

A-Team Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2009
Holiday Inn – Dubuque, IA

The A-Team meeting was on November 9, 2009 in Dubuque, Iowa. Four states (IL, MN, MO, WI), USGS and USACE were represented. USFWS, USEPA and Iowa DNR were unable to attend. As previously discussed by A-Team, the focus of this meeting was to view presentations of ongoing or completed work related to LTRMP. Also on the agenda were program and agency updates, review and ranking of FY10 Research Proposals, and other discussion items. A sub-group of the A-Team met the following day to continue working on bio-indicators. Karen Hagerty is the lead of the Indicators sub-group.

Current chairperson, Kevin Stauffer, called the meeting to order and reviewed the proposed agenda. He noted that it was difficult to find open dates for everyone to attend and that travel/budget limitations are an ongoing issue for many state agency staff. While some A-Team members were not able to attend this meeting, the dates chosen were the best fit for holding both the A-Team and Indicators meeting at the same location.

Program and Budget Updates were provided by Karen Hagerty: EMP funding for FY10 will be \$16.473 million, of which LTRMP will receive \$4,983,180. Base LTRMP program has been funded and there will be approximately \$245,000 available for FY10 Research Projects. Carry over funds have/will be used to fund necessary equipment refreshment. “No new starts” provision has been lifted if 1) they can be completed in two years, or 2) if they can be transitioned seamlessly into NESP.

LiDAR and Bathymetry work received substantial funding (\$2.5 million) through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Karen and COE have been busy finalizing contracts. In August a \$460,000 contract was issued to complete the remaining LiDAR flights of the river. Four Scopes of Work for bathymetry have been awarded or are imminent with Corps contractors. Fieldwork completion for bathymetry and LiDAR are dependent on weather and water levels. LiDAR data for Pools 8-14 and 20-24 are now available on the UMESC website. http://umesc.usgs.gov/data_library/gis_data/lidar.html UMESC has developed four SOWs to process and serve the bathymetry, LiDAR, and prepare a new seamless elevation data coverage. ARRA funds not used in data acquisition (~\$450K) can be put towards this work.

FY10 LTRMP Research Proposals: Discussion was led by Stauffer and Sauer regarding the A-Team’s ranking of the FY10 Research Proposals. This is a transition year from the APE process and there was no open request for proposals. A research science plan is being developed and will shape the process for future fiscal years. A total of eight proposals were submitted for A-Team Review. Review and ranking by A-Team followed the same process as used in the last few rounds of APE’s. Most A-Team members had submitted their agency rankings before the meeting, but a few did not. Final agency rankings are due by November 20. UMESC, COE and A-Team chair will have a final discussion on the rankings in late November or early December.

Barry Johnson noted that the Science Plan was going to be funded in FY10, but they decided not to request funds. Work will continue within existing time/funds and they will seek participation from Field Stations and A-Team. A draft of a “starting point” for a research framework should be ready by the end of the calendar year.

Presentations to the A-Team:

- An Evaluation of Invertebrate Sampling Methods for Use in the Open River Reach of the Upper Mississippi River – Bob Hrabik, Missouri Department of Conservation
- 1993 -2007 Open River catfish population data – Bob Hrabik, Missouri Department of Conservation
- Scientific framework for research on native mussels in the Upper Mississippi River System. Teresa Newton, UMESC

- Hydrodynamic Modeling. Dr. Doug Schnoebelen, IHR Lucille A. Carver Mississippi Riverside Environmental Research Station. Dr. Schnoebelen & students will develop 2-D and 3-D hydrodynamic models for the river that predict movement of water within aquatic areas and over the floodplain based on an annual hydrograph. The models will build on previous efforts at the University of Iowa and the Corps of Engineers, and will make use of new LiDAR and bathymetry data collected with ARRA funding. Model results will focus on flow dynamics as they relate to habitat features and movement of materials in the water. Habitat features will include water depth, current velocity, inundation frequency, retention time, depth to ground water, shear stress, etc. The distribution of habitat features over space and time will then be related to data on dynamics of biota, water chemistry, and ecological processes (e.g., nutrient processing, primary production, oxygen dynamics). We anticipate modeling three different river segments, beginning with two LTRMP focal reaches, probably the Open River Reach and Pool 8.

Presentations were well received and generated considerable discussion. Due to time constraints, no further summary of these presentations is included in this report. Presentations may be posted on the A-Team Corner of the UMESC website, pending approval of authors.

Agency Updates:

WI – workload and budget issues continue. No hiring, including Miss. River team leader position that has been vacant. Lock and Dam 3 embankment project update; WI is still requesting fish passage to be incorporated into the project. Lots of permit activity related to “stimulus” projects. Difficult to manage with reduced staff.

IL – DNR and other agencies heavily engaged in finalizing plans to rotenone the Chicago canal prior to planned shutdown of electrical barrier for maintenance. DNR has funded additional electrofishing of main channel areas not covered by LTRMP. May also include Wabash and Ohio rivers. Funding is from Sportfish Restoration.

IA – no updates

MO – Hrabik reported that budget woes have indefinitely postponed construction of the new Field Station/River Center. Everything else is in place, but does not look like funding will happen any time soon. Sternburg reported that MO is reducing staff, primarily through retirement incentives. Director is retiring and an appointment has been announced. Five of ten Division leaders are expected to retire. An existing position may take on more duties for Big River fisheries needs. Overall they expect to maintain 10-12% vacancies.

MN – Fisheries Chief, Ron Payer, retired this month. Dirk Peterson has been appointed as interim Chief. Job announcement has been posted for permanent filling of this position. Like other states, budget reductions and travel restrictions are happening. Outdoor Heritage amendment that passed has funded lots of projects, but no direct funding for DNR base operations.

USGS – Mike Jawson reported that funding for UMESC has been very good, particularly through ARRA. They have funding for construction of a new wing by 2011. UMESC will receive \$4.0 million from the \$475 million Great Lakes Restoration effort. Funds will be focused on projects related to tributaries to the Great Lakes. Yao Yin and Brian Ickes are currently in China working on fish sampling techniques in rivers as part of a TNC funded initiative. The proceedings of the 40th Mississippi River Research Consortium has been peer reviewed by UMESC and hope to see it published in 4-6 months.

COE – Len Kring (Rock Island), Charlie Hanneken (St. Louis), and David Potter (St. Paul) were in attendance. All are relatively new to EMP/LTRMP and looking forward to working with everyone on the river. Flood recovery, influx of ARRA funds, New Orleans, etc. have been keeping them very busy.

Next A-Team meeting will be a conference call in late January or early February. Potential topics include 1) a discussion on how we can develop and present a coherent message on the need for full funding of EMP, 2) review/discussion of research framework, 3) update and discussion on future role and make up of A-Team.