioned how the wide range of desired future conditions identified during the assessment process will be translated into the list of habitat needs referenced in the SOW and PMP. Bob Clevenstine said this question will be addressed by people working on the HNA public involvement strategy but cannot be answered yet. Marv Hubbell said he anticipates it will be an iterative process, emphasizing that Illinois will take the public's desired future conditions into consideration in developing its project priorities. Rhodes concurred, stressing that the HNA will not produce a list of habitat projects but will instead be a tool used in implementing the habitat program. He said he is not yet prepared to describe precisely what sorts of changes may be made to the habitat project selection and design process to make use of the new tool. Dick Steinbach said he understands the Corps is not ready to detail likely changes to the HREP process, but stressed that the planned use of the HNA tool should influence its design. Rick Nelson expressed concern that the HNA will produce a long list of wishes with no way to prioritize. Pullen observed that points of consensus among the lists from the public, agencies, and resource managers will help point to what those priorities may be.

Rhodes encouraged people to review the list of project goals and objectives on p. 7 of the draft PMP. After some further discussion, it was agreed that the HNA management team would provide the EMP-CC with a revised SOW and PMP in advance of its February meeting, with the goal of obtaining EMP-CC endorsement at that meeting. Buddy Arnold noted that, in order to keep the HNA on schedule, the management team will need to initiate some work items before the EMP-CC has an opportunity to review and comment on the revised SOW and PMP.

Long Term Resource Monitoring Program

Priority Team Recommendations

Tom Pullen reported that the Corps' Priority Team has met three times and has been following the flow chart process for LTRMP work plan development. The Priority Team is comprised of Jerry Skalak (MVR), Tom Pullen (MVD), Dan Wilcox (MVP), Jon Hendrickson (MVP), Ken Barr (MVR), Tim George (MVS), and Dan Erickson (MVS). On behalf of the Priority Team, the Rock Island District has submitted a draft letter to MVD outlining the team's recommended priorities for FY 99 and 00. Pullen said MVD has not finalized the letter and thus is not prepared to release it. However, USGS has reviewed the draft letter and generally agrees with the priorities contained therein, according to Pullen. Dusty Rhodes said MVD is committed to coordinating with the other program partner in keeping with the flow chart process. As such, Rhodes said MVD will not approve the Priority Team's recommendations until it consults with its partners.

Jerry Skalak summarized the Priority Team's major recommendations as follows:

- Continue routine monitoring through FY 99.
- In FY 99, statistically analyze the monitoring data collected to-date.
- In FY 99, establish a standing Science Review Committee (SRC) for the EMP as a whole, including both HREPs and the LTRMP.
- In FY 99, initiate an Information Needs Assessment (INA).
- In FY 00, implement modifications to the LTRMP based on data analysis, SRC recommendations, and INA findings.
- In FY 99, initiate design of an out-year LTRMP that reflects the proposed reauthorization funding level.

Skalak said the Priority Team is also recommending the following actions by the Corps of Engineers:

- The Corps should actively participate in the merger of the Upper Mississippi Science Center and the Environmental Management Technical Center.
- The Corps should increase its presence at the center and promote center outreach.
- The Corps should promote greater participation by the partner agencies' scientists.
- The Corps should promote increased LTRMP involvement in HREP evaluations.

Terry Moe said he views the recommendations to establish a standing SRC and to initiate an INA as strong moves by the Priority Team to redirect the LTRMP. He expressed concern with lack of partner input into the Priority Team process. Rhodes repeated his earlier statement that the Corps will not implement the Priority Team recommendations until it receives input from the other program partners. He said the Priority Team has developed a list of proposed Corps priorities, which is precisely what it was designed to do. The next step, as outlined in the flow chart and as previously discussed with the EMP-CC, is for the Corps to consult with its partners. Rhodes said this is why the Corps put this topic on the EMP-CC agenda. Moe requested information regarding the budget implications of the Priority Team's recommendations.

Ken Lubinski said he was not aware of the Priority Team's recommendations to modify the LTRMP in FY 00 based on the data analysis, SRC recommendations, and INA findings and to initiate design of the post-reauthorization EMP in FY 99. Bob Delaney said USGS generally supports the Priority Team's recommendations, but recognizes the need for further discussion among the EMP partners. Delaney said the specifics regarding implementation of the SRC and INA recommendations need more consideration in particular. He emphasized that USGS welcomes the Priority Team's role in ensuring that USGS hears one voice from the Corps concerning LTRMP implementation.

Tom Edwards emphasized that, when something goes wrong with a habitat project, it is important for the EMP to have the flexibility to address the problem, rather than simply continuing down the wrong path. Edwards said that he has pointed out potential problems with

projects and been told that the project design cannot be changed for fear of losing the money allocated to the project. He stressed that the project design process needs to allow project modification without threatening funding.

A-Team Report

In summarizing the A-Team's November 9-10 meeting, Bill Bertrand noted that the EMP-CC already discussed and accepted the team's recommendation to delay action on the joint charter. Bertrand distributed copies of a letter from A-Team chair Tim Schlagenhaft to the EMP-CC co-chairs regarding FY 99 funding. He noted that A-Team members only learned of the projected FY 99 shortfall at their November meeting and are concerned with potential impacts on monitoring activities. In an effort to better understand the situation, Schlagenhaft's letter requests clarification regarding the following two questions:

- Will the LTRMP be assessed more than 30.6 percent of the total HNA budget of \$1.0 million?
- Will the LTRMP be assessed savings and slippage in FY 99 and, if so, will these funds be returned for product development if the program expends all of its FY 99 funds?

Bertrand said the A-Team needs to know if it should meet to discuss rescoping the FY 99 monitoring plan. Dusty Rhodes asked Bob Delaney to describe the implications of the scheduled FY 99 LTRMP funding level. Delaney noted that the Corps first presented a reduced budget scenario approximately two and one-half years ago, without consulting with the Department of the Interior. This prompted USGS to review options for addressing various reduced and fixed budget scenarios. For FY 97 and 98, the EMP-CC recommended that budget shortfalls be accommodated without cutting field station operations. In keeping with this recommendation, the EMTC absorbed all the reductions in FY 97 and 98, including a \$1.0 million cut last year. Delaney stressed that the EMTC cannot absorb the entire cut in FY 99 without extensive restructuring. He explained that the assumptions set forth in the EMTC Strategic Plan are not being met and said he does not anticipate the situation will improve for at least four years, given the likely lag in appropriations following reauthorization. With the LTRMP comprised of approximately 95 percent fixed costs, there simply is no room to absorb increases for inflation, much less to accommodate any budget cuts. He concluded that the LTRMP will have to be restructured to fit within the available budget.

Rhodes suggested that the EMP-CC defer further discussion of the LTRMP budget situation until its February meeting, allowing the EMTC to develop a plan in consultation with the A-Team. Delaney said some FY 99 changes might have to be implemented before then, but said these would not necessarily be irreversible changes. He highlighted key assumptions from the EMTC Strategic Plan, emphasizing that both the short term and longer term implementation strategies in the plan rely on these assumptions:

- The FY 99-02 appropriated funding levels do not fall below the proposed FY 99 level for the LTRMP (\$5.618 million).
- The current Report to Congress recommendations are authorized by the end of the 5-year planning horizon with increasing appropriation levels.

- Agency assessments are appropriately applied and used and do not exceed FY 98 levels.
- The EMTC will continue to expand the spatial and temporal scales of data by leveraging external funding and by using cooperative approaches.
- Should funding levels during the 5-year planning horizon fall below the proposed FY 99 levels and/or reauthorization does not occur, the USGS will work with partners to restructure the LTRMP to optimally fit the fund allocation.
- Extramural funding associated with non-LTRMP but related projects (e.g., GAP Analysis, National Park Mapping, EPA Oil Pollution Control Act, and HREP studies) will continue at or above existing levels.

Delaney said USGS would like to put together a small team with representatives from USGS, the Corps, and the states to develop a restructuring plan for the partners' consideration. In addition, Delaney proposed implementing the following changes in FY 99:

- save \$112,000 by eliminating LTRMP support for a USGS sediment study;
- seek to recoup the \$155,000 HNA assessment by doing work for the HNA; and
- seek to recapture savings and slippage through reprogramming.

The EMTC is proposing the following specific measures for implementation in FY 00:

- transfer approximately \$180,000 in computerized inventory and analysis (CIA) costs to the Upper Mississippi Science Center side of the new, combined center;
- transfer approximately \$160,000 in administration/management staff costs to UMSC functions;
- in return, assume an equivalent dollar amount of costs for scientific staff currently at the UMSC and put that science staff time to work in the LTRMP;
- transfer approximately \$235,000 in bathymetry work to the Corps;
- transfer approximately \$203,000 in sediment work to non-LTRMP portions of USGS;
- seek efficiencies in field station data collection.

According to Delaney, the LTRMP needs to save between \$1.0 million and \$1.3 million per year beginning in FY 00.

In response to a question from Rhodes, Delaney said USGS could not implement the LTRMP at its current FY 99 budget allocation without affecting people. Rhodes asked Delaney to outline the USGS's management plan for living within its current budget. Delaney said the plan would involve cuts to all aspects of the program, including field stations. However, he declined to discuss specifics, saying that he first wants to work with an interagency team to develop priorities. Additional discussion followed regarding several specific budget questions, including various LTRMP funds that were transferred back to the Corps in FY 98 and the likely costs of the Priority Team's recommendations. Corps and USGS staff were unable to provide definitive answers regarding these questions.

Rhodes agreed with Delaney that a small team should be assembled to assess the impacts of current budget constraints and options for responding. After further discussion, EMP-CC members agreed to schedule a special meeting shortly after the holidays to address the LTRMP budget situation. [Note: The meeting was subsequently scheduled for January 14, 1999.] Rhodes committed to provide the EMP-CC with material in advance of the special meeting describing alternatives for addressing the budget shortfall. He stressed that the LTRMP needs a management plan to live within its budget allocation and should not rely on recapturing savings and slippage or other uncertain means of obtaining additional funds. Citing confusion in the preceding discussion regarding LTRMP budget questions, Steve Johnson and Terry Moe requested that the material provided include clear budget numbers upon which both the Corps and USGS agree.

Status and Trends Report Executive Summary

Ken Lubinski said USGS had previously committed to distributing the draft Status and Trends Report executive summary to the EMP-CC for comment by the end of August. He reported that EMTC editors were concerned with some of the revised main chapters submitted by the authors for publication. In response, the editors have been working on further revisions to those chapters and have delayed development of the draft executive summary. Lubinski said the EMTC's new schedule calls for the draft executive summary to be distributed by January 1, 1999.

LTRMP Showcase: Analysis of Catfish Catch

Marv Hubbell introduced Todd Koel, acting team leader of the Havana field station. Hubbell also announced that Illinois has scheduled a meeting for December 15 at which members of the state's two field stations will be discussing their work and be talking with state resource managers on how to link LTRMP data with state management objectives. Hubbell said the meeting is open to anyone wishing to attend.

Koel reviewed LTRMP data on channel catfish collected in all six trend areas from 1989-1997, demonstrating how the data reveal spatial patterns as well as the affects of river stage on the efficiency of different collection gears. Electrofishing catches were significantly higher in Pool 26, the Open River, and the La Grange Pool than in the other trend pools. Noting that the 1993 and 1995 floods produced abundant young-of-the-year classes, Koel also showed how length frequency distributions can be used to follow an age cohort through time. In general, the monitoring data show that catfish are most abundant in side channel border and main channel areas.

Koel also described analytical work he has been doing to explore how operation of the locks and dams affects fish. He has done this by examining the temporal and spatial variability of fish catch data and relating that to gage data. He then developed a model for the Illinois River based on the relationships he identified between hydrograph parameters and fish catch data. As an example, Koel explained that dropping tainter gates over a weekend can create an unnatural three to four foot drop in water level. Koel reviewed the monitoring data in an effort to determine what sort of effect such a drop has on the fishery. He used 41 years of fish catch

data along 286 miles of the Illinois River and examined 42 different hydrological parameters. According to Koel, the most important parameters in terms of impacts on fish were:

- reversals in direction - i.e., from a rise to a fall or vice versa, and
- duration of the high pulse and maximum stage.

The highest catfish catches were associated with high duration and stage with a low number of reversals. Koel said he plans to examine the same hydrological parameters using catfish data for all six trend analysis areas.

Gordon Farabee observed that Koel's data appear to substantiate the theory that flood pulse is important to riverine fish. Farabee said he was happy to see confirmation of this common hypothesis.

Ken Lubinski noted that USGS is trying to get field station staff more involved with data analysis. He asked about the adequacy of field station equipment to support such analytical work. Koel said he required powerful computers to do his analysis and had to use equipment that was not purchased with LTRMP funds. Koel said he was not familiar with the equipment available at the other field stations.

Bob Delaney said USGS appreciates Illinois' efforts to attract field station staff with the education and training needed to do analytical work. Delaney said people involved with monitoring on the Chesapeake Bay have suggested that a long term program should have two analysts for every data collector. He observed that the LTRMP currently has three collectors for every analyst. Dusty Rhodes said the LTRMP faces difficult choices between maintaining monitoring and the need to analyze data.

HREP Showcase: Swan Lake Project

Dave Gates explained that Swan Lake is an important resource on the lower Illinois River. Managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Mark Twain Refuge, Swan Lake runs from river mile 5 to 13 and accounts for 25 percent of the backwater area on an 80 mile stretch of the Illinois River. Gates described three sources of negative impacts to Swan Lake:

- wind action, which generates waves, thereby increasing turbidity and adversely affecting aquatic plants;
- water level fluctuations as great as several feet, which suppress plant production and result in cold water influx that is detrimental to overwintering fish; and
- sedimentation, two-thirds of which comes from the Illinois River and one-third of which comes from the 30 square mile watershed surrounding Swan Lake.

According to Gates, average water depth in Swan Lake in 1940 was three and one-half feet, with maximum depths reaching seven feet. In 1990, the average depth was only two feet, with

the deepest areas measuring three feet. The Corps estimates the sediment accumulation rate at one-half inch per year. The \$10.6 million Swan Lake project includes the following elements:

- a riverside berm to reduce sediment deposition and insulate Swan Lake from river stage fluctuations,
- a mid-lake closure structure that divides the Swan Lake into separate management units,
- two groups of islands, and
- pumps to permit water level control.

Gates focused the remainder of his remarks on the hillside sediment control features, the most unique element of the Swan Lake project. Sediment from the local watershed comes primarily from three agricultural sub-basins. Project designers wanted to reduce hillside sediment delivery by 30 percent and identified three options for achieving this goal:

<u>Option</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
• Corps acquisition of upland areas	\$4.5 million
• Corps construction of containment areas in the lowlands at the delta area	\$3.3 million
• Partnership upland sediment control effort	\$1.0 million

In addition to the expense, Gates noted that the lowlands containment option would have resulted in the loss of aquatic habitat. Under the partnership approach, the Corps provides construction money for sediment control features, such as ponds, terraces, and sediment basins; and local landowners provide the land and operate and maintain the features. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and the local soil and water conservation district are also key partners in the effort. EMP funds are being used for both structural and non-structural features, with the NRCS given discretion as to the mix of features as long as it achieves the 30 percent sediment reduction target. Structural measures are expected to reduce sedimentation by 22 percent and non-structural measures by an additional 11 percent. A 25 percent non-federal cost-share is required for the individual projects. In coordination with the Swan Lake EMP project, Farm Security Act programs are also focusing on the three key agricultural sub-basins and are expected to reduce hillside sediment delivery to the lake by an additional 17 percent.

Jackie Simon, district conservationist for Jersey and Calhoun Counties, praised the Swan Lake project. According to Simon, much of the sediment control work in the watershed surrounding the lake would not be happening without the Corps' contributions through the EMP. She said landowners are participating because they want to decrease erosion, increase productivity, and enhance recreation. As part of the project, the NRCS is working with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the soil and water conservation district to provide technical assistance. NRCS covers 75 percent of the technical assistance costs, with the non-federal partners providing the remaining 25 percent.

In response to a question from Gordon Farabee, Gates said the estimated design life of wetland cells constructed to reduce hillside sediment is 20 to 25 years. Gates emphasized that, even if such features were done two and one-half times to achieve a 50-year project life, the

partnership approach would still be the least expensive alternative for achieving the 30 percent sediment reduction goal. Paul Krone noted that some features, such as grassed waterways, may have a project life closer to 10 years.

Hubbell said Illinois is very interested in watershed efforts at all scales. He said the partnership approach to the Swan Lake HREP has created valuable community awareness, thereby increasing people's commitment to maintaining the individual sediment and erosion control features and doing other things to benefit Swan Lake. Gates said he is quite pleased with the landowners' participation rate. Ninety-five of the 170 landowners in the watershed are participating.

Other Business

Dusty Rhodes reminded EMP-CC members that a special meeting to address the LTRMP budget situation will be held in January. [Note: The special meeting was subsequently set for Thursday, January 14 in St. Louis. The EMP-CC's winter quarterly meeting will be held on Thursday, February 18 in St. Louis. The GLC and UMRBA will meet on February 16 and 17, respectively. The EMP-CC's spring quarterly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20 in the Twin Cities. The GLC and UMRBA will meet on May 18 and 19, respectively.]

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

**EMP-CC Attendance List
November 20, 1998**

Dusty Rhodes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Rick Nelson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island
Bob Delaney	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
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
Tom Pullen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Paul Kowalczyk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jerry Skalak	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Charlene Carmack	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Frank Monfeli	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Owen Dutt	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Mike Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Ken Lubinski	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Bob Clevenstine	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island
Jon Duyvejonck	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee
Dick Steinbach	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain Refuge
Karen Westphall	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain Refuge
Paul Krone	Natural Resources Conservation Service, Champaign
Bob Goodwin	U.S. Maritime Administration, St. Louis
Bill Bertrand	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Todd Koel	Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Natural History Survey
Mike Griffin	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Jim Harrison	Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission
Dan McGuinness	National Audubon Society
Tom Edwards	River Rescue
Doug Hambley	Graef, Anhalt, Schloemer & Assoc., Inc.
Mike Thompson	Graef, Anhalt, Schloemer & Assoc., Inc.
Holly Stoerker	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association