

**Minutes of the
Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program
Coordinating Committee**

**October 28, 2020
Quarterly Meeting**

Virtual Meeting

Tim Yager of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. on October 28, 2020. UMRR Coordinating Committee representatives present on the virtual meeting were Sabrina Chandler (USFWS), Brian Chewning (USACE), Mark Gaikowski (USGS), Randy Schultz (IA DNR), Dave Glover (IL DNR), Megan Moore (MN DNR), Matt Vitello (MO DoC), Jim Fischer (WI DNR), Verlon Barnes (NRCS), and Ken Westlake (USEPA). A complete list of attendees follows these minutes.

Minutes of the August 12, 2020 Meeting

Megan Moore moved and Matt Vitello seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the August 12, 2020 UMRR Coordinating Committee meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Regional Management and Partnership Collaboration

Marshall Plumley applauded the partnership for continuing to operate effectively while COVID-19 has presented unique challenges. The partnership continues to have important conversations on programmatic issues and LTRM continues to be implemented despite constraints to travel and sampling.

FY 2020 Fiscal Update

Plumley said UMRR has obligated over \$32.9 million, or 99.26 percent, of its \$33.17 million FY 2020 funds to-date. The program achieved an execution rate above 98 percent for the third consecutive year, despite a number of challenges including an extended government shutdown, record flooding, and the global COVID pandemic. He added that FY 2020 represents the sixth out of the last seven years the program has received full funding and that the program's ability to execute dollars is critical to the success of the program and ensuring that those who appropriate funds have confidence in UMRR.

Plumley explained that contract issues with Bass Ponds HREP at the end of FY 2019 pushed the contract award into FY 2020, which is why actual obligations are much higher for St. Paul District than originally allocated. Plumley commended St. Paul District for getting two projects into construction in FY 2020. Plumley noted that some cost savings on Pool 12 Overwintering and said some funds were shifted from Rock Island District to St. Paul District to award additional contract dollars to McGregor Lake. Plumley explained that the allocation to "regional science and monitoring" looks lower than in typical years, but reflects a repayment of \$5.5 million to the Bass Ponds HREP that was provided in an advance to support LTRM's FY 2020 scope of work at the end of FY 2019.

FY 2020 Reflections

Plumley reflected on the program's accomplishments during FY 2020. He said the partnership undertook a number of efforts that will help inform the 2022 Report to Congress. These included developing statements of significance, reviewing the 2015-2025 strategic and operational plan, updating

the 2013 UMRR Joint Charter of its consultative bodies, and initial planning of the 2022 Report to Congress.

Plumley said the HREP element completed feasibility for one project, initiated design work on two projects and completed design on four others, completed construction on two projects and continued construction on eight projects. Collectively, these projects represent an additional 65,000 acres of habitat restoration potential over the next 10 years. With construction completed in FY 2020, an additional 200 acres can be tallied, but three projects, anticipated to be completed in FY 2022, will raise UMRR's total restored acres considerably. Plumley said that District-based river teams identified sixteen additional projects using the new HREP selection process that incorporated the recently completed HNA-II.

Plumley said that the LTRM element continued baseline data collection and analysis of fisheries, aquatic vegetation, and water quality resources across the system, despite COVID-19 challenges across various agencies. Data collection for the decadal land cover/land use imagery was completed and will serve as a critical dataset to HREP projects and other UMRR efforts. A draft of the Status and Trends 3rd edition was completed and will be foundational to the 2022 Report to Congress. Plumley said the program also furthered integration efforts through active participation of LTRM staff on HREP study teams as well as through broader participation of HREP practitioners in the science meeting to prioritize proposals. He expressed appreciation to all who participated in these various efforts that contribute to the success of the program.

FY 2021 Budget Outlook

Plumley reported that the President's FY 2021 budget and House FY 2021 appropriations bill include \$33.17 million for UMRR, but the Senate recommendation and final appropriation are not yet known. A continuing resolution through mid-December 2020 and inclusion in the President's budget allow the program to spend at the prior year's level. The District is planning for UMRR in FY 2021 at a \$33.17 million funding scenario, with internal allocations anticipated to be as follows:

- Regional Administration and Program Efforts – \$1,250,000
- Regional Science and Monitoring – \$10,400,000
 - Long term resource monitoring – \$5,000,000
 - Regional science in support of restoration – \$3,800,000
 - Regional science staff support – \$200,000
 - Habitat project evaluations – \$1,125,000
 - HNA II/regional project sequencing – \$275,000
- Habitat Restoration – \$21,520,000
 - Rock Island District – \$7,020,000
 - St. Louis District – \$7,125,000
 - St. Paul District – \$7,275,000
 - Model certification – \$100,000

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Plumley said the \$50,000 for public outreach reflects the budget packet developed prior to reengagement of the communication team, and that the amount can be reviewed.

UMRR Ten-Year Plan

Plumley overviewed changes to UMRR's 10-year outlook since the August 12, 2020 UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting. Repair work to flood damage at Harper's Slough was added, but funding issues are not fully resolved. MVP anticipates beginning work on the first HREP from the newly identified fact sheets in early FY 2022, but a project has not yet been selected. MVR is scheduled to start feasibility at Quincy Bay in August 2021. Jim Fischer asked what progress has been made on the Trempealeau fact sheet and said that it is an important area with water quality issues that Wisconsin DNR would like to see addressed. Plumley said recent discussions identified four potential options to address existing issues at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge HREP. He noted that a site visit is being considered and that additional discussions are needed before pursuing funding. Sabrina Chandler agreed and said she was pleased with the discussion so far.

WRDA 2020

Plumley said that, in its WRDA 2020 measure, the House includes an increase to UMRR's annual appropriation authorization for HREPs from \$22.75 million to \$40 million and for LTRM from \$10.42 million to \$15 million. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's version does not contain a similar provision. If enacted, FY 2023 would be the first opportunity for the Corps to prepare a budget scenario at the increased authorized appropriation level. Plumley said passage would not preclude the program from requesting additional FY 2021 work plan dollars.

Sabrina Chandler said that, in recent years with continuing resolutions, the Senate has sometimes moved forward with the House report on Interior appropriations bills, but that may not happen with legislation as significant as WRDA. She added that USFWS staff are already at workload capacity and that nearly doubling the funding for HREPs would not be manageable without hiring additional staff, which is not currently an option. Chandler said discussion is needed regarding how the program would implement any additional funds. Plumley agreed and said other partners have expressed concern about additional capabilities and that any increase in authorization would likely necessitate a strategic planning effort to determine how to make use of additional resources.

Statements of UMRS Significance

Plumley said the UMRR Coordinating Committee is reviewing the revised statements of significance, including on a September 29, 2020 call. Andrew Stephenson said UMRBA's Board will review the statements over the winter. The UMRR Coordinating Committee will then consider the Board's feedback and prepare a revised version for consideration of endorsement at its February 2021 meeting.

HREP Selection Process Guidance Documents

Plumley said that, at its August 12, 2020 quarterly meeting, the UMRR Coordinating Committee called for additional review of the UMRR HREP selection process guiding documents. Ultimately, the Committee added i) a description of the non-federal sponsors' roles and responsibilities to the goals, roles, and responsibilities document and ii) an action to inform non-federal sponsors and the public of future HREP project development activities in the process diagram. Following the revisions, Coordinating Committee members submitted their endorsement of the final documents via email on September 25, 2020.

UMRR Joint Charter Review

Plumley said that, at its October 22, 2020 meeting, the A-Team discussed modifications to its roles and responsibilities outlined in the UMRR Advisory Group Charter. Plumley acknowledged UMRBA's

assistance in creating a survey to help guide the A-team discussion. The survey asked A-Team members to consider the current and historic role of the A-Team, topics the A-Team is best suited to address, and future opportunities in which the A-Team may have the expertise and energy to engage. The A-Team plans to submit recommended revisions to the UMRR Coordinating Committee this winter for consideration at the Coordinating Committee's February 24, 2021 meeting. The next step in updating the Joint Charter will be a review of the roles and responsibilities for the UMRR Coordinating Committee. Megan Moore echoed Plumley's appreciation for UMRBA's efforts to help guide the A-Team discussion. In response to a question from Megan Moore, Kirsten Wallace explained that NRCS and USGS abstained from endorsing the HREP guidance documents and that they have previously expressed reluctance in weighing in on habitat project decisions. Stephenson noted that the endorsement request was for the HREP selection process overall and not for specific habitat projects. He said a follow up call to discuss the roles and responsibilities for Coordinating Committee members, as outlined in the Charter, may provide more clarity on the issue.

2022 Report to Congress

Plumley said that, on September 29, 2020, the UMRR Coordinating Committee held a virtual meeting to discuss the 2022 Report to Congress. The Committee discussed the purpose of the RTCs and how the report might be used (including targeting specific audiences) as well as a preliminary report development schedule and content. Plumley said he is working with Brian Chewning on the schedule to ensure vertical team alignment in the Corps. An ad hoc team is scheduled to meet on November 3, 2020 to further develop the scope and schedule as well as refine the ideas for content and organization. Members of the ad hoc team include:

Jeff Houser	Karen Hagerty	Brian Markert
Matt Vitello	Marshall Plumley	Andrew Stephenson
Sabrina Chandler	Jill Bathke	Kirsten Wallace

Ken Westlake suggested revising the schedule to reflect that concurrence on the statements of significance from the UMRR Coordinating Committee is anticipated for February 2021. Stephenson suggested a similar revision for the 2015-2025 Strategic Plan Review process, adding that the discussions to date have proved fruitful in many ways, but the effort is not yet complete. The next step is for a survey regarding the 2015-2025 UMRR Strategic and Operational Plan to be distributed to UMRR partners in the near future. The survey will seek input regarding progress achieved since 2015, priorities for the next five years, and the issue areas to include in the 2022 Report to Congress. Plumley agreed, and said the strategic plan review helped identify the partnership's accomplishments and will help focus priorities for the next four to five years.

Communications

UMRR Communications Team

Jill Bathke said that she and Rachel Perrine are co-leading the UMRR communications team. The team has held monthly meetings since August 2020 where they have recapped past success and identified priorities and existing communication materials. The team's first activity is to draft a UMRR flyer, with a goal for seeking the UMRR Coordinating Committee's approval in summer 2021. The flyer will highlight the historic, cultural, ecological, and economic benefits of the UMRR in the context of water, wildlife, and way of life. The team is working with a St. Paul District Visual Information Specialist to draft the flyer and inspiration is being drawn from existing outreach materials. Bathke said the flyer will be graphics driven with a focus on clarity for broad audiences including the general public and legislators. Andrew Stephenson said the draft program flyer utilizes language outlined in the statements of significance, emphasizing the value of that document. The team's next meeting is scheduled for

November and will include discussion on revisiting the communication and outreach plan, refining the Lower Illinois River Pilot Project, and inventorying additional communication materials.

External Communications and Outreach

Communication and outreach activities in the fourth quarter of FY 2020 include the following:

- Sabrina Chandler said that she participated in the Mississippi River Parkway Commission's annual meeting, which was held virtually. The meeting included a session on clean water with a recorded presentation from Congresswoman Betty McCollum. Representative McCollum outlined language in the House's FY 2021 consolidated appropriations measure that directs USEPA to develop a Mississippi River Restoration and Resiliency Strategy (MRRRI) with the Corps, Departments of Agriculture and Interior, FEMA, and NOAA as well as state, local, and tribal governments, and business and nonprofit stakeholders. Sabrina Chandler said she was able to provide a brief history of UMRR and the program's benefit to the Upper Mississippi River Basin to 200 session attendees. Kirsten Wallace explained that, while the MRRRI language has drawn confusion, it has created opportunity to discuss UMRR and other important work, particularly with the level of science-based information about habitat needs assessment and resilience. Olivia Dorothy said American Rivers is partnering on the MRRRI effort and explained that the intent is for an additive program similar to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to allow additional funds to be appropriated along the entire Mississippi River, including to existing programs such as UMRR. Dorothy said that MRRRI partners recognize the long-standing efforts of UMRR and have a desire to expand restoration efforts on the lower river.
- Chandler said she had additional conversations with Congressional staffers and participated in Rep. Ron Kind's advisory board the week of October 19, 2020 during which she discussed UMRR.
- Mark Gaikowski said UMESC and other partners participated in the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative's (MRCTI) annual meeting on September 16, 2020. UMRR and various elements were recognized by that group and support was expressed for continuation of the program.

UMRR Showcase Presentations

FY 2020 HREP Accomplishments

Angela Deen said MVP awarded construction contracts for Bass Ponds HREP and the first half of McGregor Lake. McGregor Lake and Lower Pool 10 will be utilizing dredged material from the 9-foot navigation channel. The beneficial use of the material for McGregor Lake resulted in significant cost savings for the O&M program by avoiding double-handling placement costs. Deen said USFWS staff have seen record numbers of visitors on the trails during the COVID-19 pandemic including bike commuters, hikers, birders, anglers, and hunters. MVP is placing additional signage at its HREPs during construction and is increasing UMRR-related social media posts to conduct outreach.

Julie Millhollin said MVR submitted the Steamboat Island feasibility plan to MVD for review. A multi-agency workshop was convened for the Lower Pool 13 habitat project and a kick-off meeting was held for the Green Island habitat project. A design contract is anticipated to be awarded for Keithsburg Island HREP in FY 2021. MVR awarded six contracts under a blanket purchase agreement for forestry work and timber stand improvement at various HREPs. An open house presentation video on Steamboat Island and a video showing rip rap placement at Beaver Island were well-received by the public. In response to a question from Jennie Sauer, Kara Mitvalsky said trees planted at Huron Island HREP include river birch, bitternut hickory, northern pecan, shellbark hickory, common hackberry, common persimmon, honey locust, Kentucky coffeetree, black walnut, American sycamore, swamp

white oak, bur oak, pin oak, American basswood, and overcup oak. Trees were planted in 3 different sizes at 2 different elevations with each tree tagged and monitored to understand what size and elevation and species can survive best in these floodplain conditions. Shrubs planted at Huron Island include common buttonbush, eastern redbud, red osier dogwood, green hawthorn, elderberry, hibiscus, common elderberry, common buttonbush, red osier dogwood, and sandbar willow. Mitvalsky said aquatic plantings at Huron Island are also being studied by ERDC staff. The first planting occurred in 2019 and that floating plants survived best following extended high water, so additional floating plants were planted in 2020. The study will continue for the next few years and includes 16 species that are in culture and/or have been planted. Brian Markert said the Corps has used contracts to collect seed and grow trees ahead of plantings and that sub eco types of seed are important for some species to ensure they are suited to elevations and growing conditions at projects.

In response to a question from Jim Fischer, Millhollin said the Corps has had discussions, but have not yet installed live camera streams at projects. Fischer said it may be an opportunity to reach a wider audience. Mark Gaikowski said USGS has used web cams at stream gages, connected with a wireless modem, suggesting that the technology could be used to support HREPs. Sabrina Chandler said the Refuge has a camera in Pool 7 that has been valuable, but requires substantial work to maintain. Markert said the Corps is on the cusp of being able to employ some camera technology. In response to a question from Andrew Stephenson, Millhollin said the Corps plans to continue using blanket purchase agreements in the future because of the recent success. Chandler expressed appreciation for the work that went into finding a solution to improve tree plantings on habitat projects.

Brian Markert said MVS is still responding to impacts related to flooding in 2019, making this year one of the tougher years in recent memory to get full teams assembled and coordinate necessary activities to get projects started. MVS readied the Oakwood Bottoms habitat project report for public comment. A multi-agency virtual project kick-off was convened for Yorkinut Slough. Instead of a two or three day in-person meeting, activities were spread out over weeks in small segments to accommodate virtual participation. Harlow Island Phase 1 plans and specs are complete and the project is ready to advertise, pending funding availability. Crains Island is the first open river project to reach construction. A contract was awarded in February to allow time for tree clearing to lessen impact to bats. At Clarence Cannon, work was completed on interior and exterior water control structures. Some reforestation work and adjustments to electronics are needed at Ted Shanks. Markert shared a video highlighting work on the Oakwood Bottoms habitat project sponsored by U.S. Forest Service. In response to a question from Ken Westlake, Markert said the Yorkinut Slough NEPA Environmental Assessment is anticipated in early calendar year 2022.

[Note: Oakwood Bottoms video link:

https://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Portals/54/docs/pm/Reports/EA/Oakwood%20Bottoms/Oakwood%20Bottoms%20GTR%20Feasibility%20Report%20Public%20Review%20Info.mp4?ver=R65zB41cLMnTh8yuLUL_fg%3d%3d.

All three districts are finalizing the newly selected HREP fact sheets.

Evidence of Regime Shifts in the LTRM Fisheries Data

Kristen Bouska summarized the findings of a recently published manuscript on evidence of regime shifts in the LTRM fisheries data. Three alternate fish regimes have been described in the UMR: diverse native fish community, common carp dominant, and silver and bighead carp dominant. Under resilience theory, stable functional biomass indicates high resilience and shifting functional biomass suggests low resilience or regime shift. Once in a regime, conditions are maintained by reinforcing mechanisms that keep it from shifting to another regime. Biomass of common carp has declined in five of the six study reaches and bighead and silver carp have increased in the three lower reaches. Most

study reaches started as a common carp dominant state, though it is uncertain if they were stable in that state. Evidence suggests that Pool 8 and Pool 4 have a highly resilient diverse native fish community and Pool 13 is transitioning in that direction. La Grange and Pool 26 have moved toward silver carp dominance. Invasive fish-dominant communities would require management actions to reduce biomass to a threshold adequate for a regime shift to desired native fish communities. Bouska said there has been little scientific work regarding regime shifts in river systems and that this current study is only possible due to long term data collected through LTRM. This paper provides evidence that the resilience concepts are applicable to river systems and can help identify thresholds and potential feedbacks that management actions can target.

Jennie Sauer said that Illinois' long term electrofishing (LTEF) program adopted LTRM methods in 2010 and is increasing sampling in the Illinois River. In response to a question from Sauer, Bouska said the number of years of data required to detect regime shifts is contingent on the variability of the system. Bouska said LTRM data provide the necessary before and after reference points regarding the hypothesized shift, which was critical for detecting trends. Bouska suggested looking at data available from LTEF reaches near the edge of invasion of silver and bighead carp. In response to a question from Lauren Salvato, Bouska said detection probability and gear bias toward different species may be a factor in biomass thresholds and that additional research and monitoring is needed to determine if, as common carp decline, the system will shift to silver and bighead carp dominance or remain in a co-dominant state.

Long Term Resource Monitoring and Science

FY 2020 4th Quarter Report

Jeff Houser said accomplishments of the fourth quarter of FY 2020 include publication of the following manuscripts and completion report:

- Regime change in a large-floodplain river ecosystem: patterns in body-size and functional biomass indicate a shift in fish communities
- Integrating perspectives to understand lake ice dynamics in a changing world
- Smallmouth buffalo (*Ictiobus bubalus*) growth across a 1200-km human use and ecological disturbance gradient in the Upper Mississippi River

Houser said the 2020 systemic UMRS aerial survey was completed on August 11-26, 2020, marking the fourth decadal imagery collection. He noted that data collection was completed quickly because of excellent water levels and weather, but that COVID-19 restrictions required special approval to complete the work and have two people in the plane. Natural color and near-infrared spectral imagery will produce land use/land cover dataset for use by resource managers and researchers. Houser said that Larry Robinson is retiring in January 2021 and that Benjamin Finley worked with Ben Lubinski to organize data collection and will assume management of the land cover data.

Status and Trends 3rd Edition

Houser said a draft of the UMRR Status and Trends Report 3rd Edition was submitted to the A-Team for review. The report provides a detailed quantitative assessment of the long-term trends and current status of the UMRS based on 40 indicators of ecosystem health and resilience. Assessing the status of various indicators was done by either comparing them to externally developed criteria where available (e.g., water quality) or through spatial and temporal comparisons within the system (e.g., identifying reaches with the greatest or least prevalence of aquatic vegetation). Houser expressed appreciation to the chapter leads, contributing authors, Jason Rohweder for creating maps, and all the field stations past

and present for their data collection, upon which the report is based. Houser explained that the report is structured in ten chapters:

- Chapter one will outline the purpose, objectives, and foundations of the report.
- Chapters two through seven involve assessing the status and trends of the UMRS from 1993 to 2019 for the following:
 - Hydrology: all hydrologic indicators (e.g., annual min/max/mean discharge, duration of high flows), which affect all other aspects of the river, had significantly increasing trends.
 - Geomorphology: geomorphic indicators include new land form surface area gained and backwater bed elevation change. New land form gain was similar to gains from 1989 to 2000 and 2000 to 2010. Backwater bed elevation increased at the pool-scale from 1997 to 2017.
 - Land/water cover: leveed areas are relatively stable across the system and there is a persistently strong gradient in area behind levees across the system. Continued decline in forest area in all reaches except for the Unimpounded Reach, where some areas along the river channel showed increases. Aquatic areas showed increased side channel areas and increased contiguous floodplain lake areas.
 - Water quality: total phosphorous declined, but little change was seen in total nitrogen. Both indicators remain above water quality criteria. Suspended solids have declined in most study reaches. Algae are stable and high in areas, indicating eutrophication, but have decline in Pool 4, Pool 8, and the La Grange Pool. Backwater hypoxia is more frequent in summer than winter and small long-term increase was seen in Pool 4.
 - Aquatic vegetation: submersed aquatic vegetation (SAV) increased in upper and lower Pool 4, Pool 8, and Pool 13. SAV remains scarce in other reaches. Emergent vegetation, especially wild rice, has increased in Pool 4 and Pool 8, but not Pool 13.
 - Fisheries: Comparison of native to nonnative biomass show increasing bigheaded mass dominance in Pool 26 and La Grange. No bigheaded carp have been detected through LTRM in Pools 4, 8, and 13. Forage fishes are less abundant in Pools 4, 8, and 13 and more abundant in Pool 26, the Open River, and La Grange Pool. Notable trends for lentic fishes include increases in Pool 4, 8, and the Open River and an order or magnitude decrease in La Grange Pool over the period of record.
- Chapter eight covers using long-term data to understand the causes and consequences of long-term changes in water clarity and vegetation in the UMRS. A decline in suspended solids and increase in submersed vegetation likely indicates a feedback mechanism, which may also be associated with reduced sediment disturbance from a decline in common carp abundance. A period of low discharge (2006, 2007, and 2009) may have also been important for vegetation recovery. Improvement was especially pronounced in the impounded area of Pool 8 and corresponds to UMRR HREP islands constructed there. Pool 13 has higher suspended sediment and lower aquatic vegetation, and a Lower Pool 13 HREP is in development.
- Chapter nine will address how and why the UMRR LTRM played a key role during the bigheaded Asian carp invasion in North America. LTRM provides data at scales of time and space that permit unique insights into the bigheaded carp invasion. Contributions include improved understanding of the influence of invasive carp on native filter feeding species, sport fishes, and full native fish communities, their effects on local limnology and lower trophic levels, and greater understanding of shifting ecological states as well as potential control methods, among others.
- Chapter ten will provide a summary and synthesis of the preceding chapters.

The report will include summary tables to concisely convey changes to the indicators including increasing and decreasing trends, stable conditions, and a dynamic status that indicates change over time that did not have linear patterns from start to finish of data collection. Houser said that the UMRS is a spatially complex and spatially dynamic river that will continue to change as it adapts to the altered hydrology caused by ongoing changes in land use, levee distribution, and navigation modifications to the river. He said the report, combined with other recent and existing reports, provides a sufficient groundwork for discussion of a desired future condition for the UMRS.

In response to a question from Megan Moore, Jennie Sauer said that both suspended sediment concentration and flow normalized concentration can be used to estimate load and flow-normalized load. In response to a question from Karen Hagerty, Kristen Bouska said common carp, silver carp, bighead carp and grass carp are included in non-native commercially valued fishes. In response to a question from Andrew Stephenson, Houser said detection of bighead and silver carp through means other than LTRM electrofishing may be covered in the chapter on invasive carp.

USACE LTRM Report

Karen Hagerty said that, if UMRR continues to receive its full authorized funding level, UMRR's FY 2021 LTRM allocation would be \$6.3 million (\$5.0 million for base monitoring and \$1.3 million for analysis under base). Approximately \$132,000 is anticipated in carry-over funds from UMESC and the states. An additional \$2.5 million will be available for science in support of restoration and management. Five items scheduled to be funded include the final year of IWW monitoring, reimbursing state costs incurred from implementing COVID protocols, adjusting FY 2020 proposal costs for state rate changes, graphical assistance on the Status and Trends Report from Jason Rohweder, and covering exceedance in FY 2020 LTRM costs of approximately \$130,000.

Hagerty said there will not be a request for research proposals in FY 2021 given the amount of ongoing work. Potential items for remaining funds include the "stable states" proposal, funding two years of land cover/land use processing, or other efforts regarding landscape patterns, resilience, or ecohydrology. Funding ideas will be discussed with the A-Team and UMRR Coordinating Committee at a future meeting.

Hagerty said that changes to the UMRR website URL have disrupted existing bookmarks, but that the website is functional and the shortcut link still works: www.mvr.usace.army.mil/UMRR. In response to a question from Stephenson, Hagerty said the link on the UMRR business cards was not affected.

A-Team Report

Nick Schlessler said the A-Team met via webinar on October 22, 2020. Topics discussed included continued impacts of COVID-19 on agency policies and work during the 2020 field/work season, macroinvertebrate declines, progress on the Status and Trends Report 3rd Edition, and potential modifications to the roles and responsibilities of the A-Team outlined in the 2013 UMRR joint charter of consultative bodies. At the meeting, Stephenson provided an overview of results of a survey of present and past A-Team members regarding the roles and responsibilities of the A-Team.

The A-Team identified four issues to resolve in updating the charter. The four issues include the following:

- Clearly define frequently used terms in the initial paragraph.
- Retain references to website review.
- Elaborate on the A-Team's roles in implementing "other activities identified in UMRR-CC strategic plan.

— Better define public participation, including considering the use of “listening sessions.”

A small group (Karen Hagerty, Jennie Sauer, and Nick Schlessler) was tasked with drafting language for the A-Team’s review at its winter meeting in early 2021.

Schlessler said Jeff Houser requested input from the A-Team on overview tables that present a large amount of trend data concisely for inclusion in the Status and Trends Report 3rd Edition. A-Team members agreed to compile agency feedback by November 13, 2020. Shawn Giblin provided an update on creation of an *ad hoc* team to identify potential questions to address around macroinvertebrate (particularly burrowing mayfly) declines. Members include representatives from each state and a professor from UW-La Crosse. The A-Team’s next meeting will be held via webinar in January or February 2021. [Note: The A-Team’s winter meeting was held on January 25, 2021.] Houser expressed appreciation to the A-Team for the valuable feedback they provided during the discussion.

Habitat Restoration

Angela Deen said MVP’s planning priorities include Reno Bottoms and Lower Pool 10. Reno Bottoms is planning to evaluate alternatives using the forest succession model. The modeling will simulate forest response under different hydrology, climate change, and invasive species conditions. In lieu of an open house event, a video for public distribution will be released on YouTube. Cost benefit analysis on alternatives is underway for Lower Pool 10, and TSP selection is anticipated in fall 2020. The district’s design priority is addressing repairs on three islands and backwater areas at Harpers Slough and supplemental funds were requested for construction. Construction at Conway Lake is approximately 80 percent complete. A virtual ground breaking ceremony for Bass Ponds is scheduled for November 6, 2020 and will be broadcast via Facebook Live. A construction contract was awarded for McGregor lake at the end of FY 2020. Four of the five recently selected HREP fact sheets have been approved and the first project is anticipated to begin in FY 2022. In response to a question from Megan Moore, Deen said the next project will likely be Lower Pool 4 or Weaver Bottoms. Marshall Plumley said that the new HREP selection process was originally thought to occur every five years, but if the program authorization is increased and additional funds are appropriated, additional projects would need to be identified sooner.

Julie Millhollin said MVR’s planning priorities include Steamboat Island, Lower Pool 13, Green Island, and Pool 12 Forestry. Steamboat Island is at MVD awaiting final approval. The Lower Pool 13 PDT is drafting chapters for a 35 percent review milestone and is working on the water level management feature. A virtual open house video is being produced for Green Island and is anticipated to be posted on October 30, 2020. The Pool 12 Forestry PDT is scheduling a kick off workshop in December 2020. MVR is working towards awarding a design contract for Keithsburg Island in FY 2021, pending a dam permit. If plans for that project do not proceed as expected, the District will advance Steamboat Island Stage I. Tree planting is ongoing at Pool 12 Overwintering Stages II and III and is scheduled to occur on Huron Island Stage II in November 2020. ERDC staff planted aquatic vegetation at Huron Island Stage III. Dredging continues at Beaver Island. MVD approved the Quincy Bay fact sheet and provided comments on the fact sheets for the Lower Pool 11 and Pool 18 Forestry habitat projects.

Brian Markert reported that MVS’s planning priorities include Oakwood Bottoms and Yorkinut Slough. The Oakwood Bottoms feasibility report is ready for public comment. Yorkinut Slough study alternatives formulation is underway. Planning for West Alton Islands is anticipated to kick off in early FY 2021. A design contract for Piasa and Eagles Nest was awarded in September 2020. Crains Island Phase II is in design. Plans and specs are finalized for Harlow Island for a future outyear award. Earth work and pile removal is underway at Crains Island and the District anticipates adding an \$800,000 option to the contract. The pre-bid site visit was attended by more contractors than any other project. Pump station work and berm setback at Clarence Cannon is anticipated to be completed in the near future. Markert expressed appreciation to the USFWS for allowing work to continue past the shutdown

period to make use of good soil conditions. Reforestation and warranty work continue at Ted Shanks. Three fact sheets with USFWS as sponsor were sent to MVD for approval and other fact sheets will be submitted to MVD for approval following sponsor review. Chris Erickson and Jim Fischer expressed appreciation to all the District HREP managers for their continued work on projects despite challenges. Sabrina Chandler concurred and said she was impressed to see how much the program continues to achieve.

Other Business

Upcoming quarterly meetings are as follows:

- **February 2021 – Remote**
 - UMRBA quarterly meeting – February 23
 - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – February 24**
- **May 2021 – TBD**
 - UMRBA quarterly meeting – May 25
 - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – May 26**
- **August 2021 – TBD**
 - UMRBA quarterly meeting – August 10
 - **UMRR Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – August 11**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

**UMRR Coordinating Committee Virtual Attendance List
October 28, 2020**

UMRR Coordinating Committee Members

Brian Chewning	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Sabrina Chandler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Mark Gaikowski	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Dave Glover	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Randy Schultz	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Megan Moore	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Matt Vitello	Missouri Department of Conservation
Jim Fischer	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Verlon Barnes	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Ken Westlake	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5

Others In Attendance

Sharon Sartor	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, HQ
Jim Cole	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Thatch Shepard	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Ben Robinson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Leann Riggs	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Bryan Taylor	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Angela Deen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jill Bathke	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Chris Erickson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Terry Birkenstock	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jon Hendrickson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Col. Steve Sattinger	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marshall Plumley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Andy Barnes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Kim Thomas	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Karen Hagerty	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jodi Creswell	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Julie Millhollin	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Davi Michl	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Jesse Ray	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Rachel Hawes	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Roger Perk	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Kara Mitvalsky	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Anthony Heddlesten	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Brian Markert	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Jasen Brown	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Rachel Steiger	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Ben McGuire	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Johnson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Lane Richter	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Janet Buchanan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Chuck Theiling	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ERDC
Sara Schmuecker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IIFO
Amber Schorg	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IIFO
Tyler Porter	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IIFO
Matt Mangan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IIFO

Tim Yager	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Neal Jackson	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMRCC
Jeff Houser	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jennie Sauer	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
KathiJo Jankowski	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Molly Van Appledorn	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Nate De Jager	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Danelle Larson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jennifer Dieck	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Kristen Bouska	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
John Delaney	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
JC Nelson	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Chad Craycraft	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Kirk Hansen	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Nick Schlessler	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Neil Rude	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Steve Galarneau	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Olivia Dorothy	American Rivers
John Howard	City of Winona, MN
Doug Blodgett	The Nature Conservancy
Gretchen Benjamin	The Nature Conservancy
Marian Muste	University of Iowa
Kirsten Wallace	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Andrew Stephenson	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Mark Ellis	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Lauren Salvato	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association