

**Long Term Resource Monitoring Program
Analysis Team Report to August 2009 EMP-CC
(Submitted by Janet Sternburg)**

New chairman Kevin Stauffer called to order the Analysis Team (A-Team) phone conference on July 30, 2009. 19 people participated in the call, with all five states, USACE, USFWS and USGS represented. Bill Franz of EPA was unable to participate and NRCS has yet to appoint a replacement following the retirement of Fred Kollman. The primary objectives of this phone conference were to 1) provide an update and the opportunity for a team discussion on approved Strategic and Operational Plan for Fiscal Years 2010 to 2014; 2) provide an update on FY9 and 10 budgets, stimulus funds and potential end-of-year funds; 3) provide an update on NESP/EMP transition; 4) describe process for 2010 research projects; and 5) additional time for ad hoc indicator group to discuss next steps.

Strategic and Operational Plan (SOP) for the LTRMP: Marvin Hubbell noted that the new SOP for FY 2010-2014 was approved at the May 2009 meeting of the Environmental Management - Coordinating Committee (EMP-CC). The A-Team had the opportunity to review and discuss the plan at the April meeting and is familiar with its content. Kevin Stauffer sent all A-Team members a highlighted copy of the SOP that identified tasks for the A-Team, and he sought discussion on these tasks.

One item brought up for discussion was the expansion of the A-Team to include expertise on areas to be addressed in FY10-14, but not currently represented on the A-Team. Janet Sternburg shared her thoughts on this item, indicating she was envisioning the need to bring in floodplain and mussel expertise to the group (and other areas identified within the plan), because new components/research tasks are identified for these areas. She wasn't sure how this expertise would be brought in to the A-Team, whether it was agenda driven, permanent representation, or some other option. Stauffer noted that it might be difficult for each state to always bring a representative to all A-Team meetings given current budget situation. Others concurred. Overall, most members thought expansion is a good idea, when warranted. Sternburg made the suggestion that the A-Team make a recommendation to the EMP-CC to form a subgroup of A-Team/EMP-CC members to look at roles and responsibilities and how to bring in additional perspectives. Although not voted on, Stauffer asked Jim Fischer and Sternburg to make such a request of the EMPCC at the August meeting.

A question was also raised on role of A-Team in review of annual SOP implementation report. Hubbell suggested USGS/Corps would draft the report and seek input from the A-Team. Fischer suggested that maybe a broader group, much like the team for developing the SOP, would participate in development and review of report, before going to the EMP-CC. Hubbell thought this to be a good idea.

Stauffer brought up task of having greater connection between LTRMP and Habitat and Rehabilitation Projects (HREP). Hubbell indicated he saw three ways for this to occur: HREP also undergo a planning effort, much like that for the LTRMP; LTRMP scientists participate in planning groups, such as FWIC, FFW, RRAT Tech, etc., including floodplain reach planning; LTRMP scientists may have roles to play in individual project planning, and could seek greater participation.

Budget Discussion: Hubbell indicated that the EMP is 1 of 3 national priority restoration programs for FY09. There used to be 9 identified programs with this designation, but it has shrunk to three. So, this indicates the program is still well received.

FY09 budget for EMP was slightly less than last year's but stimulus funds and dollars that for HREPs due to flood damage repair provide an approximate budget of \$38 M to EMP. FY09 has restrictions on new construction/planning efforts, so this impacts long term construction capability. For LTRMP, state field stations will receive FY10 funding at the beginning of Federal FY10 using FY09 funds that could not be expended. This will allow for some flexibility in FY10 as budgets are still unknown. The "base" program of LTRMP will increase to \$4.7 M from \$4.3 M in FY10.

LiDAR and bathymetry received about \$2.5 million and both data layers should be completed for the entire system by end of September 2010, depending on weather. Karen Hagerty indicated she was unsure when data would be ready for use by all stakeholders, as it still requires some processing by USGS/Corps and

others before fully accessible. Hopefully it will eventually be as simple as a GIS data layer, with opportunity for others to use raw data for more detailed analyses. Barry Johnson indicated there is a lot of information contained within each data set, which makes it difficult to serve since users may vary in their goals and technical expertise. John Chick offered possibility of using new supercomputer at University of Illinois to analyze large data set, if needed.

Barry Johnson described another use of Stimulus funds to being work on landscape analyses by Nathan DeJager. This study will develop a hydrodynamic model to describe and predict habitat characteristics based on changes in water movement, retention times, etc. It will eventually use the seamless elevation layer created using LiDAR and bathymetric data. Plan is to do one upper river pool and one reach in the open river.

Hubbell indicated that the Administration and House are seeking \$20 M for FY10 and the Senate is proposing \$18 M. Expectation is somewhere in the middle. Senate language does not have new construction/planning language; hope is that conference results would not have this restrictive language.

EMP/LTRMP Transition: Hubbell briefly mentioned the transition plan as required by Congress. A plan was prepared and shared to partners for input this spring and early summer. The goal is to not lose habitat restoration capability that currently exists when moving into NESP; therefore transition should not fully occur until sufficient funds are appropriated for NESP. See Hubbell for more information or a copy of the plan.

FY10 Research Projects: Jennie Sauer sent out an e-mail on July 28, 2009 describing the future after Additional Program Elements. She noted that with the acceptance of new SOP, the current APE format will be changed. Research projects will be lead by scientific research plans developed by the Partnership rather than through a proposal process. FY2010 will be a transition year as research plans will be under development.

For FY2010, there will be no broad request for proposals. Instead, proposals only from previous/on-going LTRMP research (APE) projects that would gain from another year of study should be submitted. She requested study plans be submitted by September 4, 2009. The following criteria will be used to determine the merit of an application submitted to the LTRMP:

- Relevance of proposed project to river managers, research priorities and LTRMP goals and objectives
- How project enhances previous/on-going LTRMP project
- Degree of originality and scientific rigor in the design of the research
- Adequacy of the methods to collect and analyze data
- One year definable product(s).

Other: Jim Fischer suggested greater use of A-Team corner on USGS website, specifically placement of meeting minutes, list of all A-Team members (not just agency reps), etc.. All agreed it could be better utilized and effort will be made to update the site.

Agency Updates:

WI: Facing 25% reduction in DNR budget; staff reductions via retirement and departures; 8 day furlough, and program changes. New secretary is seeking to hold a summit with all five UMRS states to discuss aquatic nuisance species.

MO: Agency is reducing staff by about 10%, it is likely some programs/staff assignments will see changes. Kat McCain is the new Project Manager for LTRMP. The new building for the Center for Applied River Sciences is currently on hold and is waiting for governor to sign legislation that would authorize its construction, among other tasks.

IL: Agency has a new director, Marc Miller, who has an interest in river related work. The Long Term Electrofishing Project on the Illinois River is to be expanded as a pilot to the Chain-of-Rocks and Pool 19 areas.

MN: DNR Divisions of Ecological Resources and Waters are merging and are currently working on structure/functions of this new Division. New email system is being put in place over the next few months, so watch for address changes.

FWS: Dealing with retirement of Don Hultman; Jason Wilson has replaced Dave Ellis at Great River NWF.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be in October/November, with the date and format to be determined. Input on agenda items should be sent to Kevin Stauffer.

For questions or comments, please contact your A-Team representative or Kevin Stauffer, chairman (651-345-3365, ext. 229; or Kevin.stauffer@state.mn.us).