

**MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD**

**SUBJECT:** Meeting Summary of River Resources Coordinating Team (RRCT), March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

A meeting of the RRCT was held on Wednesday March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from 9 a.m. – Noon via conference call and webinar. The following individuals participated in the meeting:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Bill Franz	EPA
Bob Clevenstine	US FWS
Charles H Theiling MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers
Charles Spitzack	US Army Corps of Engineers
Christine Brown	US Coast Guard
Ed Britton	US FWS
Ellen Milliron	US Army Corps of Engineers
Janet Sternburg	MO Dept of Conservation
Jim Fischer	WI DNR
Karen H Hagerty MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers
Kenneth A Barr MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers
Kirk Hansen	IA DNR
Kirsten Mickelsen	UMBRA
Lonn McGuire	US Army Corps of Engineers
Marvin E Hubbell MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers
Mark Cornish	US Army Corps of Engineers
Mike Griffin	IA DNR
Mike Steuck	IA DNR
Nicole M Manasco MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers
Roger A Perk MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers
Scott D Whitney MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers
William T Gretten MVR	US Army Corps of Engineers

**Approve Agenda: Roger Perk and Janet Sternburg**

The agenda was approved as presented. With no old business, Mr. Perk asked for introductions around the table.

**Environmental Management Program (EMP) Updates: Marvin Hubbell**

There is \$19 million for EMP in the President's budget for FY12. This is \$2.5 million more than last FY. There are many cuts of Corps programs in the President's budget, but EMP has been cut less than some others.

A regional review plan was developed to address streamlining the new review procedures given to the Corps. The third revision of the plan is being prepared for submittal to MVD.

The EMP report to Congress was completed in December and we are awaiting a response from Corps headquarters. Copies of the report will be distributed to partnering agencies next week. It is possible that headquarters will request changes to the report, but those will be in the form of addendums to the report.

Transition plan from EMP to NESP was submitted to headquarters. No comments have been received back at this point. The report included the status of all EMP projects by district and as well as the similarities and differences between EMP and NESP programs.

***ACTION ITEM: Marvin Hubbell to send Bill Franz four copies of each of the recent reports completed for EMP.***

The HREP Strategic Planning Committee will meet for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in May.

Fox Island – The construction contract has been awarded. The water level must go down before work can begin.

Rice Lake – A construction contract award will be made in September.

Pool 12 overwintering project – The DPR will be completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of FY12. The construction contract will be awarded in FY12.

The LIDAR is 40 – 50% complete. The weather has to cooperate before it can be finished. The water levels must be low and it cannot be flown during the “leaf on” season.

#### **NESP Planning Updates: Scott Whitney**

Scott Whitney has accepted a position with MVD as a flood risk manager. His last day in his current role will be March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011. His position will not immediately be back filled. Chuck Spitzak will step in to continue moving items forward on NESP.

NESP funding is uncertain. The last year NESP was in the President's budget was 2001. Last fall, there was a working plan for \$3 million and up to \$6 million. However, there is \$1.6 million in hand as a result of the Continuing Resolution Act and carry over. That money will be depleted within a couple of pay periods.

Feedback is needed from RRCT participants on the fleeting plan that was sent out via email around the first of March.

Jim Fischer asked if any of the shelf-ready NESP projects could be completed under EMP. Mr. Whitney answered that they could not because EMP does not have the authority to work on Navigational Structures which is what most of the shelf-ready projects are. There are a couple more traditional projects that could be implemented under EMP but they are not shelf-ready and the cost share agreements would have to be put into place.

### **Reach Planning – Ken Barr**

The individual reach plans were completed and briefed out at the last quarterly meetings. The whole system report is open for comment.

***ACTION ITEM: Ken Barr will place a “DRAFT” watermark on the cover of the report so that anyone reviewing it will know that it is still open to revision.***

**FIWC Chairmanship** – The FWS will give up the chair or co-chair position with the intent of re-nominating a FWS staff member in a few years. The RRCT members discussed some of the high priority items for the FWIC in the next year to year and a half. Here are the items that were mentioned; channel maintenance, refining objectives, EMP project prioritization, water quality indicators in the Mississippi, Hydropower, exotic species, fish passage, floodplain landowners partnership, climate change adaptation, and coordination with the RRAT and Illinois Working Group.

It was decided that the FWIC group should hold a meeting to discuss potential chair candidates. The Corps is willing to staff the chairmanship if the FWIC is agreeable to that plan.

***ACTION ITEM: Chuck Theiling will take the lead in scheduling a FWIC meeting to discuss nomination and elect a new FWIC chair.***

### **Corps Funding Outlook – Roger Perk**

In regards to the FY12 President’s budget, Operations is funded close to its normal level. Construction and General Investigations (GI) is lower than normal. GI is usually between \$9 and \$10 million. In the President’s budget GI is listed at \$400,000. Construction is funded at \$23 million and is limited to Greenbelt and the Des Moines / Raccoon Creek projects. There is \$108 million in the budget for Continuing Authorities Projects nationwide. The President’s budget is at \$53.5 million for the Mississippi River and \$32 million for the Illinois River. The following is a breakdown of funded items; Saylorville - \$5million, Red Rock - \$8.1 million (up from FY10), Coralville - \$4.5 million, and Inspections of Completed Works - \$370,000 (down a lot from FY10). Unlike most other agencies, the Corps is line item funded so money cannot be shifted around as some other agencies can do.

**Regionalization** – Project planning and Real Estate will be more regionalized in the Mississippi Valley Division per Gen. Walsh. Planning in the Division is separated into Northern and Southern Pods. The northern planning pod is based out of St. Paul and the southern planning pod is based out of New Orleans. No employees are moving work locations but how we are organized and who we work for is changing. Partnering agencies will still work with the same Corps staff for the most part. Supervisory

roles may change somewhat. Project Managers will stay the same and funding will funnel through the PMs the same.

***ACTION ITEM: Roger Perk will distribute Corps staff organizational charts to the partnering agencies after the regionalization effort has been finalized.***

#### **Operations and Maintenance – Bill Gretten**

River conditions have improved in the last few days. The river has been opened to river traffic locally as of Friday (March 4<sup>th</sup>) and should be opened up to Dubuque by the end of the week (March 11<sup>th</sup>). Lock and Dam 11 in Dubuque is still locked up with ice but should break up in the next few days.

Buoys are everywhere in the river after the hard winter. Many channel markers are off station and the effort to reset those won't begin until next Tuesday (March 15<sup>th</sup>).

The control stands at L&D 20, 21, and 22 were raised last year for floodproofing which is very fortunate due to the high probability of flooding this year. Also due to the high probability of flooding, it is unlikely that the recreation site will be opened at their usual times this year.

More money was spent on dredging last fall than average. Those expenses cut into the budget for this year. Also, Division has issued a directive to look at a 5% budget cut this year. Those funds will be redirected to the critical backlog of maintenance in the District.

#### **Sand and Gravel Permitting – Wayne Hannel**

In response to questions regarding how the Rock Island District handles sand and gravel permit applications from outside entities, Mr. Hannel provided the following information: when the RI District receives a permit request, the footprint of the area that is to be dredged is reviewed. If there is potential for a mussel bed, the DNR is consulted and a survey may have to be done. However, the RI District does not receive many requests for sand and gravel permits. Typically, when a permit is granted it is for a lengthy amount of time because those operations often stay in the same area for quite awhile since they are usually going after sand for concrete. Janet asked if dredging gravel can cause instability in the bed. Mike Griffin said that they require that anything over 2" in diameter is put back.

***ACTION ITEM: Wayne Hannel will provide Janet Sternburg with some example of past sand and gravel permits that have been issued by the Rock Island District.***

#### **2011 Flood Forecast – Jim Stiman**

The data used by the Corps to look at flood probabilities is generated by the National Weather Service and USGS. The 90-day forecast uses 60 years of historical data and applies the current conditions to determine flood probability. Currently, the water level of the Mississippi River is higher than normal for this time of year. The conditions of the Minnesota River are increasing the probability of the main stem Mississippi River flooding. The Iowa and Des Moines Rivers both have average probabilities of flooding right now. The 90-day outlook (March 7 – June 5) shows a 98% chance of minor to moderate flooding

on the Main Stem Mississippi and up to a 66% chance of having a flood of record at L&D 12. The weather in the coming weeks will continue to impacts these probabilities. The next NWS forecast update will not come out until the end of March unless there are significant changes in conditions.

***ACTION ITEM: Ellen Milliron will distribute copies of Jim Stiman's presentation slides to the RRCT.***

#### **Dredging – Nicole Manasco**

Ms. Manasco stated that there are efforts to provide a more regionalized approach to the dredging operations. The changes will provide a more coordinated approach to addressing dredging schedules and resources at the ground level rather than regionalization at the management level like the Corps' Planning and Real Estate sections are doing.

Ms. Manasco stated that dredging is currently occurring at Marseille Lower and she proceeded to share with the group via slides that dredging schedules for the Illinois and the Mississippi (See attached schedules).

#### **DMMP – Nicole Manasco**

New sites are being investigated for the Cal-Sag. The first phase of site eliminations has been done and there are 10 potential site candidates still on the list. Those 10 sites are having phase 1 HTRW work being done on them.

The RRCT will need to review the material placement matrix and make a determination as to whether or not it will be sufficient for the upper portion of the Illinois River, where material placement was previously not necessary. It was suggested that Nicole coordinate with Marshal Plumley in regards to the matrix.

**CHMMP** – This program has been on hold for the most part. However, there has been an effort placed on developing a solid GIS database. In the future a decision tree will be used to determine where sand will be placed.

#### **Agency Updates**

Missouri Department of Conservation – Janet Sternburg. The sales tax revenue for the year is slightly higher than projections; The UMRCC meeting is next week, March 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>; In regards to the hydropower project at L&D 21, the license was pulled back by FIRK; An interstate and interagency group has been established to look at hydropower needs. Kirsten Mickelsen is a point of contact for that group; Illinois participation in the RRCT is necessary. Methods of encouraging that participation should be discussed.

***ACTION ITEM: Janet Sternburg and Roger Perk will discuss avenues to obtaining Illinois DNR participation.***

Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Mike Griffin. The IDNR has a new director named Roger Lande. He is a 73 year old lawyer from Muscatine that was appointed. The DNR has not declared for or against any bill in the legislature as of yet.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – Jim Fischer. Cathy Step has been appointed as the new Secretary. She is planning to streamline the DNR. Five new directors have been appointed but Pat Stevens is the only one from outside of the DNR and he has been appointed to Air and Waste. A bill has been proposed that would cut all state employees' salaries an equivalent to 20%. Furloughs should be done by the end of June. The DNR is dealing with significant vacancies. Two people within the River Team are definitely retiring and there are three more potential retirees by the end of the year. The team leader position (Gretchen's position) may be back filled, which was previously not going to be filled. In regards to stewardship funding, those purchases will not be made except for a select few that are already in the pipelines.

Environmental Protection Agency – Bill Franz. Bill's last day will be June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Coast Guard – Christine Brown. CG is preparing for a potential flood and is readying for commercial and recreational vessel traffic.

**NEXT MEETING.** The next meeting will be a conference call / webinar on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 12:30.

**LISTING OF ACTION ITEMS:**

***ACTION ITEM: Marvin Hubbell to send Bill Franz four copies of each of the recent reports completed for EMP.***

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