

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: River Resources Coordinating Team (RRCT) Meeting Minutes, 26 October 2005

1. A meeting of the River Resources Coordinating Team was held on 26 October 2005, from 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm at the Rock Island District Office, ABC Conference Room. The agenda is included as Attachment 1. The following people were in attendance (in person or by phone):

George Hardison, Corps, Rock Island, OD-T (Co-chair for Kenn Shoemaker)	Teresa Kincaid, Corps, Rock Island, PM
Gretchen Benjamin, Wisconsin DNR (Co-chair) (phone-in)	Ken Barr, Corps, Rock Island, PM-A
Jim Mick, Illinois DNR (phone-in)	Scott Whitney, Corps, Rock Island, PM-M
Bob Schanzle, Illinois DNR	Marvin Hubbell, Corps, Rock Island, PM-M
Mike Griffin, Iowa DNR (phone-in)	Jodi Staebell, Corps, Rock Island, PM-F
Janet Sternburg, Missouri Department of Conservation	Camie Knollenberg, Corps, Rock Island, PM-F
Bob Clevestine, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Jerry Skalak, Corps, Rock Island, PM-M
Jon Duyvejonck, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Mark Cornish, Corps, Rock Island, PM-A
Ed Britton, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (phone-in)	Steve Johnson, Corps, Rock Island, PM-A
Terry Savko, Illinois Department of Agriculture (phone-in)	Nicole McVay, Corps, Rock Island, PM-A
	Kenny Brenner, Rock Island, OD-T
	Mike Cox, Corps, Rock Island, OD-T
	Marv Martens, Corps, Rock Island, ED-HH
	Clint Beckert, Corps, Rock Island, ED-HW
	Dorene Bollman, Corps, Rock Island, PM-A

2. The group approved the minutes of the May 2005 meeting with minor corrections. The final minutes are included as Attachment 2.

3. Funding Status

Teresa Kincaid provided a status on the Fiscal Year 2006 funding appropriations. The Corps appropriations bill has not been passed and the Corps is currently operating under a continuing resolution authorization. Ms. Kincaid offered to provide specific project funding information as attendees requested. The appropriations bill could have reprogramming restrictions which limit the ability to move funds from one project to another. Regional overhead rates, which require Rock Island District to charge higher overhead rates than necessary for Operations Division, will continue in FY06. In FY05, Rock Island District received some funding as partial payback for higher overhead rates, but indications are that there will be no similar reimbursement in FY06. This has the greatest impact on the Illinois Waterway and the reservoirs. There is the potential for reduced work on Dredged Material Management Plans on the Illinois Waterway and possibly a shortfall of dredging funds.

4. Institutional Arrangements (Teresa Kincaid and Ken Barr)

A meeting was held October 20-21 in St. Louis to discuss institutional arrangements for coordinating all river activities. As currently proposed, there would be a River Council with roughly 30 members at the highest level. The RRCT and FWIC level groups would continue to play key roles in coordinate activities in each Corps district. Attachment 3 shows the current concept for institution arrangements. Ken Barr stated that the Navigation Environmental Coordinating Committee (NECC) would be disbanded with ~1/3 of NECC functions going to the River Council and 2/3 going to RRCT or FWIC. A new team has been proposed to take over RRCT and River Resources Action Team (RRAT) (St. Louis District) functions on the Illinois River. The State of Illinois submitted a letter in support of this. The RRCT and RRAT need to work together to form the Illinois River Group. Teresa Kincaid noted that there would be at least one more iteration before finalization of the institutional arrangements framework. Teresa Kincaid recommended that the RRCT briefly review the current charter/operations procedures of the RRCT to determine if changes are needed to fulfill the proposed role of the RRCT within the updated Institutional Arrangements framework. Mike Griffin asked if the Advisory Panel would include in the institutional arrangements and expressed concern with the veto authority the panel may have. Ken Barr stated that an Advisory Panel is in the draft authorizing language for the Navigation Study. If the authorization is passed with the panel component, Ken Barr stated that he is hopeful that the River Council could form the core of the Advisory Panel and that there would be continuity between the River Council and Advisory Panel.

5. Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee (FWIC) (Bob Clevestine)

Building on the institutional arrangements discussion, the RRCT discussed the increased role for the Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee (FWIC) under the proposed Institutional Arrangements framework. In response to Teresa Kincaid's inquiry about the search for a new chairman, Bob Clevestine indicated that no volunteers have stepped forward. Further discussion of the chairman responsibilities highlighted the expanding role of the FWIC as NECC activities are redistributed to both the RRCT and the FWIC. Clevestine estimated that the position could initially require substantial staff time if the NESP is implemented as proposed. Chair activities would include tracking pool plan progress, project selection and prioritization, and participation as the FWIC representative to the RRCT System Evaluation Team, and other collaboration teams as needed. Clevestine will organize the upcoming FWIC meeting to be held in late November or first week of December. Agenda items will include prioritizing a new list of Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects, Pool Plans, FWIC role under institutional arrangements and chairmanship succession. Agency representatives should come prepared with an agency position regarding their interest or capability to accept the chairmanship. Janet Sternburg asked if the current FWIC mailing list was sufficient to support expanded FWIC activity. Clevestine indicated that the upcoming meeting announcement should be circulated within each agency to ensure that appropriate staff is notified. Corrections to the mailing list should be provided to Clevestine. Discussions of the membership reaffirmed that non-governmental organizations such as the Upper Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri Rivers

Association (UMIMRA); Ducks Unlimited; The Nature Conservancy; Waterfowl USA; and The Conservation Fund have been and will continue to be welcome to participate in the FWIC.

6. Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) (Scott Whitney)

a. In FY06, the Corps will continue PED (Pre-construction Engineering and Design) efforts on NESP projects (Attachment 4). The group discussed the breakdown of the Ecosystem adaptive management funding. A more detailed breakdown of FY06 work plan will be forthcoming. Whitney stressed that the Continuing Resolution Appropriation is restricting momentum for NESP. CRA restrictions on contracting have put some contracts on hold until the Corps funding bill is passed.

b. In FY06, the Corps will be actively working on the following 9 NESP projects in the Rock Island District: Lock 22, LaGrange Lock, Island Building – Pool 11, Fish Passage at L/D 22, Floodplain Restoration – Emiquon West, Water Level Management in Pool 18, Backwater Restoration – IWW Peoria Reach, Island Shoreline Protection, and Reduce Water Level Fluctuations – IWW. Six systemic projects will also continue: Program Management, Systemic Environmental Mitigation, Ecosystem Restoration Plan, Ecosystem Adaptive Management, System Cultural Stewardship, and Fleeting Plan. Whitney provided updates on the following projects:

- Island Building - Pool 11. Additional mussel surveys were conducted in late August/early September. Preliminary information was received from contractor and provided to agency POCs. The Corps is waiting on the final report and then will work with agencies to determine the future of this project.
- Reduce Water Level Fluctuations on the Illinois Waterway. Chuck Theiling and Kevin Landwehr have drafted a document on water level fluctuations on the Illinois River that will be shared with the NECC. Based on preliminary information it appears we may not be proceeding with this based on high estimated project costs with minimal benefits.
- Backwater Restoration – IWW Peoria Reach. There was not much progress on this project last year. Illinois State Water Survey has collected core samples on backwaters and was to use some FY05 funding to process these samples and collect additional ones. This contract was delayed last year and is currently being deferred until after CRA.
- The Emiquon East project with TNC (Project Q1) is no longer proceeding under NESP as NGOs cannot be cost-share sponsors. The project is proceeding under the Corps Continuing Authorities Program as a Section 206 Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project.

c. Whitney mentioned the following upcoming NESP-related meetings. The Science Panel will prepare summaries of their meetings which will be shared with the RRCT and others.

- October 27th - Science Panel Meeting in St. Paul to discuss pool water level management with the Pool 5, Pool 18 and Harlow Teams. Chuck Theiling and Kevin Landwehr are representing the Pool 18 Team.
- November 9th - Science Panel Meeting on Fish Passage at L/D 22 and 26.

- November 15th UMBRA Meeting
- November 16th (morning) EMP-CC Meeting
- Nov 16th (afternoon) Workshop with NECC/EMP-CC to discuss long-range monitoring plans for the UMRS.
- November 17th – NECC/ECC-Navigation Environmental Coordinating Committee/Economics Coordinating Committee (ECC) Meeting. Read-ahead material concerning the FY06 Work Plan will be coming out the second week of November.

7. Environmental Management Program (EMP) (Marvin Hubbell)

a. The President's proposed budget for EMP is \$33.5 million. The House has \$33.5 M and the Senate has \$20 M. FY06 work plans have been developed based on funding of \$20 M.

b. There are funds to initiate one new HREP. The new project will be selected from the prioritized list to be developed by the FWIC and reviewed by the System Evaluation Team (SET). Make sure you have submitted new project information to FWIC for consideration. Hubbell stated that he is hopeful that the new projects will look more at ecological processes and require less intensive management. There was discussion on the FWIC prioritization process. Bob Clevestine said the matrix developed by St. Paul District will be just one tool used in the prioritization process. EMP will work to share the new project information with NESP.

c. We continue work on a project database for all HREP projects. We have all project summary information and are working to attach financial information. This database will be sortable by congressional district and other fields.

d. LTRM. The minimal sustainable program will be \$3.8 million this year. The Corps anticipates \$800k-\$1 M in Additional Program Elements (APEs). The APEs will be reviewed and selected later this week. The goal is to get the APEs started as soon as possible.

e. At the last EMP-CC it was determined that NESP has overtaken many of the Strategic Planning efforts that were envisioned. EMP will now look at strategic issues and the first one identified was system monitoring. This is to be discussed at the upcoming joint NECC/EMP-CC session.

f. The EMP Workshop was held in August. Please provide any comments on the workshop or EMP Design Handbook to Kara Mitvalsky, Rock Island District.

g. Hubbell provided an update on the following HREPs:

- Pool 11 Islands. Construction is nearly complete for this year. The contractor will return in the spring for grading and reseeding.
- Lake Odessa. Anticipate construction contract will be out for bid in April/May 06 with initiation of construction by late summer.
- Rice Lake. Schedule for construction in late FY07. Some issues need to be addressed to stay on schedule.

8. Watershed and Ecosystem Programs (Jodi Staebell)

a. The Draft Illinois River Basin Restoration Comprehensive Plan is tentatively scheduled for public review early in 2006. We are still resolving issues with Corps Headquarters. The report identifies a need for an \$8 billion multi-agency effort to achieve significant restoration in the entire Illinois River basin over the next 50 years. The first increment would be \$155 million through 2011. Projects on the mainstem would initially focus on the Peoria pool and tributaries and then move to the lower pools. The study was not in the President's, Senate's or House's budgets so all funding for this year would require payback on funds not spent in previous years.

b. Jodi Staebell noted that the team is working to select the next group of Critical Restoration Projects. Potential new projects include sediment reduction in tributaries to the Peoria pool. Staebell provided an update on the following mainstem projects:

- Peoria Riverfront. Next step is to sign the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Depending on funding levels, there is the potential for construction award late in FY06.
- Pekin North. The design work is essentially complete. The next steps are getting final Headquarters approval and signing the PCA. Section 401 water quality certification was received from the State of Illinois. This project should be ready for construction in FY07 if funds are available.
- Pekin South. Pending payback funding, there will be some additional work on the design this year. Water quality certification has not been received. This project should also be ready for FY07 construction, pending funding.

c. The group discussed that the mainstem and some tributary projects of the Illinois River Basin Restoration effort would be coordinated with the River Council.

9. Environmental Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) (Camie Knollenberg)

Project teams are preparing FY06 Work Plan for environmental CAP projects. For FY07, these projects will be evaluated using performance based budgeting. Kansas City District is doing planning for some of the CAP projects due to staffing shortages. Mike Griffin asked if congressional attention was still needed to keep these projects moving. Knollenberg replied that only projects specifically named in the appropriations bill are being funded. Knollenberg gave updates on the following projects:

- Blackhawk Bottoms (Section 204). Kansas City District is providing planning services on this project. The team submitted a 35% design package in late August for review. Once comments are addressed and resolved, the package will be provided to the project sponsor (Iowa DNR) for review.

- Emiquon East Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project (Section 206). More detail regarding project alternatives will be provided at the next meeting. The Preliminary Restoration Plan was submitted and approved this summer. The feasibility phase was started late in FY05. Surveys and ground water modeling are being conducted. Roughly \$300k is budgeted for FY06.
- Quincy Bay Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project (Section 206). Kansas City District has drafted the Preliminary Restoration Plan which is currently under review by the Rock Island District. The focus of this project is to address sedimentation in the bay. Pending approval of the PRP, the feasibility phase could be initiated in FY06.

10. Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan (Teresa Kincaid)

The draft report has undergone internal team review and is ready to go to MVD for review and to the Independent Technical Review team. At this time, the report does not recommend implementation as estimated benefits did not exceed estimated costs. The report evaluated setback and buy-out alternatives. If there is interest, states could consider implementing alternatives and plans contained in the report. The study analysis included a constraint that alternatives would result in only minimal increases in hydraulic profiles at the start of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. The UMIMRA requested that the Corps evaluate potential impacts to the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project if the constraint was removed. The study team will brief the Mississippi River Commission on the report conclusions in Vicksburg, MS. This meeting will be open to the public, but there will be no opportunity for comments by others. It is anticipated this hearing will take place in February. In light of Hurricane Katrina, the Corps is taking a closer look at situations such as New Orleans – high risk and associated levels of protection. Public meetings to discuss report findings will held in the following locations: south of St. Louis, Quincy or Burlington, Peoria or south of Peoria, and either Dubuque or somewhere in the St. Paul District. Meetings have not yet been scheduled.

11. Floodplain Management (Jerry Skalak)

a. FEMA support. In FY05, Rock Island District completed modeling for FEMA for use in delineating the floodway on the Illinois Waterway. In FY06, the district will begin working on mainstem levee evaluations. FEMA has provided \$1.15 million for the Corps to begin evaluating mainstem levees on the ILWW, Upper Mississippi, and lower Missouri Rivers. Evaluation results will be used by FEMA to determine if the levees are certifiable. Efforts over the next two years will focus on the ILWW and Miss. The majority of the work will be completed by the Rock Island District, but some tasks will be done by St. Louis District. This funding also covers the Corps participation on the Levee Policy Task Committee and the Prototype Levee database development team.

b. UMRS Flow Frequency Study. In FY05, the Corps received a Data Quality Act Petition. Information was submitted to Corps Headquarters for acceptance, but there has been no word back on the submission. A Freedom of Information Act petition was also received. Corps counsel determined that there was already sufficient data available publicly so no action was required in response to this petition.

c. Floodplain Management Services (FPMS) Program. FPMS is a Corps wide program to respond to technical study needs of the public as they pertain to the floodplain. The costs are 100% Federal and it is a study authority only. The types of activities and studies are varied but mostly involve providing technical advice/analysis. The District is usually funded around \$150K per year. There is one FPMS Special Study effort underway in Rock Island, the hydrologic and sediment modeling for the Joyce's Slough, Clinton, Iowa. A new start approval request for Jack Oak Slough near Cassville is being pursued.

d. Planning Assistance to States. The district is completing the LaSalle I&M Canal study and working to develop the scope for a potential study at Utica.

12. Dredged Material Management Plans (DMMP) (Jerry Skalak)

a. The FY05 performance summary was provided (Attachment 5). One of the key accomplishments was completion of acquisition of the mitigation lands for Kemps-Craigel. The FY06 base program products list is also attached (Attachment 6). Jerry Skalak is looking at different funding scenarios. The plan in Attachment 6 assumes more funding than is currently predicted for the Illinois Waterway. The schedule for all UMR and IWW DMMPs is provided as Attachment 7.

b. Information was provided on the Keithsburg Mitigation Site. The Corps is currently negotiating with the land owner. Corps Office of Counsel verified that the Corps can condemn for mitigation. The landowner has been notified that we can condemn. We continue to try to purchase without condemnation.

c. Two or three DMMPs will be ready for approval at the next RRCT meeting. The Quiver DMMP is currently out for public review. The Spring Valley DMMP and L/D 21 Lower DMMP will be out soon.

d. Channel Maintenance Management Plans (ChaMMPs) (Steve Johnson). Steve Johnson provided an update on ChaMMPs. Preliminary plans have been identified for the Pool 18 and LaGrange ChaMMPs. Public meetings were held on August 30-31 in Keithsburg and Burlington for the Pool 18 ChaMMP. Meeting summaries are being finalized. The team review draft will be out next month. Independent Technical Reviewed is scheduled for the end of December with public review to follow. A public meeting for the LaGrange ChaMMP is scheduled for November 9 in Havana, Illinois. Steve Johnson recommended that RRCT approve Pool 19 and the Dresden/Brandon Road Pool as the next two ChaMMPs to be developed. Pool 19 is proposed for approval because it is expected to be fairly simple due to limited dredging in the pool and would follow a downstream progression from the Pool 18 ChaMMP. The Dresden/Brandon Road Pool was selected over the Peoria Pool because there is so much

proposed activity on the Peoria Pool under NESP. RRCT members unanimously approved the recommendation. Members requested that the next RRCT meeting should include an explanation of the criteria and priorities for scheduling and completing Channel Maintenance Pool Plans.

13. 404 Impact Analysis (Mark Cornish)

a. Mark Cornish reported that the final report of the 2004 Fisheries investigations of Island 241 has been received. A draft report on the LTRMP analysis of dredged placement effects detected by LTRMP in Pool 13 and the LaGrange Pool has also been received. Cornish reviewed the status of the 404 Studies:

- Vegetation. Studies complete
- Invertebrates. Draft Report is expected soon. They are replicating the UMR Study on the Illinois Waterway – LaGrange Pool.
- Mussels. Work is underway in Pool 18 to assess recolonization rates of dredged material placement areas at Jacoby, Camp and Huron Islands. The Willow Bar island site was dropped. This follows previous work in Pool 18 by Ecological Specialists (July 1999 Heidi Dunn) and Jim Eckblad (August 1998). Field work was conducted by Brent McClane and is complete. The report is forthcoming.
- Sediment Transport - Dyed Sand. The draft report is complete. The study found dyed sand up to one mile below the placement site and found dyed sand in off-channel areas. It was also found one year after the material was placed
- Fisheries. The results of the LTRMP analysis of Dredged Placement and Effects Detected by LTRMP Data were inconclusive for adverse impacts. They are working to get results of the 2003 Report, IWW Senate Island, UMR Hogback/Long Island published in the North American Journal of Fisheries Management. This study found that there were no short-term effects of dredged material placement on: diversity, evenness, richness and Abundance of most species at existing dredged material placement sites. The 2004 report on the long term study at Island 241 found no impacts to prey fish and rough fish; however Kirby and Bowler felt that sport fish may be impacted. The report has been distributed for review and results should be discussed at the upcoming FWIC meeting.
- Turtles. The draft report on the turtle study in Pool 13 near Savanna, Illinois is due in December. They found turtle nests (both active and abandoned along with dummy nests) and hatchlings on both the reference and test locations. More nests and hatchlings occurred on the test site but this may be an artifact of the test site being larger. They found that recreational use of beaches did cause nest destruction and abandonment
- Sediment transportation – Clint Beckert has completed the analysis of the Pool 18 samples. Seventy five percent of the draft report is done and it should be finished by the end of June.

b. The Rock Island district has completed 16 reports and an interim report covering 6 areas of scientific interest over 9 years and spent over \$2 million studying effects of dredged material placement in compliance with the conditions of the 404 permit. Bob Clevestine commended the Corps for doing an outstanding job with these studies. Mark Cornish asked that the future of 404 Impact Analysis be discussed at the next FWIC meeting.

14. Dredging Update (Kenny Brenner)

Preliminary results of the 2005 dredging season are presented in Attachment 8. A final summary of the 2005 dredging season will be presented at the next RRCT meeting. Emergency dredging was conducted at Keithsburg (Pool 18) and Beardstown. An after-action report on the Beardstown emergency channel closure has been prepared and includes input from the Coast Guard, industry representatives and others. George Hardison noted that with the growing maintenance dredging backlog there is increased potential for channel closures and emergency dredging. Mike Cox provided a status update of revegetation efforts at Bells Island (Marseilles). The back slope may need some work prior to planting. There is the potential for re-shaping of the back slope and planting next year.

15. Committee to Assess Regulating Structures (CARS) (Kenny Brenner)

As stated at the previous meeting, the Corps is now doing 10-year CARS plans rather than the typical 5 year CARS plans. The next CARS meeting is scheduled for November 29. Following is an update on specific projects (Attachment 9 provides additional details):

- Wing dams at Hogback Island (Pool 21) were completed
- Minor bank protection at Lock 20 Upper Approach was completed.
- Doppler monitoring was conducted at Sabula Lower. High-water post-construction monitoring was conducted and low-water monitoring will also be conducted.
- Head end of LaGrange Island (Pool 21) was rocked as part of the Gardner HREP.
- One island perimeter of the Pool 13 Sabula Reach DMMP was partially constructed this year.

16. Administrative Issues

The next RRCT was scheduled for the afternoon of January 24 or from noon to noon on January 23-24. A draft agenda with hand-outs will be sent out one month prior to the meeting. Any items to be voted on will have read ahead material. Agenda items will include:

- Votes on 2-3 DMMPs
- Vote on HREP prioritization list from FWIC
- NESP – Report findings on Illinois Water Level Fluctuations and Pool 11 Islands mussel survey
- 404 Impact Analysis – what next
- Revisit RRCT purpose/charter
- ChaMMPs results Pool 18 and LaGrange Pool
- ChaMMP criteria for scheduling and completing pool plans
- Dredging summary
- Standing up separate meeting for Illinois Waterway
- Rotating RRCT co-chair
- Possible report on FWS programs from Refuges, Ecological Services and/or Fisheries.

Attachments (10)

Jodi Staebell
RRCT Coordinator

CF (w/ attachments):

PM-M (Dist)

PM-F (Kincaid, Thompson, Staebell,
Schroeder, Knollenberg)

PM-M (Hubbell, Skalak, Whitney)

PM-A (Barr, Bollman, Cornish, Johnson,
McVay)

OD-T (Hardison, Cox, Brenner)

ED-HH (Martens)

ED-HQ (Beckert)

External Distribution:

See Distribution List Attachment 10