

Final Minutes
LTRMP A-Team Conference Call
February 11, 2010
1:30 – 3:30 pm

Participants: Illinois – John Chick, Rob Maher, Greg Sass
Iowa – Kirk Hansen, Dave Bierman
Minnesota – Kevin Stauffer, Walt Popp
Missouri – Janet Sternburg, Kat McCain
Wisconsin – Jim Fischer, Terry Dukerschein
COE – Karen Hagerty, David Potter, Charles Hanneken
USGS – Barry Johnson, Mike Jawson, Jennie Sauer, Nate De Jager,
USFWS – Rick Frietsche, Jon Duyvejonck

Agenda: Roll call, introduction – Stauffer
EMP and COE updates – Hagerty
Indicators ad hoc update – Hagerty
Future Function and Composition ad hoc update – Sternburg
Report to Congress update – Johnson, Sauer
Accomplishments (product list) of Field Stations – Stauffer
Spring meeting plans – Stauffer
Agency updates, open discussion – All

EMP and COE updates

EMPCC suggested that COE (Hubbell) look into developing a strategic plan for the HREP program, along the lines of the plan completed for LTRMP. After discussion with partners, most agreed that this would be good to pursue. Hubbell has started to draft a Scope of Work (SOW), so the process is just getting started. Hubbell will update the EMPCC with the group's recommendation. Some of the items that will be included will be a process to identify new projects, monitoring of projects, and maintenance of projects. Participation from LTRMP and A-Team members will be important, particularly related to monitoring and adaptive management aspects.

Hagerty gave a brief update from a January COE meeting with staff from St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis district staff. Items discussed included the HREP database and what needs to be done to get it completed, how project monitoring is being done across districts and how it can be done better, how monitoring can be done so it is more usable to LTRMP, and a discussion on updating the website.

Hagerty noted that the President's budget identifies \$21,150,000 for EMP in FY11, which would give LTRMP approximately \$6,393,000. No numbers from House or Senate at this time. President's budget does not include any funding for NESP. Sternburg noted that UMRBA and various NGO's will be trying to encourage Congress to maintain, or increase, EMP funding by highlighting the value of the program. Chick asked if there was a "1 pager" or some kind of fact sheet available that could be used by partners to help promote EMP, and in particular LTRMP. UMRBA was suggested as a potential source for a fact sheet. Stauffer will check with Barb Naramore to see what is available. Sauer noted that the fact sheet for the FY10-14 LTRMP Strategic Plan might be helpful. She will email it to A-Team members and post on the A-Team corner (done).

Indicators ad hoc update

The Indicators group was scheduled to meet Feb 9-10, but was cancelled due to weather and travel conditions. Hagerty is in the process of rescheduling the meeting and tentative dates are March 30-31 in the Quad Cities. The group will finalize the Purpose Statement that was drafted by Barry Johnson and Karen Hagerty, and will ask A-

Team for formal approval when it is complete. The A-Team will be asked to forward the Purpose Statement to the EMPCC for their endorsement, in May. There will also be a sub-group formed to look at fish indicators.

Future Function and Composition of A-Team ad hoc update

Janet Sternburg is chair of this ad hoc and reported on activities of the group so far. A conference call was held on January 7 and notes from that call will be coming out soon. The ad hoc has/will be discussing how to encourage participation from experts in disciplines that are not currently represented on the A-Team. This would help diversify topics for quarterly meetings and potentially broaden the function and expertise of A-Team. The ad hoc will also be looking into the development of a charter that would define what the A-Team does, who participates, clarifies roles and relationships, etc. This effort will also try to address how A-Team could assist in EMP/NESP integration in areas like monitoring and adaptive management.

Science Plan and Research Frameworks update

A draft of the “**Scientific framework for research on unionid mussels in the Upper Mississippi River System**” by Teresa Newton, Steve Zigler, Wendell Haag, Jon Duyvejonck, and Mike Davis is currently being reviewed by A-Team. Stauffer reminded A-Team that comments are due to him by February 15 and he will compile comments for the five states, USFWS and USEPA. The unionid research framework will be used as a template for the remaining research components (landscape patterns, vegetation, and connectivity).

Barry Johnson reported they have started working on the landscape patterns and vegetation frameworks. They anticipate early drafts of these two frameworks by mid-summer. The vegetation framework will be headed up by Yao Yin and Becky Kreiling. Nate De Jager is heading up the landscape pattern framework. De Jager reported that he has started to put together a group that, so far, includes Bill Richardson, Pat Heglund and Emily Stanley (UW Madison). He would like to add someone from further “downriver.” Sternburg suggested there may be some interest by MO DOC staff and ask him to work with Kat McCain on this.

Johnson said the connectivity framework will be the last one to start, as it could have several directions it could go. For example there could be two distinct plans (e.g. aquatic, floodplain) within this framework. Need to look at NESP Forest PDT work and how this, and other efforts, could be brought into this framework.

Johnson also gave an update on the Science Plan, which he will be drafting for everyone to review. He has a working draft, but not done at this point. He will provide an outline of the Science Plan at the February EMPCC meeting and potentially have a draft of the plan done by mid to late March.

Report to Congress update

Sauer said staff from Field Stations and UMESC have already provided her with information on collaborative efforts they have been involved with and doesn't expect to need more information on this part of the report. Johnson also said he doesn't anticipate any broad call for information from Field Stations, but there may be a few specific requests.

Hagerty noted that COE has lead on the RTC, and that they, UMESC, and UMRBA all have sections that will be drafted by mid-March. Once compiled, they will go to partners and A-Team for review. Timeframe for review draft is mid-summer.

Accomplishments (product list) of Field Stations

Stauffer initiated discussion regarding an annual “product list” of work accomplished by LTRMP Field Stations. Most stations compile some kind of list for internal needs, but there has not been a consistent or complete reporting mechanism in recent years. The last compilation of Field Station accomplishments was done by Valerie Barko, which covered the period of 1989 to 2004. A variety of opinions and ideas were discussed. Most agreed that there would be some benefit and could be used to highlight successes and build program support. Stauffer agreed to formulate a suggested process based on this discussion and send it back to A-Team for further review. The basic plan would be to have Field Stations submit a list of accomplishments by calendar year and provide the list annually at the April meeting. Field Station lists would identify and separate accomplishments that were directly related to LTRMP. Other items could be listed separately. These product lists would then be included as Agency Update attachments to meeting minutes.

Spring Meeting plans

The next A-Team meeting will be held on April 21 in La Crosse, the day before the MRRC meeting. Tentative start time is 10:30 am. Stauffer will provide meeting details and agenda prior to the meeting.

Agency updates and open discussion

Missouri – decrease in revenue from sales tax is impacting budget. A new director has been appointed and there will be six (out of ten) new Division Chiefs in the near future.

Illinois – Ed Walsh retired in December and there is some hope this will be refilled. Asian carp issues around Chicago have been consuming a lot of time for all DNR Fisheries staff. An increase to hunting and fishing licenses has been approved. They hope to be able to fill at least a few positions in the next 1-2 years.

Iowa – currently working on the crappie telemetry project. Tagged 200 fish last November and have noted considerable predation of tagged fish by otter.

Wisconsin – Terry has been busy working on final EMAP and LTRMP reports. Lots of things keeping them busy right now. Jim – they are still maintaining 10-30% vacancy rate around the state. No new hires, except positions that have federal funding. There has been drastic cutbacks in Service Center hours at all locations and they are working to develop phone trees and other ways to handle public requests. The Fish Biologist exam will be given for the first time in a long time. Lock & Dam 3 lower embankment project permit has not been issued by WI DNR. Permits for the upper embankment spot dikes and Navigation Safety segments of the project have been issued. Also trying to keep ahead of hydropower development proposals on the river.

Minnesota – interviews for Fisheries Chief are being held today. Walt noted that they were able to use a vehicle on Lake Pepin ice to do some of their WQ samples this winter. First time in a long time that has happened.

COE – Hagerty said they have received additional “stimulus” funding that will be used for Lidar and Bathymetry work. Will be used to process and serve data, and create seamless layer. David Potter noted that Dan Wilcox retired recently, but after some time off will be returning as a consultant to continue some of his work.

FWS – Frietsche announced that Kathy Henry has been hired as the new project leader at Port Louisa Refuge.

UMESC – John Amberg has been hired in a new Invasive Species position that will focus on Asian carp.

Other – the “Upper Mississippi River Research Synthesis: Forty Years of Ecological Research” has been published by Hydrobiologia. About 25 copies are still available. Contact Greg Sass if you are interested in obtaining a copy. There will probably be some copies still available at the MRRC meeting.